

# Louisiana Outdoors Forever (LOF) Program

## Pre-Application Guidance and Evaluation Criteria



House Bill 762 creating the “Louisiana Outdoors Forever Program” passed overwhelmingly in both chambers in the 2022 session. The bill, introduced by Representative Jerome “Zee” Zeringue (District 52) creates the Louisiana Outdoors Forever program. House Bill 406 provides \$10 million in funding for the program’s first year.

Working through voluntary conservation measures, the program will help fund projects that protect drinking water supplies, conserve wildlife habitat, provide recreational opportunities in urban and rural areas, sustain working farms and forests, and much more. It is estimated that outdoor recreation in Louisiana currently generates \$12.2 billion in consumer spending annually and supports \$3.4 billion in wages and salaries. Those numbers would grow with the ability to leverage funds with a possible five to one dollar match.

The Louisiana Outdoors Forever Program is soliciting pre-applications from State agencies, political subdivisions of the State including governing authorities and nongovernmental organizations working in coordination\* with public agencies\*\* that are interested in submitting applicable projects. The pre-applications will be reviewed to ensure that the projects will meet the purposes of the Program related to conservation of Louisiana’s natural resources and provides benefits to the general public. The attached “Pre-Application Guidance” provides potential applicants with the eligibility requirements of the program. A pre-application must be submitted online at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever) by midnight on May 19, 2023 to be considered for the first round of projects. The pre-application will be reviewed and scored. Successful candidates will be contacted to submit full applications for possible funding.

See below LOF Agency Partnership Template as guidance. Completing this document is optional and should be used as a tool for public agencies who seek guidance.

*\*To ensure that state funds are being utilized for the public’s benefit, Louisiana Outdoors Forever Program requires that applications for funding made by nongovernmental organizations be submitted in coordination with public agencies. This means that the proposed project must be done in conjunction with, or have a nexus to a public agency. This nexus or relationship to a public agency should be explained in the cover letter and full application. The LOF Technical Advisory Board will review each application to determine whether the proposed project is in coordination with a public agency. A partnership letter from a public agency detailing the cooperative role of the public agency for the project, or having a public agency as a co-applicant are sufficient evidence of a qualifying nexus. However, a letter that a proposed project is not inconsistent with a program of the public agency may be insufficient without further evidence of coordination. It is not necessary that the public entity provide funding for the project to be considered as a qualifying project being performed in coordination with a public agency.*

*\*\*Referencing Title 42 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes provides for Public Officers and Employees and provides a definition for Public Body. Specifically, the Open Meetings Law portion of Title 42 (R.S. 42:13) defines “Public Body” to mean village, town, and city governing authorities; parish governing authorities; school boards and boards of levee and port commissioners; boards of publicly operated utilities; planning, zoning, and airport commissions; and any other state, parish, municipal, or special district boards, commissions, or authorities, and those of any political subdivision thereof, where such body possesses policy making, advisory, or administrative functions, including any committee or subcommittee of any of these bodies enumerated in this paragraph.*

## Pre-Application Guidance

The Technical Advisory Board will use the Evaluation Criteria to review and evaluate Pre-Applications. Below is an outline of the information required on the Pre-Application, as well as optional information which could be useful to include. **Pre-Applications can be up to a maximum of 7 pages.**

### Required to include in Pre-Application:

**Cover Letter** – This official letter is the instrument demonstrating support and authority to submit a pre-application, signed by a ranking authorizing representative of the entity (board chairperson, commissioner, mayor, etc.). It must be on official letterhead.

**Project Title**

**Project Category/Categories**

**Project Location**

**Project Map** (in addition to the 7 page maximum)

**Project Description** including benefits related to project category and surrounding community/state

**Generalized Project Budget Worksheet**

**Responses to each of the evaluation criteria:**

Total project cost

Total funding requested

Match Commitment(s) – including type, status - committed or potential, and source

Accordance /non-conflict with existing state, local, and federal plans (list which plan(s))

Area of designated need or underserved area

Timeline – time to complete, time to realization of conservation benefits, and if the project could be completed by close of this funding cycle

Maintenance and management plan

**Estimated Appraisal** (if applicable, in addition to the 7 page limit on Letters of maximum)

### Optional documents to include:

**Letter of Support**

**Letter of financial commitment from sponsors and partners**

Pre-Applications must be submitted online at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever).

Following review of the pre-application, the submitter will be notified to either complete a full application or that the project will not be considered further at this time.

## Evaluation Criteria

### Evaluation Criteria Table

Pre-applications will be assessed on the below evaluation criteria. Applicants that meet the criteria will be invited to complete a full application. Applicants should be sure their pre-application contains enough information for reviewers to consider all criteria.

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Applicant partner (mark affiliation):</b>	
Local governing authority	
Political subdivision of the State	
State agency	
Non-government organization working with public agency	

Name of affiliated entity or partner: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Project Category (mark all that apply):</b>	
Land conservation of important natural areas, including fish and wildlife habitat.	
Water quality projects related to land conservation or land management, including those lands that protect drinking water supplies	
Conservation project on working land, farms, and forested land.	
Conservation project on recreational properties related to important natural areas and public use.	
Conservation project on historic properties adjacent to or integral to habitat restoration or enhancement	

<b>Considerations</b>	
Is the total cost outlined in the pre-application? (Y/N)	
Does the pre-application describe funding or other type of match? (Y/N)	
Does the pre-application describe how the project will provide benefits into the future? (Y/N)	
Does the project align with any State Plan? (Y/N)	
Is the project contiguous with other conservation properties? (Y/N)	
Is the project in an underserved area or an area of designated need? (Y/N)	
Does the proposal contain a schedule for timely completion? (Y/N)	
Is there a plan for maintenance and management of the project (sustainability through time)? (Y/N)	

Technical Advisory Board (TAB) reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Meets LOF Criteria? (Circle)                      Yes                      No

# LOF Agency Partnership Template

## Printed on agency letterhead

Dear Technical Advisory and Project Selection Board Members:

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (public agency), I would like to provide our support of the Louisiana Outdoors Forever application for \_\_\_\_\_ (NGO) and their project \_\_\_\_\_ (project name).

The proposed project helps further our state agency's mission/objectives and provides public benefits by one or more of the following LOF priorities.

Clearly describe the proposed project's specific conservation alignment with each applicable priority below.

*For example, land conservation of important natural areas - the project will protect/restore longleaf pine savanna habitat which is a conservation priority in with the State Wildlife Action Plan.*

- Land conservation of important natural areas, including fish and wildlife habitat.
- Water quality projects related to land conservation or land management, including those lands that protect drinking water supplies.
- Conservation project on working land, farms, and forested land.
- Conservation project on recreational properties related to important natural areas and public use.
- Conservation project on historic properties adjacent to or integral to habitat restoration or enhancement

Add any additional comments describing how your agency is coordinating with the NGO to implement the project. For example, *potential technical assistance for planning, and/or implementation, and/or long-term management of the project.*

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (name and contact information)