**Section 3050.60 Eligible Project Costs**

a) Grant assistance may be obtained for land acquisition costs for the conservation of open space, natural resources and public natural resource related recreation purposes, including associated eligible appraisal and relocation costs. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, acquisition of land for the following:

1) Natural resource conservation and open space purposes to protect lakes, rivers, streams, open space, natural lands, wetlands, prairies, forests, watersheds, resource-rich areas, greenways, significant fish and wildlife resources, and endangered or threatened species habitats, existing forest preserves, conservation areas, nature preserves, and land and water reserves, and/or unique geologic or biologic features; and

2) additions to such existing public areas.

b) Project costs for which reimbursement is sought cannot be incurred by the project applicant prior to grant approval notification or Department authorization. Costs incurred prior to Department approval are ineligible for grant assistance. For acquisition projects, costs are considered incurred when property deed, lease or other conveyance is accepted by the local sponsor or first payment is made on the project property or to an escrow account for the property. In addition, no purchase agreement, option, etc., or price negotiations shall be entered into without Department approval.

c) No grant awards shall be awarded for the acquisition of land that will not be available for general public outdoor natural resource related recreation purposes unless otherwise approved by the Department.

d) No grant awards shall involve the use of eminent domain. Land interests must be purchased from willing sellers only.