

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of State Parks
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

July 25, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

STATEWIDE/O'AHU

SUBJECT: Selection of Projects for Federal Grant Awards through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program with Fiscal Year 2024 Funds: Update of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Reconstruction of a 2-Ballfield Complex at Sand Island State Recreation Area, O'ahu [TMK: (1) 1-5-041:006].

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a Federal grants program administered by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) to expand public outdoor recreation opportunities. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of State Parks (State Parks) assists with the administration of this program on the state level. LWCF grants are made available to county and state agencies for the acquisition of recreation areas, construction of new recreational facilities, and rehabilitation of existing facilities. The grant funds must be matched with State funds, County funds, or in-kind services. State Parks takes the lead in notifying the county parks and recreational agencies of the availability of grant funds, accepts applications, and makes a preliminary selection of projects for the grant awards. The Land Board approves this selection of projects as a means of soliciting public comment in the selection process and authorizing DLNR to enter into project agreements with the NPS for the selected projects receiving grant awards.

In order to qualify to receive the LWCF funds, Hawai'i must prepare an updated Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every 5 years. Hawai'i's 2021 SCORP Update maintains our eligibility to participate in the program until December 31, 2026. NPS recently developed a new policy to allow states to update their SCORP every 10 years which we will work towards in the future. State Parks believes the 5-year update is the best approach at this time to address trends that have developed since the 2021 SCORP and expand the scope of outdoor recreation for grant assistance. State Parks has had inquiries for potential LWCF grants that were not adequately considered in the 2021 SCORP such as motorsports, electric bikes, EV charging stations, and community gardens. While the previous SCORP addressed lo'i kalo and fishponds for grant assistance, there has been interest in considering other cultural practices, such as hula, in our definition of outdoor recreation for future grant assistance. The SCORP includes an inventory of Hawai'i's recreational resources and assesses the recreational demands and priorities based on consultation with government agencies and input from

public surveys and stakeholder meetings. Applications for grant awards are ranked on their ability to meet the state's recreational demands and priorities as identified in the SCORP.

Each year, the Department of Interior announces the funding available for the State Assistance Program of LWCF and the apportionment to each state based on population. NPS has not notified the States of their FY25 apportionment but Hawai'i currently has funding of approximately \$3.2m from FY24 and another \$2.9m from FY23. The FY23 funds must be obligated by September 2025.

The ranking and selection of projects is conducted through the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) that is outlined in the 2021 SCORP. The OPSP is designed to assure equal opportunity for all eligible project sponsors and the general public to participate in the benefits of the LWCF program. By notifying the four (4) County Departments of Parks and Recreation about the availability of the funds and the timeline for submittal of grant applications, these outdoor recreation sponsors are provided an opportunity to request these funds in a fair and equitable process. Applications are ranked on their ability to meet the priority outdoor recreation needs of the state. If the grant requests exceed the funding available, the OPSP ranking becomes the primary means of deciding which projects are submitted to NPS for funding consideration. In the 2021 SCORP, one of the high priorities is improving the quality and condition of existing facilities.

Because of the available funding level, grant applications from both the State and County agencies were considered for funding support. State Parks notified the four (4) County Departments of Parks and Recreation in October 2024 about the availability of these federal funds after a workshop was held in February 2024 by NPS and State Parks to encourage the counties to participate and to provide assistance with evaluating potential projects and submitting pre-applications. The Counties of Maui and Hawai'i Island chose not to participate this year and the City and County of Honolulu did not submit any applications by the deadline of January 2, 2025. The County of Kaua'i was awarded 6 LWCF grants in 2023 and decided to focus on completing these grants before applying for any new ones.

As a result, the only applications submitted were by DLNR, State Parks. The following project applications have been reviewed and selected for submittal to NPS for an LWCF grant award subject to Board approval:

15-00190 2026 SCORP Update (Statewide)

Applicant: DLNR, Division of State Parks

Estimated Project Total: \$600,000

LWCF Grant Request: \$300,000 (50%)

Matching Funds: State Funds (CIP)

Project Description: Update of the 2021 SCORP, including an inventory of recreational resources, public input to evaluate recreational needs, demands, threats, and priorities, and development of an action plan for

addressing these needs and demands. Additional planning projects include creation of a LWCF database and online LWCF resources for the public
Environmental & Regulatory Status: N/A

15-00191 2-Ballfield Complex, Sand Island State Recreation Area

Applicant: DLNR, Division of State Parks

Estimated Project Total: \$2,400,000

LWCF Grant Request: \$1,200,000 (50%)

Matching Funds: Hawaii Softball Foundation (HSF) funds, donations, and in-kind services.

Project Description: Reconstruction of the 2 softball fields and related support structures, including backstops (2), dugouts (4), batting cages (4), scorekeeper booths (2), scoreboards (2), bleachers (6), fencing, and walkways.

Environmental & Regulatory Status: HRS, §343 exemption; Class 2 renovation. HSF will hire a contractor to address all other permitting requirements.

The 2026 SCORP Update is required for Hawai'i to remain eligible to receive LWCF grant funds and therefore, this project is ranked as a high priority for LWCF funding support. State Parks proposes to hire a planning consultant to assist with the SCORP Update that will involve online surveys, public outreach and meeting on all the islands as well as meetings with recreational agencies and providers. With this input, the recreational demands, needs, and issues will be addressed, and a strategic action plan will be developed.

The 6 ballfields at Sand Island State Recreation Area (SRA) were constructed by the community in 1998 and used for youth baseball for several years before falling into disrepair. The Hawaii Softball Foundation (HSF) has been renovating, maintaining, and coordinating the use of the 6 ballfields by schools, leagues, and the public since 2012. DLNR issued a 10-year lease to HSF in 2021 for the management and maintenance of the 6 ballfields at Sand Island SRA. The 2021 SCORP recognized the high demand for softball and baseball fields and Sand Island is currently the only location on O'ahu with dedicated fields for softball. These fields are also important for serving the public in the urban core of Honolulu.

The reconstruction of the 2-ballfield complex at Sand Island SRA is a partnership between the Division of State Parks and the HSF. A previous LWCF grant (Project 15-00171) was originally intended to cover the renovation all 6 of the ballfields. The 4-ballfield complex (quadrangle) was reconstructed in 2021, but the 2-ballfield complex had to be deleted due to insufficient funding. Therefore, this current request (Project 15-00191) addresses the reconstruction of the 2 ballfields which will result in 6 playable fields meeting the regulations for tournament and league play by high schools and colleges.

DLNR will serve as the project sponsor for the grant award and oversee the project. HSF will serve as the general contractor coordinating the architectural and engineering studies, permitting, and construction. HSF has committed to providing all the match for the grant, including their own funding, donations from contractors/vendors, and in-kind services. HSF has a proven track record and continues to improve the 4-ballfield complex through their funding sources.

The balance of LWCF funds will revert to Hawai'i's Special Reserve Account which will allow use of the funds in 2026 if all the FY24 and FY25 funds can be obligated. Several potential projects for 2026 have already been identified by the counties and state, including Phase 3 of the Hilo Bayfront Trails within Wailoa River State Park which has been a successful collaboration between the County of Hawai'i and DLNR, State Parks with prior LWCF assistance.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board approve the selection of two (2) new projects and authorize the submittal of these projects to the National Park Service for grant funding awards through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program for an amount totaling \$1,500,000:

15-00190	2026 SCORP Update	\$300,000
15-00191	Ballfields, Sand Island SRA	\$1,200,000

Respectfully submitted,



CURT A. COTTRELL
Administrator
Division of State Parks

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources