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# FACT SHEET

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## Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund Grant Program

Established in 1986, the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund was created to provide permanent and steady funding for park land and greenway conservation corridor protection and outdoor recreation facility development. Administered by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Division of Parks and Recreation, the trust fund annually generates \$1.5 million for grant projects.

Each year the Division of Parks and Recreation makes \$750,000 in grant awards for park land acquisition and park development and \$750,000 in grant awards for greenway corridor land conservation and trail development. Since the beginning of the grant program, the Division has provided over \$14 million in matching grant assistance to local governments throughout Delaware.

The intent of this grant program is to increase the number and quality of parks and outdoor recreation facilities available to the recreating public and to increase public land holdings that protect valuable natural and cultural resources.

### Who is eligible for trust fund grants?

County and municipal governments and local park districts are eligible to apply for the competitive trust fund grants and are considered “sponsors” under this grant program. County and municipal applicants may receive matching grants of up to fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost. Park districts may receive matching grants of up to seventy-five percent (75%) funding. Partnerships between governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and other non-traditional recreation providers are encouraged.

The project sponsor must supply the balance of funds not provided by the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund. The following funding sources may be used to match Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund Grant funds:

- City or County cash
- Transportation Enhancement (SAFETEA - FHWA)
- Federal grant funds (NERR, NOAA, EPA)
- Community Transportation Funds (CTF)
- Corporate or private donations
- Foundation grants
- Donated materials or labor
- Volunteer or in-kind labor
- Value of land (only if pre-approved by the Division)

### What types of projects are eligible for trust fund assistance?

The trust fund grant program is designed to assist local governments and park districts by providing matching grants for the planning, acquisition, and development of parks, greenways and trails.

The types of eligible grant projects include the following: park land acquisition; park development of both passive and active facilities; park planning and design; greenway corridor acquisition; trail development; and trail planning and design. For a detailed list of eligible park, greenway and trail grant projects see Park Guidance and Greenway and Trail Guidance. Park and trail maintenance and operational costs are not eligible under this trust fund grant program.

### **How to apply for grant funding.**

All eligible sponsors are notified by the Division of Parks and Recreation early each year at the start of the trust fund grant program cycle. As a first step in the grant process, the Division accepts Pre-Applications that contain information about the proposed project. This information helps our staff determine project eligibility, costs and steps necessary for the full application. Eligible sponsors may fill out the 2006 Pre-Application on line. After Pre-Applications are evaluated, a sponsor may be invited to complete a full grant application.

### **Evaluation of grant proposals**

Park grant applications are evaluated and ranked by the Division of Parks and Recreation. The Division's recommendations are taken to the Open Space Council for approval of park grant awards. Greenway grant applications are evaluated and ranked by the Council on Greenways and Trails. This Council's approval is forwarded to the Division of Parks and Recreation. Final approval of all grants lies with the DNREC Secretary and the Director, Division of Parks and Recreation. At a minimum, the application review process is designed to evaluate each project for the following:

- How the project fulfills public outdoor recreation needs that most benefit the citizens within a county, community or park district;
- How the project protects natural and/or cultural resources; and
- Verifies the sponsor's ability to provide matching funds, project implementation, and long-term maintenance and stewardship of the land protected or park developed.

### **Long Term Responsibilities**

When an eligible grant application has received all approvals, the Division of Parks and Recreation will prepare a Project Agreement outlining the project scope and funding that both the state and the sponsor are providing. The Project Agreement is a contract between the state and the sponsor and is signed by each. When a sponsor accepts Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund grant assistance, the sponsor agrees to dedicate the land acquired or improved with trust fund assistance to public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity and assume responsibility for continuing operation and maintenance of the area.

### **How much money is presently in the trust fund?**

The principal of the trust fund reached \$46 million in 2006. Legislative appropriations, private donations, 21st Century Funds and Real Estate Transfer Taxes comprise the fund's endowments. Yearly, \$1 million of Realty Transfer Taxes are deposited into the trust fund. One-and-a-half million dollars of trust fund interest is used for this trust fund grant program; the remaining interest funds State Open Space acquisitions and stewardship of state natural and cultural resource lands.

The trust's principal must remain intact with only trust-generated interest being used for acquisition and outdoor recreation facility development. By law, the trust fund corpus or principal may not be spent.

For more information on the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund Grant Program contact:

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