

**MARJORIE L. AND ARTHUR P. MILLER FUND  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
SUMMARY SHEET (One page only)**

**Date:** September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Contact Information:**

Organization Name:	Open Land Conservancy of Chester County (OLC)	Contact Name:	Raymond Clarke
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		Year Incorporated:	1939

**Have you previously received the Miller Grant Award:** Yes  No

**Field of Interest:** Environment

**Organizational Information:**

**Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County municipalities served):**

OLC serves primarily the residents of Tredyffrin, Easttown, East Whiteland and neighboring townships.

**Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:**

We do not track the number of visitors to our Preserves, but we consider that we serve all residents in our geographic area (30,000 in Tredyffrin alone) by providing opportunities for recreation (eg: hiking, fishing, birding), service (eg: student clubs, scouts) and education (eg: internships, nature walks).

**Mission Statement:**

- Preserve Chester County open space and acquire land suitable for nature preserves
- Protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat
- Maintain trail systems for the public for passive recreation
- Encourage and enable residents of Chester County to participate in conservation activities
- Provide educational programs in conservation and nature studies

**Organization Description:**

OLC is a non-profit land trust protecting 480 acres, 370 in 8 nature preserves owned in fee and 90 under conservation easement. We are operated by a hands-on Board and a volunteer cadre, and supported by approximately 500 members. We focus geographically around the Exceptional Value-designated Valley Creek watershed, protecting it from development and from invasive vegetation. We partner with local land management professionals including the National Park Service and National Lands Trust.

**Annual Budget:** \$45,000

60%	% of budget for program expenses	0	# of full time equivalent staff
30%	% of budget for administrative expenses	12	# of Board Volunteers
<u>10%</u>	% of budget for fundraising expenses	40	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers (est)
100%	Total	1,500	# of volunteer hours (est, Board and others)

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Membership (40%); Investment Income (30%); Contributions (20%); Grants (5%)

**Proposal Information:**

**Grant Amount Requested:** \$2,500

**Description of Grant Purpose:**

To plant native tree and shrub species in an educational deer "exclosure" at a reclaimed building site in Airdrie Forest Preserve. Purchased materials and expertise will be matched with labor supplied by volunteers and by school Environmental Club members or Eagle Scouts.

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**GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

Please provide the following information clearly and concisely.  
Proposals of 1 or 2 pages are strongly encouraged.

- **Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness**

OLC was founded in 1939 as Chester County Horticultural Society, and is one of the nation's oldest land trusts. The following extract from the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society Quarterly of July 1940 describes the donation of the Conservancy's first Preserve, since increased to 75 acres and now named Airdrie Forest, and also describes the purpose and values that continue nearly 80 years later:

*Miss Lydia S. Moncure Robinson of Airdrie, Paoli, has recently conveyed to the Chester County Horticultural Society of which Howard S. Okie, Esq. is president, some 63 acres of woodland on the South Valley Hills overlooking the Great Valley.*

*This gift fulfils one of the Society's main objects, that of the "acquisition of land suitable for wild flower and forest preserve", the development of which will require energy and enthusiasm. We see in the future sparkling fern-bordered pools in the three branches of the Valley Creek, the steep sides of the wooded ravines glowing with shade-loving native flowers, and easy paths throughout the mile-long park. ... Surely our loyal citizens, especially those of Tredyffrin and Easttown, will give their hearty support to this worthy project.*

In the years since, OLC has been a leading force for preserving open space in the face of extensive commercial and residential development in the Great Valley. Our seven additional Preserves were acquired and expanded by both donation and acquisition. The acquisitions were funded by both County and Commonwealth grants. For example, the acquisition of Cedar Hollow Preserve was funded by the first Growing Greener grant in 1999. We own five Preserves along Valley Creek, one each on the hillsides overlooking the valley, and a small Preserve in East Bradford township. All Tredyffrin Preserves have trail networks and are open to the public for passive recreational activities. We also hold 18 conservation easements on private lands, further protecting the watershed.

OLC is managed and operated by its volunteer Board of Directors, supported by its neighbors and volunteer organizations such as the Conestoga High School Key Club, scouts and groups of employees from corporations such as Vanguard and Siemens. Eagle Scouts have made major contributions: building creek crossings, trails and information kiosks. We also benefit greatly from connections with land management professionals at Valley Forge NHP, land trusts such as NLT and organizations like Trout Unlimited and the Sierra Club. Local partner companies provide discounted services such as trail mowing and tree management that we can not handle ourselves. These services are funded by dues and contributions from our 500 members and by interest income.

Each Preserve is managed according to objectives laid out in a management plan. A primary goal for all Preserves is to foster a diverse habitat of native species. Our very first Preserve, Airdrie Forest, (described so eloquently above!) is fortunate to have relatively old-growth trees which have limited invasive vegetation, but regeneration is severely constrained by high deer density deer browsing. The proposed project is designed to directly address this problem. The requested grant would fund a fenced "exclosure" and the planting of a selection of diverse native trees and shrubs on the site of a hazardous building, which has now been demolished. Not only would the project add young trees and diverse native species to the Preserve, its trailside location and the proposed signage would serve a powerful educational purpose. Also, this presents a great opportunity to build a partnership with neighboring Delaware Valley Friends School. The Miller Fund wisely decided not to support the 2018 application for this project; now that OLC's investment in the site preparation is complete, we believe that the timing is now perfect.

## 2. Funding Request

This request is for funding for an environmental enhancement project to plant diverse native species in a deer enclosure in a high traffic area in OLC's Airdrie Forest Preserve.

### A. Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed

The project responds directly to the overall vision, and the "Preserve" goal and recommendations embodied in the County's Landscapes Comprehensive Plan:

*Vision: In 2045, Chester County abounds with healthy natural areas, ....*

*Goal - Preserve: Advance the protection and stewardship of open space*

*Encourage restoration and stewardship: ....protected open space should be prioritized for significant restoration projects*

*Expand open space education: .... initiatives could include involving the public as volunteers, the installation of demonstration projects ....*

Land Trusts such as OLC are highlighted as key entities for the implementation of these recommendations.

### B. Project impact

These projects will contribute to a majority of the Miller Fund objectives:

- A public or school-based environmental education effort: through partnership with neighboring Delaware Valley Friends School Environmental Club or Eagle Scouts, and on-site signs
- Environmental enhancement and preservation of a significant site: located in OLC's ground-breaking 80 year-old original Preserve
- Volunteer and leadership development: through the partnerships noted above
- A demonstration project with wide use application: the enclosure is expected to be a powerful demonstration of the value of deer management and of the beauty of diverse native species

This project is located next to a high traffic trail which will introduce its purpose and benefits to a high percentage of Preserve visitors.

### C. Overall strategies to implement the project

Our approach relies on a tested principle: to leverage professional design and oversight expertise with well-managed OLC volunteers. We engaged a professional ecological services firm to evaluate the building site, to design a long-lasting enclosure that will withstand its woodland environment for many years, and to provide cost estimates for both the enclosure and plantings. OLC will refine the design to allow for maintenance access, and to finalize material and installation equipment needs. We plan to plant a mix of canopy and understory trees and shrubs that add appeal and diversity to the Preserve flora. In addition we will monitor the site for expected regeneration of existing species.

### D. Why it is important to fund this now

OLC has completed the removal of the building and the site is in perfect condition for the project. The remaining disturbed soil will be prime territory for establishment of vegetation, yet most amenable to planting before it becomes compacted.

### E. How do you intend to meet the challenge component of this grant?

The total project cost is budgeted at \$21,830 including building demolition costs, and \$3,830 for the enclosure and planting only (Attachment 5A), which we are planning to fund as follows:

- OLC Funds: \$18,150 (demolition of building, design costs)
- Enviro Club or Eagle Scout labor \$900 (equivalent hourly rate)
- OLC Board labor \$280 (equivalent hourly rate)
- Miller Fund Grant \$2,500 (materials for trees, enclosure)

Although now a "sunk cost", the precursor demolition cost is a significant strain on OLC resources.

## 3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit's mission

Demolition	July 2019	Site preparation (complete)
Construction	Mar 2020	Enclosure
Planting	April 2020	Native trees and shrubs

Outcomes directly address the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> components of our Mission, listed on the Summary Sheet, above.

## 4. How impact and results will be demonstrated

This is a project with highly visible impact, close to frequently walked trails. Preserve visitors will see the project and vegetation growth and be drawn to the educational signage (an important part of the project) both at the site and at the kiosk at the trail head.

Site Pictures



**Exclosure Site**



**Deer Pressure**

Small illustrative planting



**Successful individual planting of typical proposed species to restore adjacent damaged area in the Preserve**

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. A: 2017 audited annual report and financial statement  
B: 2017 and 2018 Revenues and Expenses (under audit)  
C: 2017 and 2018 Financial Statement (under audit)
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. A: Itemized project budget (1 page)  
B: Enclosure design (3 pages)