

# Qualification of Parks and Eligible Areas for Parks on the Air

Board of Directors • Approved August 18, 2026

Parks on the Air is an international program. Government structures and the terminology used for parks and public lands vary among countries.

To maintain a consistent, understandable, and manageable worldwide program, Parks on the Air applies the same eligibility requirements in every country while identifying the governmental tiers that satisfy those requirements within each country.

## 1. Qualifying Governmental Tiers

A new Parks on the Air reference must be owned and operated by an agency of one of the two highest qualifying tiers of government designated by Parks on the Air for that country or entity.

If a country or entity has only one qualifying tier of government, only parks owned and operated by agencies of that tier are eligible.

Terms such as Federal, National, State, Provincial, Regional, Territorial, Prefectural, or similar terms do not independently determine eligibility. Governmental structures and terminology differ among countries.

Parks on the Air Leadership, in collaboration with Country Mapping Representatives, will determine which governmental tiers qualify in each country or entity and publish those determinations in the Parks on the Air Country Eligibility Schedule.

Local, county, municipal, communal, or other governmental entities below the qualifying tiers designated by Parks on the Air are not eligible.

## 2. Country Eligibility Schedule

Parks on the Air will maintain a Country Eligibility Schedule identifying the governmental tiers eligible to create Parks on the Air references in each participating country or entity.

For example:

|                      |                                    |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Australia</b>     | Commonwealth and State/Territory   |
| <b>Japan</b>         | National and Prefectural           |
| <b>United States</b> | Federal and State                  |
| <b>Canada</b>        | Federal and Provincial/Territorial |

These examples illustrate the format of the schedule and do not themselves establish eligibility.

Parks on the Air Leadership, in collaboration with Country Mapping Representatives, is responsible for determining and modifying the qualifying governmental tiers for each country.

Country Mapping Representatives apply the published schedule. They do not independently determine which governmental tiers qualify.

When a country's governmental structure does not fit clearly within this standard, Parks on the Air Leadership will determine the appropriate qualifying tier or tiers and add that determination to the Country Eligibility Schedule.

In exceptional circumstances, Parks on the Air Leadership, in collaboration with the Country Mapping Representative, may designate a third governmental tier as qualifying when the governmental structure, administration of public lands, or limited availability of otherwise eligible areas within a country or entity makes application of the two-tier standard impractical. Such determinations will be made at the country or entity level, not for individual parks, and will be published in the Country Eligibility Schedule. The existence of a third qualifying tier in one country or entity does not establish eligibility for a comparable governmental tier elsewhere.

### 3. Ownership and Operation

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An eligible area must be owned and operated by an agency within a qualifying governmental tier.

A park that is owned by a qualifying governmental entity but operated or managed by a local government, nonprofit organization, private organization, concessionaire, contractor, or other third party is not eligible, except as provided below.

**Third-Party Operation:** A park operated or managed by an entity outside the qualifying governmental tier is not eligible unless Parks on the Air Leadership, in collaboration with the Country Mapping Representative, has expressly recognized the governmental park system in question as satisfying the operation requirement.

Such recognition may be granted where a government has formally delegated operation or management of its park or protected-area system to a nonprofit or other nongovernmental entity, particularly where that arrangement represents the customary or principal means by which qualifying public parks or protected areas are administered within that country or entity.

Recognition does not extend to independently owned or operated nonprofit or private parks merely because they serve a public, conservation, recreational, or environmental purpose.

Any recognition under this provision will be made at the country, entity, or governmental park-system level, not for individual parks, and will be published in the Country Eligibility Schedule. Recognition of such an arrangement in one country or entity does not establish eligibility for similar third-party arrangements elsewhere.

Private ownership, shared public-private ownership, governmental designation, environmental recognition, sponsorship, or public accessibility does not satisfy the ownership requirement.

### 4. Governmental Designations and Inventories

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A governmental designation, inventory, registry, environmental classification, planning designation, or other official recognition does not by itself create an eligible Parks on the Air reference.

The underlying area must independently satisfy Parks on the Air's ownership, operation, governmental-tier, public-access, and documentation requirements.

This applies regardless of the environmental, scientific, historical, cultural, or recreational significance of the designation.

### 5. Public Access

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An eligible area must be open to the public.

Public access may be subject to reasonable entrance requirements, permits, operating hours, seasonal restrictions, or other rules established by the responsible agency.

Public access alone does not establish Parks on the Air eligibility.

### 6. Boundaries and Documentation

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An eligible area must have identifiable boundaries supported by authoritative documentation.

The Parks on the Air reference must include an official governmental website providing information about the area and its boundaries.

In countries or qualifying governmental tiers where such information is not routinely available through an official website, authoritative governmental GIS data, agency maps, or other official governmental documentation may be used.

## 7. Country-Level Application and Interpretation

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Country Mapping Representatives are responsible for determining whether individual candidate areas satisfy these rules and fall within the governmental tiers listed in the Country Eligibility Schedule.

Country Mapping Representatives may not create alternative eligibility standards for their countries, expand the governmental tiers established by Parks on the Air Leadership, or create exceptions to the ownership and operation requirements.

Questions involving governmental structure, unusual ownership or management arrangements, or circumstances not clearly addressed by these rules must be referred to Parks on the Air Leadership.

When Parks on the Air Leadership resolves a question that is likely to recur, the determination should be incorporated into the Country Eligibility Schedule or other published guidance so that the same issue does not require repeated interpretation.

## 8. Existing Non-Compliant References

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The existence of an existing Parks on the Air reference that does not comply with current eligibility standards does not establish precedent for the addition of similar references.

Legacy references may be reviewed, corrected, or deactivated in accordance with Parks on the Air policy.

Parks on the Air is not required to identify or correct all legacy inconsistencies simultaneously.

## 9. Guiding Principle

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Parks on the Air's objective is not to include every park, green space, protected area, recreational property, conservation designation, or publicly accessible natural area.

The eligibility standard exists to maintain a consistent, understandable, and administratively sustainable worldwide program.

Differences among countries are addressed by identifying the governmental tiers that qualify within each country, not by creating different eligibility standards for different countries.

Once those qualifying tiers and any recognized country-level administrative arrangements have been established, the same Parks on the Air eligibility requirements apply worldwide.

**Board of Directors  
Parks on the Air  
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