

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND PROGRAM

www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants

What is the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)?

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) has been in place since 1976. It provides grants to local governments and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to purchase land or rights in land for public recreation or protection of land because of its environmental importance or its scenic beauty. It also assists in the appropriate development of land for public outdoor recreation.

The sources of funds for the MNRTF are annual revenues from the development of State-owned mineral resources, largely oil and gas. The program is administered by the MNRTF Board of Trustees and the Grants Management office of the DNR. The MNRTF Board of Trustees meets six times a year and all meetings are open to the public.

Who is eligible to apply?

The following entities are eligible to submit an MNRTF application: school districts and local units of government, including cities, villages, townships, and counties, or any combination thereof in which an authority is legally established to provide recreation and state agencies.

What do I need in order to apply?

All applicants must have a current, five-year community recreation plan that has been locally adopted and approved by the DNR by the application deadline. For guidance on preparing a recreation plan or to amend your plan, consult the booklet Guidelines for the development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans (IC1924).

What types of projects are eligible?

A variety of acquisition and development projects for public outdoor recreation facilities are eligible for funding through the MNRTF program. Examples include natural areas, greenways, trailways, picnic areas, beaches, campgrounds, boating access, fishing areas, winter sports areas, playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, splash pads, and skate parks. Facilities needed to support outdoor recreation such as restrooms, trailheads, interpretive centers, and storage buildings are also eligible.

What are the minimum and maximum grant amounts?

Development projects: Minimum Grant Request: \$15,000 (\$20,000 minimum total project cost)

Maximum Grant Request: \$500,000

Acquisition Projects: no minimum or maximum grant request

What is the local match requirement?

Applicants must provide a minimum 25% match. The applicant match for development costs can be met by local general fund or force account labor, donations of materials or services. The applicant match for acquisition projects can be met by local general fund or by donation by the seller of a portion of the value of the land to be acquired. Cash donations and other federal or state grants can be used as match for either development or acquisition projects.

When are applications due?

Applications for development and acquisition projects are due April 1st each year. A secondary deadline for applications for acquisition only is due August 1st each year.

What costs are eligible under the MNRTF program?

For development projects those costs directly associated with the construction of the project will be reimbursed, including engineering costs and the costs associated with obtaining permits. In addition to primary scope items, costs associated with site work, landscaping, utilities, site amenities and some dredging are also eligible for reimbursement. For acquisition those costs associated with the purchase of the land or rights in land as well as incidental costs such as prorated taxes, recording fees, transfer taxes, title insurance, appraisal fees, environmental assessments and closing costs.

How are projects selected for funding?

All applications for MNRTF funding are evaluated and scored based on criteria established by the MNRTF Board. Each application is reviewed and a site visit is performed in consultation with the applicant. Each application is peer reviewed by Grants Management staff and a preliminary score and review is provided to each applicant, with the opportunity to provide supplemental information to improve the score. All applications are peer reviewed a second time and a final score assigned to each application. The ranking of scored applications is provided to the MNRTF Board for final approval at the December Board meeting.

What criteria are used to evaluate applications?

There are ten core criteria for evaluating development applications and nine core criteria for evaluating acquisition applications. These criteria are: Need for the project, Site and Project Quality, Applicant history, Natural resource based recreation opportunities/protection and use, Financial need of the applicant, Urban area recreation opportunities, Applicant match, entrance fees, Universal design (development projects only) and Oil and gas impacted areas. In addition, the MNRTF Board has chosen three priority project types, which are: Trails/greenways, wildlife/ecological corridors and winter deeryard acquisitions, and urban areas.

What is the time frame for completion of a project?

Once an application is recommended for funding and the state legislature has appropriated the funds, development projects are given 2 years to complete construction and acquisition projects are given 1 year to complete the purchase. For development projects, once a project agreement has been executed, and approval of engineering documents and bidding, construction can commence. For acquisition projects, once a project agreement has been executed, an appraisal, title work and environmental assessment approved, approval to close is given. Since the MNRTF is a

reimbursement program, the full purchase price for the property must be paid by the applicant (less any donations of land value), and a reimbursement request submitted for the balance.

What are some additional items to consider when applying?

The applicant must have control over any property to be developed, either in fee simple ownership or some form of longer lease or easement.

A public input meeting must be held within the six-month time period before the application deadline and before a resolution committing to the application is passed by your local governing body.

Applicants should also make additional outreach efforts to ensure the public is aware of the project and document those efforts in the application.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND APPLICATION MATERIALS VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.MICHIGAN.GOV/DNR-GRANTS AND CLICK ON “GRANT PROGRAMS” THEN “MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND” OR CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT (517)373-9125.

