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Appendix 10:

RECREATION GRANTS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL RECREATION PLANS

Recreation-related grants administered by the DNR

The department administers a wide variety of grants that are available to local governments, tribes, conservation groups, and landowners. The following list includes those grant opportunities related to outdoor recreation. For more information about these and other grants, go to:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/aid/grants.html>

Acquisition & Development of Local Parks

Eligibility & Purpose: Helps to buy land or easements and develop or renovate local park and recreation area facilities for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes (e.g., trails, fishing access and park support facilities). Applicants compete for funds on a regional basis. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

ATV Enhancement

Eligibility & Purpose: Annual funding to a non-profit organization that promotes the safe and wise use of ATVs and UTVs, ATV/UTV riding and ATV/UTV education.

ATV Patrols

Eligibility & Purpose: Issued to Wisconsin county sheriff departments that participate in ATV enforcement efforts.

ATV Trails

Eligibility & Purpose: Issued to counties, towns, cities, villages and tribes to acquire, insure, develop and maintain ATV trails, areas and routes.

Boat Patrol Grants

Eligibility & Purpose: Issued to Wisconsin counties and municipalities that participate in boating enforcement efforts.

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

Eligibility & Purpose: **Tier 1** for smaller projects that add transient boating infrastructure to the area. **Tier 2** for larger projects and are competitively judged at the national level.

Clean Diesel Grant Program

Eligibility & Purpose: To help reduce diesel emissions from both public and private vehicle fleets across the state.

Clean Vessel Act

Eligibility & Purpose: A nationwide competitive federal grant program that provides funding to states as part of an effort to clean up the nation's waterways. The CVA encourages states to subcontract with private marinas/businesses as well as local units of government to construct projects.

Friends of State Lands

Eligibility & Purpose: Grants from this program help improve facilities, build new recreation projects and restore habitat on state properties. This grant program is part of Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Habitat Area

Eligibility & Purpose: Protects and restores important wildlife habitat in Wisconsin in order to expand opportunities for wildlife-based recreation such as hunting, trapping, hiking, bird watching, fishing, nature appreciation and wildlife viewing. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Hunter Recruitment, Development, Training and Education Grant Program

Eligibility & purpose: The primary purpose of the Hunter Recruitment, Development, Training and Education grant program is to provide cost sharing grants to local clubs, organizations, communities, governments, Wisconsin Tribes, colleges, universities and technical schools to ensure the education, training and development of safe and ethical hunters and mentors.

Land & Water Conservation Fund - Nationally Competitive Program

Eligibility & Purpose: A nationally competitive federal program that will create or reinvigorate parks and other outdoor recreation spaces in areas delineated by the Census Bureau as comprising densely settled territory that contains 50,000 or more people. The State of Wisconsin will be able to submit two applications to compete for the available funding.

Land & Water Conservation Fund - State Program

Eligibility & Purpose: This Federal program encourages creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received by the DNR for this program are split between DNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities. Grants cover 50 percent of eligible project costs.

Motorized Stewardship Grants

Eligibility & Purpose: Counties, towns, cities, villages and WI tribes are eligible to request funding for new bridges on existing funded trails, major bridge reconstruction/rehabilitation & rehabilitation of funded trails.

Recreational Boating Facilities

Eligibility & Purpose: Counties, towns, cities, villages, WI tribes, sanitary districts, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts and qualified lake associations for recreational boating facility projects.

Recreational Trail Program

Eligibility & Purpose: Counties, towns, cities, villages, WI Tribes, and incorporated organizations may apply for grant funding for development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Funds from this program may be used in conjunction with the state snowmobile or ATV programs and Stewardship development projects.

Shooting Range Grant Program

Eligibility & purpose: Counties, cities, villages, townships, other governmental agencies or units, clubs or organizations, businesses or corporations and educational institutions can apply for assistance in outdoor shooting range construction, including: backstops and berms, target holders, shooting benches, baffles, protective fencing, signs, trenches, gun racks, platforms, restrooms and other items considered essential for the project by the department. Indoor ranges may be eligible as well.

Snowmobile Patrols

Eligibility & Purpose: Wisconsin county sheriff departments that participate in snowmobile enforcement efforts.

Snowmobile Trail Aids

Eligibility & Purpose: Counties and WI tribes may apply for funding to provide a statewide system of well-signed and well-groomed snowmobile trails for public use and enjoyment.

Sport Fish Restoration

Eligibility & Purpose: Counties, towns, cities, villages, tribes, sanitary districts, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, and qualified lake associations may apply for grants to construct fishing piers and motorboat access projects.

Stamp Funds - Wild Turkey, Pheasant and Waterfowl

Eligibility & purpose: To provide funding to support the development, maintenance, preservation, restoration and maintenance of each species and its associated habitat in Wisconsin. All non-profit conservation organizations and units of government are eligible to apply.

State Trails

Eligibility & purpose: Applications for grants under this subprogram must be for properties identified as part of the **State Trail system**. It is possible for sponsors to nominate additional trails for state trail designation. The Streambank Protection Program protects water quality and fish habitat in Wisconsin by establishing buffers along high-priority waterways. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Streambank Protection

Eligibility & purpose: The Streambank Protection Program protects water quality and fish habitat in Wisconsin by establishing buffers along high-priority waterways. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Summer Tribal Youth Program

Eligibility & purpose: The department may, in partnership with any of the federally recognized American Indian tribes or bands domiciled in this state, establish a summer program that provides members of the tribe or band who are 13 to 19 years of age with an opportunity to work on projects related to the conservation of natural resources. The department may not provide funding that exceeds 50 percent of the eligible program costs. The tribe or band shall be responsible for the remainder of those costs.

Urban Green Space

Eligibility & Purpose: These grants help buy land or easements in urban areas to preserve the scenic and ecological values of natural open spaces for nature-based outdoor recreation, including non-commercial gardening. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Urban Rivers

Eligibility & Purpose: These grants help buy land on rivers flowing through urban or urbanizing areas to preserve or restore the scenic and environmental values of riverways for nature-based outdoor recreation. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Utility Terrain Vehicle Trails

Eligibility & Purpose: Counties, towns, cities, villages and tribes can apply for funds for maintenance of UTV trails, minor development, gates and signing. This is a companion program to ATV Trail Aids.

Guidelines for the Development of Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (CORP)

Introduction

A prerequisite to participation in some outdoor recreation grant programs is the adoption and subsequent DNR acceptance of a local comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. This requirement can be found in Chapter NR 50, Wisconsin administrative code for the following programs: Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF), Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP), Urban Green Space Program (UGS), and Urban Rivers Grant Program (URGP).

This document was prepared to help local units of government develop comprehensive park and recreation plans that will do the following: 1) guide them in acquiring and developing public outdoor parks and recreation facilities, and 2) insure that plans meet the minimum requirements for participation in both state and federal programs.

Planning occurs at several different levels. Comprehensive planning is an overall survey of the existing facilities within a given jurisdiction, and it gives recommendations for future improvements. A comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (CORP) is only the first step in the development of a recreational park site or system.

Being aware of other planning efforts from other agencies, municipalities, and non-profit organizations during the comprehensive outdoor recreation planning process enables your community to consolidate recreation, resource management, and development efforts for an area, region, or state. Communities may find it easier and more economical to implement the CORP recommendations when coordinated with other plans.

Master planning, which follows the recommendations of the comprehensive plan, is an overall view and analysis of an existing or proposed park area. The purpose is to guide the orderly development of a park or recreational facility. Site planning is the detailed plan of how an area within a park or recreation area will be developed. Site plans supply the construction details needed to develop a facility recommended in the master plan.

Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans

What Are Plans?

Local comprehensive outdoor recreation plans will vary in complexity depending on the size and population density of the municipality. It is unrealistic to expect a small township in northern Wisconsin to complete a plan as complex as one done by a densely populated municipality in southeastern Wisconsin. However, no matter how complex a plan is, it must contain a few basic elements if it is to be effective as a planning tool. The following outline includes the minimum requirements for all plans to gain eligibility to participate in funding programs. Non-profit conservation organizations (NCOs) are eligible to participate in the Knowles–Nelson Stewardship Program under the Urban Green Space and Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks programs. NCOs may adopt or carry out recommendations from a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan of the local unit of government in which the NCO project is located or use their land management plans that are required for participation in the stewardship programs.

What Does A Plan Consist Of?

The following annotated outline lists the required components needed for an approved plan. There is no order or format required for a plan; in fact, communities are encouraged to improvise and develop their own unique plan.

- I. Copy of the adopted resolution or minutes approving the comprehensive outdoor recreation plan**
Obtain approval for your local comprehensive outdoor recreation plan from the local governing body. Each local government must include a copy of the resolution of adoption or minutes from the meeting adopting the plan. Communities included in the county outdoor recreation plan must also submit documentation indicating that they have adopted the county comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

- II. Table of contents**
Include this section to give the reader a sense of how the plan was developed and show where the major points of information are located by chapter and page.

III. Statement of need and parameters that the plan will establish

Provide a general statement that briefly discusses the reason for a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan and what your community will accomplish with the plan. This statement could include the major points of what your plan will accomplish.

IV. Goals and objectives

List the goals and objectives you expect your plan to produce or write a mission statement to cover the goals and objectives of your plan and state the philosophy of your park and recreation program.

V. Definitions

A. Terms

Define the terms used to describe programs, facilities, and recommended actions proposed by the plan.

B. Classifications

Define the list of standards used to describe facilities recommended by your plan. These classifications usually correspond to the National Recreation and Park Association's recreation, park, and open space standards guidelines.

VI. Planning process

A. Description of process

Give a brief description of the sequence of events that took place during the development of the comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Include landmark dates (e.g., public meetings, inventory gathering periods, draft plan presentation dates, etc.).

B. Amending the plan

Plan amendments are common and should be considered part of the planning process. They frequently represent good implementation or plan usage and should be acceptable for consideration by local decision-makers. Amendments must follow the same process as the original plan and should be outlined in this section. Amendments generally prolong the effectiveness of the parent plan.

VII. Summary of past comprehensive outdoor recreation plans

Review the history of outdoor recreation planning in your jurisdiction to help the reader comprehend the present outdoor recreation situation and to support the recommendations for action made in the plan

VIII. Description of the planning region

A. Social characteristics of municipality/planning region

Discuss social factors that are important to understanding your community and its recreation needs and potential. These may include but are not limited to the following: the size of the population; its geographic, age, sex, racial, and ethnic distribution; location of concentrations of minorities or senior citizens; number of disabled residents; and socioeconomic levels including employment and unemployment. Discuss population trends and projections over the planning period. Include tables that provide information on population trends and age characteristics.

Note: Population projections for all municipalities are done each year by the following state agencies: Department of Administration, Department of Revenue, and Department of Development. In addition, population projections and other technical services are provided by county or regional planning commissions serving your area.

1. Size
2. Population trends and projections
3. Ethnic background
4. Employment/unemployment
5. Age
6. Economy

B. Physical characteristics of the region

Provide a discussion of the physical factors in the community and region that are important to understanding your community and its recreation needs and potentials. These may include topography, water resources, climate, soils, environmental problems and concerns, and transportation systems. Maps displaying these features should be provided when available. A good inventory will point out environmentally sensitive areas, which may be targeted for protection or avoided for construction sites. By recognizing trends in social and physical characteristics in your planning area, recreation facilities can be designed for maximum use. For example, a playground should be sited in any area with a large concentration of children as well as appropriate soils for construction. Remember, major features such as rivers or traffic arteries will influence the distances needed to travel in order to use recreational facilities.

1. Topography
2. Water Resources
3. Climate
4. Soils
5. Flora and fauna

IX. Outdoor recreation supply inventory

A. Natural resources available for outdoor recreation

Include a list of all areas available to the residents of a municipality for recreation purposes. List open space areas that have the potential to provide recreation opportunities whether they are currently available for public use or not. This inventory should include information on the size of the parcel, name of the park if so dedicated, current ownership, public access points, present use, and future options.

1. Developed
2. Undeveloped

B. Outdoor recreation facility inventory

Provide a detailed listing of all the facilities available to the residents of the municipality or planning region, including number of sites, types of park/recreation areas, facilities available at sites, current condition of park/recreation areas, and facilities on sites. This inventory can be general in nature, concentrating on major facilities such as softball diamonds, tennis courts, shelter buildings, restrooms, etc., or it can be a detailed listing of general as well as specific facilities such as picnic tables, grills, bike racks, etc.

1. Number of sites
2. Types of park/recreation areas
3. Facilities available at sites
4. Current condition of park/recreation areas and facilities on sites

C. Accessibility for persons with disabilities

Assess the existing recreational facilities for accessibility to persons with disabilities. Communities that seek grant funds have an extra incentive to conduct an accessibility evaluation because the priority ranking system provides additional credit to sponsors who include the process in their planning program. Persons with training in accessibility issues (including a good understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Barrier Free Design Standards) should be consulted when conducting an evaluation of a community.

In addition to a survey of what is available, the community should include a program of compliance for facilities that do not comply with accessibility requirements. For example, if five restroom buildings in the community need improvements to make them barrier free, the plan should include a

remodeling schedule. A second example would be to make accommodations so that a hearing impaired child could attend a playground storytelling event.

Include definitions and guidelines in an appendix to give a better understanding of what is needed to implement the barrier free facility plan.

X. Outdoor recreation needs assessment

Do a needs assessment to discover your community's most crucial recreational opportunities. En route to discovering the exact needs of the community, many other things can be accomplished by conducting a needs assessment, such as the following:

- Citizens' opinions of how recreation services are being delivered.
- Types of programs and facilities wanted, programs and facilities currently being used, and programs being avoided.
- Support levels for new facility and program proposals as well as for proposals on user fees, operating hours, and recreation marketing programs.

Generally, there are two basic methods for conducting a needs assessment: public input and recreation standards. Often both are used in varying degrees to gain the most accurate picture of community needs.

A. Public input assessment

Public participation is an important element when planning your community's park and recreation system. After all, the public will be using the parks. What better way to learn local demands than by involving the general public in the planning process? How to elicit your community's needs is really up to you. What you are looking for is guidance from the people who will be using your recreational facilities. The following four public input methods are often used to assess needs within a community. Choosing the one, or combination, that best suits your community's needs will be based on available staff, time constraints, and financial resources.

1. Informal

Rather than ask for citizen input, this system records questions and suggestions as they arise. As can be expected, the more vocal citizens and special interest groups will dominate in this type of assessment. Still, this approach has merit because it is important to consider the needs and demands of special interest groups.

2. Citizen committees

Citizen committees act as a liaison between the public and the decision makers. In many communities, prevailing park and recreation boards serve as the citizen committee as well. Boards representing constituents reflect a number of opinions concerning recreation policies and issues. When developing brief surveys, this type of committee helps to gain general impressions of the public's need.

It is important to establish a committee that represents the entire population of the municipality. Such a committee may include senior citizens, minority groups, disabled persons, community leaders, etc. An ideal committee consists of both citizens and elected officials. Citizens can provide needed public input and opinion while the elected officials can help muster political support in the latter stages of plan adoption and implementation.

3. Public meetings and workshops

Public meetings and workshops are the most common method for measuring citizen needs. They offer the advantages of being relatively inexpensive and they allow for important dialogue between the public and the decision makers of the municipality. A major drawback of this method is that it can be extremely time consuming and therefore not as helpful when working under a strict time deadline.

One very simple, yet productive technique for gathering opinions from public meetings is known as the modified nominal group process. In this process the public workshop is divided into small discussion groups. Each participant of the group is asked to answer a general question regarding park and recreation issues such as, "In your opinion what problems or issues must be solved to provide adequate recreation for this community in the next five years?" After allowing approximately 15 minutes for thought, the participants are asked to list their answers. Each answer is recorded on a large sheet of paper by a designated group leader. Once all the issues have been recorded, they are ranked by the group in order of importance. After all groups have completed their discussions, they reconvene and present their findings to each other. The final task is to establish the top ten issues of the whole group.

This process effectively generates many ideas from just one workshop. Also, it has the advantage of representing a cross-section of residents from the municipality or planning region.

4. Needs assessment surveys

These can be the most valuable methods for obtaining citizen opinion on recreation needs, problems, and issues within a municipality or planning region. Unfortunately, if not done properly, needs assessment surveys can produce misleading or useless data.

Using any one or a combination of the methods listed above will help a municipality gain insight to the recreation needs and demands of the general public. Needs are then prioritized as high, medium, or low priority. It becomes important to compare projected needs against existing facilities. It is possible that needs established by the general public may not represent real deficiencies in recreation provisions for a municipality. Often, public issues and concerns stem from nothing more than a lack of information on the subject. For this reason it is important to compare existing open space areas and facility developments against a set of standards set up to help measure a park system's adequacy.

B. Needs standards

The standards system is another method of assessing a community's recreation needs. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed standards to provide a scale against which the existing recreation system can be measured. Standards can be used to create guidelines for future needs. Typically, standards link acreage to the community's population or link the number of facilities to the population. In addition, service area standards are also used to determine recreation needs.

1. Recreation open space

A community's open space needs are generally assessed using space standards. Space standards are the most widely used and common measure of a recreation system's adequacy. Total park and recreation space is normally expressed as a ratio of acres per population. Standards based on population can be helpful in assessing current and future open space needs and demand for the community. However, because a community may meet open space standards and still be deficient in park facilities, it is important to look at facility standards as well.

2. Recreation facilities

Facility standards are similar to space standards because they are expressed in facility units per population ratio. The purpose of evaluating a recreation system from a facility viewpoint, in addition to an open space viewpoint, is to determine the amount of needed facility development in each recreation area.

Problems related to using facilities standards can be seen in the assumption of desired opportunities by the resident population. For example, a tennis court is needed based on the municipality's population. In reality, it is possible that very few people in the community enjoy playing tennis, which eliminates the need for this type of facility.

In addition to the population-based standards discussed above, it can be useful to analyze a community's recreation needs according to service areas. This can be done for both open space needs and for facility needs. Each park and facility type will serve a geographical area of a certain radius. A drawback to this type of standard is that it does not take into account citizen preferences and barriers resulting from the natural and man-made physical landscape.

In general, it should be noted that population and service area standards assume that the needs and wants of individuals are similar in all areas to which the standards are applied. Service area standards assume upon reaching some threshold, an increase in the quantity of facilities results. Age, income, and education all contribute to people's recreational preferences, yet standards ignore these variables. Another problem with using standards is that they have been developed primarily for urban communities and have limited application to rural areas.

Despite these problems, standards have a place in recreation planning. Community leaders can use them to approximate the adequacy of their park systems. The best advice is to use them cautiously and they should not be the only criteria used to develop a needs assessment. The public input methods described earlier can be used to determine priorities and perceived needs within the community. Standards can then be applied to the prioritized needs. By combining these two methods, it should be possible for a community to determine their most important recreation needs during the planning period. The next step will be to develop recommendations that highlight the community's plan for meeting the needs.

C. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

XI. Recommendations for outdoor recreation provision

Base local government recommendations for the implementation of outdoor recreation on the results of the supply inventory, needs assessment, and SCORP findings. These recommendations should address two elements: 1) an action plan for future park acquisition and development and 2) a program for future operation and maintenance of the community's park system.

A. Action program—capital improvement schedule (CIS)

Provide an action plan that solves or reduces deficiencies in a community's recreation system. A good plan will identify the actions needed to be taken, where, by whom, and in what time frame. These actions can be identified by formulating a capital improvement schedule (CIS).

A CIS details anticipated acquisition and development for at least a five-year period based upon the needs assessment. For each item listed in the CIS, indicate which year(s) in which the improvement will take place and its location within the park system. Clearly describe the improvement, estimate its cost, and provide a cost breakdown per anticipated funding source.

B. Operation and maintenance

1. Existing operation and maintenance responsibilities

Examine the operation and maintenance responsibilities of the existing park system and review the implications of the capital improvement schedule (CIS) on your community's future operation and maintenance capabilities. Many communities jump head-first into ambitious recreation developments with little, if any, attention to operation and maintenance expenses. Communities often construct excellent facilities, only to have serious problems keeping them open for public use.

2. Implications of CIS on operation and maintenance capabilities

A municipality's park system operation and maintenance costs should be organized in a schedule or calendar form. List all work required on a property for each year, by season. Break the list down to individual work items and, below each work item, list the tasks required to complete the work item. The next step is to estimate how much time is required between each task. A final step is to indicate cost estimates for each task, including staffing costs to operate and maintain the park system.

Most successful communities will prioritize major maintenance projects for their facilities and incorporate the projects into a five-year CIS. It would be wise to look beyond a five-year project planning calendar and anticipate major facility needs, which usually occur beyond the five-year period.

C. Funding programs

1. Local funds

Identify existing and potential funding sources for the comprehensive outdoor recreation plan in order to show how implementation of the plan will impact the community and to show what level of investment is required to satisfy the community's needs.

2. Available grant funding programs

A wide base of financial support can be built into the comprehensive outdoor recreation plan through the identification and pursuit of potential funding sources. Funding sources can come in a variety of forms (local bonds, donations, and state and federal grants and loans). Information for finding funding sources can be obtained from the regional DNR community service specialist.

XII. Appendix: supporting data, tabular data, graphs, maps, tables

Use this section to display your supporting data, tabular data, graphs, maps, and tables.

DNR Acceptance

After a local government adopts the plan, it is then submitted to the appropriate DNR regional community service specialist (CSS) for acceptance. The community service specialist evaluates the plan and if it meets specifications, a letter granting five years of eligibility is mailed to the local government. Communities are encouraged to send a draft plan to their regional community service specialist for review before submitting the final plan. If a plan does not meet DNR specifications, the CSS will document the deficiencies in a letter to the local unit of government. A revised plan can then be resubmitted.