

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

One page only. This page will be shared electronically with Grant Committee Members & Fund Advisors.

*Note: If Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the Community Foundation's **Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.***

Date: 9-5-2019

Contact Information

Organization Name: Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA) **Executive Director/CEO Name:** Mr. Andrew Loza
Address: 119 Pine Street, 1st Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101 **Executive Director/CEO E-mail:** aloza@conserveland.org
Phone: 717-230-8560 **Board of Directors Chair Name:** Mrs. Rene Carey **Website:** www.ConserveLand.org
Primary Contact Name: Ms. Sara Painter **Year Incorporated:** 1999 **Primary Contact E-mail:** spainter@conserveland.org
FEIN: 23-2789029

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes ___ No X Not Sure ___

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes ___ No X

Field/s of Interest:

___ Arts, Culture & Humanities

X Environment/Animal Welfare

___ Education

___ Health

___ Human Services

___ Religion

Organization Information:

Geographic Area Served, Population Served, and Annual Number of People Served: *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):*

PALTA serves everyone who lives, works, and plays in Pennsylvania by advocating for conservation-minded public policy that ensures clean water, open space, food security, and other vital elements of prosperous communities. PALTA serves as the voice for and provides direct assistance to 70+ member conservation organizations across Pennsylvania, who in turn count over 100,000 members served. Chester County has the highest number of conservation organizations in the state, the greatest volume of open space, and PALTA puts a great deal of resources into supporting Chester County open space preservation.

Mission:

The mission of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA) is to help conserve the lands needed for healthy, prosperous, and secure communities—the forests, farms, parks, urban gardens, and other green places that safeguard drinking water, prevent flooding, protect wildlife, provide recreational and economic opportunities, and preserve scenic beauty and community treasures. PALTA accomplishes this by helping nonprofits and local governments improve their effectiveness and efficiency in acquiring and stewarding land and easements, advancing sustainable land use practices, and connecting people to the outdoors. PALTA also fosters public understanding of conservation, advocates for sound governmental policy, and leads state and national endeavors to achieve far-reaching advancements in conservation.

Proposal Summary:

A \$7,500 grant to PALTA will support general operations in order to increase the pace and efficiency of conservation in Pennsylvania and nationwide.

Annual Budget \$ 1,098,000

6 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

___ % of budget for program expenses

11 # of Board Volunteers

___ % of budget for administrative expenses

35 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

___ % of budget for fundraising expenses

___ # of Volunteer Hours

100% total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

1. The William Penn Foundation: \$175,000
2. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: \$310,000
3. Community Foundation for the Alleghenies: \$81,320

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 7,500

Organizational Background and Information

Organization History

PALTA began as an informal coalition of land trusts over a quarter century ago. Land trust staff and volunteers created PALTA because they saw a pressing need for an association to focus on the broad needs of the conservation movement—to solve problems and seize opportunities that individual organizations could not effectively handle on their own. Now PALTA represents and serves over 70 conservation organizations who count more than 100,000 Pennsylvanians as members and donors.

Achieving meaningful levels of lasting conservation is challenging given legislative and legal threats to good conservation law and public conservation investments, limited capacity of organizations to sustain in-house expertise in various aspects of conservation practice, and the continuing rapid development and environmental threats to our land and water. PALTA's services benefit conservationists in Pennsylvania and across the nation by giving organizations the resources and support they need to save more land and protect more water. And—crucially—PALTA is a fierce watchdog at the state capitol in Harrisburg, serving as the voice of Pennsylvania's conservation organizations—big and small—on public policy that impacts conservation.

Current Activities

Advocacy: PALTA's advocacy efforts in Harrisburg provide an essential service to all Pennsylvanians by guarding against threats to good conservation law while promoting improvements to public policy in support of conservation. By meeting with legislators, leading grassroots advocacy campaigns, filing amicus briefs in court cases, and engaging in other advocacy techniques, PALTA has achieved several major public policy successes over the years, including:

- PALTA has steadfastly defended Pennsylvania's Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund—which has provided \$867 million for conservation and outdoor recreation projects—from repeated budget raids. Most recently, the state's proposed 2019 budget proposed to take \$30 million from the Keystone Fund, but PALTA successfully convinced the governor and legislators to scrap the proposal.
- In 2018, two conserved properties—Stoneleigh and McCormick Farm—faced eminent domain threats and were in grave danger of being bulldozed. PALTA moved swiftly to rally support for legislative action to protect lands under conservation easement from eminent domain. The resulting law saved Stoneleigh and McCormick Farm and blocks use of eminent domain on any land conserved with a conservation easement unless there is no other alternative. The law established a national model for protecting conserved lands from the irresponsible exercise of eminent domain.
- In 2017, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court considered a case in which a municipality sought to sell a portion of a beloved local park to a developer. Adopting arguments made by PALTA, the court ruled that municipalities cannot sell off public parkland for cash or otherwise repurpose it for private purposes.

PALTA must fight to protect these conservation gains while advocating for even more. That cannot be done without increased, diversified funding; current funding to PALTA has been reliable, but it is not guaranteed. An unrestricted general operating grant will help PALTA ensure that conservation victories are built upon, and not jeopardized.

Direct Technical Assistance: Staff and volunteers of conservation organizations large and small depend on PALTA staff for advice, insight, and guidance when navigating issues that arise in their day-to-day conservation work. PALTA staff members are always available to answer a question, research an issue, or connect someone with the right expert. Questions come in with great variety: “How do I get the landowner to talk to us?” and “How do I convince landowner’s counsel that the organization needs this legal protection?” and “Can we pay a fundraiser on commission?” and “Who can help us with a conservation plan?” and “Why won’t the township solicitor agree to this?” and so on.

Financial Assistance: PALTA operates the Conservation Easement Assistance Program (CEAP), which increases the amount of land protected and improves the quality and long-term viability of easements by providing small grants to conservation organizations to help cover the costs of completing conservation projects. Since 2004, PALTA has awarded over \$1.3 million, allowing land trusts to protect over 28,000 acres they would not have been able to protect otherwise.

“Basically, CEAP has made important easements possible that would have been lost without it.” – Roy Kraynyk, Allegheny Land Trust

Guides, Model Documents, and Other Tools: PALTA creates and curates a wealth of resources designed to help conservationists work more effectively and efficiently. The resources are available free of charge at PALTA’s website ConservationTools.org (which often receives over 20,000 visits per month). Resources include:

- 120+ original guides that cover a wide swath of conservation topics, from property transactions and land stewardship to outreach and organization management. The guides are rigorously researched, consistently updated, and written in clear, readable language suitable for both conservation professionals and the general public.
- 20+ original model legal documents, including the *Model Grant of Conservation Easement and Declaration of Covenants*, the most time-tested, thoroughly vetted conservation easement model in the United States. Now in its seventh edition, the model is used by organizations from Alaska to Alabama for their easement transactions.
- A curated, ever-growing collection of thousands of reports, guides, fact sheets, and other resources related to conservation, outdoor recreation, smart growth, and similar topics.

Effective conservation depends on up-to-date, well-researched guidance and bulletproof legal documents, but organizations rarely (if ever) have the capacity to create these resources themselves. PALTA’s extensive online library provides these crucial resources and saves conservation organizations time and money, ultimately increasing the number of acres protected in Pennsylvania and across the United States.

Education: PALTA provides numerous educational opportunities for conservation organization staff and volunteers. Each spring PALTA hosts the Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference, a three-day event jam-packed with sessions taught by experts that attracts hundreds of conservationists, planners, legal experts, and government officials from across the state. In 2019, over 350 people

attended the conference in Monroe County. James Engel, executive director of Tincum Conservancy, commented: “The conference is an excellent opportunity to learn and to receive information that I can actually put in to practice.”

PALTA also organizes the biennial Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Conference—the state’s largest gathering of people engaged in trail and greenway work—and hosts periodic webinars and workshops on specific conservation topics.

Mapping: In 2018, PALTA launched a series of comprehensive, interactive online maps, including a map of all privately and publicly conserved land in Pennsylvania and a map showing the service areas of each conservation organization in the state. PALTA’s conserved land database has been adopted as the official protected lands database for Pennsylvania—the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources uses it when looking for projects to fund. The Natural Heritage Program uses it to help developers steer clear of conserved properties when planning projects, and conservation agencies use it when considering which parcels to acquire or ease. PALTA’s recent riparian planting project will have a similar impact by helping organizations and governments identify the best places to plant trees in order to reduce water pollution and prevent flooding. Also, PALTA’s in-house expert is available to help organizations with mapping issues; this service is extraordinarily valuable for smaller organizations that cannot afford their own mapping software and specialists.

Impact of a General Operating Grant

The need for PALTA’s efforts and services has dramatically expanded over the past five years, resulting in the need for more funding and staffing support. Building organizational capacity is one of the organization’s biggest challenges; the part-time office and project administrator has steadily had to add more hours to keep up with the demand for her services, and in September, 2019 is now working full-time. In April 2019, the organization’s first ever full-time development director was hired to diversify revenue streams.

PALTA is a leader in shaping conservation-related public policy in Pennsylvania and provides essential resources that boost the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation projects across the United States. A general operating grant will enable PALTA to increase its impact and meet growing threats to—and opportunities for—conservation.

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association staff and board of directors are grateful to you for considering this application for a grant to so that we can work together and achieve the vision of a Pennsylvania where people know that their treasured green places will endure: a commonwealth where the lands that provide clean water are safeguarded, where outdoor recreation opportunities abound, where productive farmlands and forests are conserved, and where natural areas are protected so future generations can experience the beauty, the water, and the productive lands and wildlife that Pennsylvanians enjoy today.

Testimonial

“Here at ClearWater Conservancy, we can directly trace our organizational growth and relevance in land conservation and natural resource protection to the extent of our involvement with PALTA. The wise counsel, technical resources, and experienced staff of PATA have set an example of principled leadership which we embrace and seek to emulate in our work throughout the local

community. Throughout Pennsylvania, we are so fortunate to have a statewide advocate for sound conservation theory, law and practice like PALTA. **Their value to us is immense.** We strive to never take PALTA for granted.”

–Kevin Abbey & Deb Nardone, ClearWater Conservancy