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Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP)

Background

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) serves as a guide for all public outdoor recreation in the state and encompasses urban, suburban, and rural opportunities and challenges. In order to be eligible for certain federal funds to enhance outdoor recreation, all 50 states and territories must produce a SCORP on a consistent basis, usually on a 5 year cycle, with most states beginning the process years in advance.

The example objectives below are taken from Arizona's 2018 SCORP:

- Establish Outdoor Recreation Priorities
- Set Criteria to Allocate Federal Funds
- Protect, conserve, and manage public lands, recreation spaces, and unique places for current and future generations.
- Encourage a highly integrated and connected outdoor recreation system.
- Ensure a diverse and growing population has access to outdoor recreation spaces and opportunities to enjoy a range of recreation activities.
- Communicate linkages between outdoor recreation, individual wellness benefits, community health, and a thriving economy.
- Elevate public participation and engagement in outdoor recreation planning initiatives and issues.

Why SCORP's are important

Regardless if your project qualifies for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding, SCORP's are an important component for state agencies to assess and determine the state of recreation within its boundaries. This element goes beyond the federal funding requirement and leads to a multitude of recreation projects that fall outside the LWCF framework. As the State of New York outlines in their most recent SCORP:

"...the plan serves as a status report and general guidance document for the planning, preservation and development of the State's outdoor recreation resources. It is the State's assessment and policy statement on the state of recreation in NYS to the

executive and legislative branches of State government, to other units of government, to recreation and preservation interest groups, and to the public”.

State Process

Each state varies in what agency takes the lead in developing the SCORP and often it involves many different state agencies. If a state has an Office of Outdoor Recreation (create a link that takes them to a list), it's nearly certain that office will be the lead. However, if a state does not have an Office of Outdoor Recreation, then the Department of Natural Resources is the next most common to lead the effort.

While each individual state creates its own structure, most will have an advisory committee as well as other stakeholder groups they depend on to get an accurate assessment of the opportunities for outdoor recreation. This is where mountain bike organizations should be engaging with their states and working to help develop the overall SCORP.

Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions

- Connect with state agencies that are responsible for outdoor recreation
- Cultivate Regional Partnerships
- Examine successes in neighboring states
- Align projects with eligible sponsors (state programs)
- Look for creative opportunities for matching funds
- Develop state legislative champions to support your project