



A Brief Guide To: LWCF Program Reviews

LWCF Manual Citation:

Chapter 1.C

Synopsis:

Under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act, the National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for continually monitoring each State's effectiveness in administering the LWCF program. While the review of a State's program is an on-going process, it is currently measured over a 3-year period. At the end of this period it is expected that the appropriate NPS Regional Office LWCF program managers will visit the state to:

- fact find as appropriate,
- address previously identified problems,
- resolve issues involving the State's program, and
- identify to the State successes, concerns, and material weakness or potential thereof.

The LWCF manual states the purpose in this manner:

In assessing the present status of a State's LWCF program administration, it provides a basis for improving overall coordination between the State and NPS, insures that program administration is being carried out consistent with program laws, regulations, and policies, and identifies areas where improvements must be made. The state program reviews provide an opportunity to improve program accountability and lessen vulnerability to waste, fraud and abuse.

Until recently, program review teams consisted of up to 6 persons including a team leader, 2 regional office project managers, a SCORP person, an appraiser, and a project manager from another region. Now the team more likely consists of a team leader and one project manager from the home region. Although not currently practical, a separate week of program review inspections by NPS staff generally supplements each program review.

The scope of the program review should include, but is not limited to:

- ✓ an opening discussion with state officials on the need for, purpose, and goals for the program review visit,
- ✓ discussions with appropriate officials regarding non-compliance issues,
- ✓ discussions with other appropriate state officials (e.g., finance, SHPO, auditors),
- ✓ provide technical assistance,
- ✓ review randomly selected LWCF project files for program compliance,
- ✓ review randomly selected LWCF appraisals,
- ✓ review the Open Project Selection Process,
- ✓ discussions with appropriate officials regarding program successes, and
- ✓ a closing discussion addressing the general outcome and what can be expected in the final report.

Following are some NPS considerations in preparation for the on-site component of the program review:

1. Outline opinions, conclusions, and perceptions with an understanding that changes will occur as a result of new information learned from the on-site visit.
2. Consult with state LWCF staff to establish a time for the visit.
3. Obtain and study the state organizational chart for a better understanding of the personnel.
4. Obtain and study the state's guidelines and technical assistance materials provided to potential applicants.
5. Review previous LWCF program review reports.
6. Review the SCORP and OPSP.
7. Review obligation and expenditure rates.
8. Review the status of all inspections.
9. Randomly select up to 12 LWCF grants for a file review. A variety of types and phases of completion should be included.
10. Prepare a draft agenda with the names of the appropriate state personnel needed for each discussion.

Program reviews are beneficial to everyone, but perhaps more so for those states with inexperienced staff or new management. While on-site, NPS staff is prepared to offer any level of training that appears appropriate in addition to the conduct of the program review.

