

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 9.13.19

Contact Information

Organization Name: Green Valleys Association of SE PA Executive Director/CEO Name: Victoria Laubach
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Phone: (610) 469-4900 Board of Directors Chair Name: Chris Orzechowski
Website: www.greenvalleys.org Primary Contact Name: Vicki Laubach
Year Incorporated: 1964 Primary Contact E-mail: (same as above)
FEIN: 23-7025192

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes No
Not Sure
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes No Not Sure
 Donor Advised Fund(s) Fund for Chester County Don't know/Not sure

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Education
 Health Human Services
 Religion

Organization Information:

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

Green Valleys primarily serves northern Chester County in the townships of North, East, & South Coventry, East and West Vincent, East and West Pikeland, Schuylkill, Tredyffrin, East Whiteland, Charlestown, Upper Uwchlan, East and West Nantmeal, and Warwick; and the boroughs of Elverson, Spring City, and Phoenixville.

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:

We have approximately 1,000 members and serve the roughly 143,000-person population of northern Chester County; 5,000 individuals are engaged in our education programs annually. We work with students & teachers in the Owen J. Roberts, Phoenixville, and Pottstown School Districts; local government officials; and community volunteers.

Mission:

To protect, preserve, and restore the natural watersheds of northern Chester County. We inspire, educate, and involve our community to make a difference for our generation and for generations to come.

Proposal Summary:

We are seeking match funding to complete a conceptual trail plan for our headquarters, Welkinweir, which will incorporate the organizations recent land acquisitions to the Preserve, providing additional recreation opportunities to the local community and visitors to the Preserve.

Annual Budget \$ <u>759,658</u>	<u>4</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>86</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>10</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>10</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>79</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>4</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>750</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<u>100</u> % total	

Top 3-5 funding sources: Grants, fee for service, Rodebaugh trust Fund, corporations, memberships

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 2500

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Green Valleys Watershed Association (GVWA) was founded in 1964 to protect the five major tributaries to the Schuylkill River in northern Chester County: French, Pickering, Pigeon, Valley Creeks, and Stony Run. GVWA has a 55-year history of working with residents, government, and community groups to protect the local environment through education, partnerships, planning, advocacy and community engagement. Our focus has adapted over the years to address evolving threats and issues to our region's Exceptional Value and High Quality designated streams and natural resources but our focus remains on watershed protection, environmental education, and land stewardship - from the closure of point source polluters like Knickerbocker Sanitary Landfill, to addressing non-point source pollution by working with municipalities to improve ordinances, with educational institutions to improve stormwater capture with nature-based infrastructure, or farmers to implement best management practices to keep rainwater clean and separate from animal waste.

In 1997 the organization took title to Welkinweir, the former home of GVWA founding members Everett and Grace Rodebaugh, to protect the property in perpetuity and to expand the organization's environmental and science education programming. Our educational programs have grown exponentially in the 22-years we've owned Welkinweir – summer nature camps for children ages 4 to 14, on-site interactive community nature programs for families and adults, in-school programming and on-site experiential field trips for students in 1st through 12th grades, Pennsylvania Master Naturalist and Schuylkill Water Stewards volunteer training programs for adults.

We are committed to stewarding Welkinweir in a manner that supports and embodies our mission, provides an example to residents, and offers a tranquil retreat for visitors. We have taken numerous opportunities to add to the preserved land at Welkinweir to bring the original 162-acres up to the current 224-acres, to protect the property, the adjacent contiguous forests, and the Exceptional Value, wild trout Beaver Run that flows through the properties.

We seek to educate people to enable them to be better stewards of our natural resources and empower them to act to protect those resources. We collaborate with other nonprofit organizations – from local, to regional, state and national, to strengthen our effectiveness, most notably through the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, which brings organizations across the basin together to reduce pollution, protect headwaters, and promote water-smart practices and policies.

Funding request

Description of key initiatives

We focus on three program areas, watershed protection, environmental education, and land stewardship. Our watershed protection program is our oldest initiative, and they reason for our founding as the French Creek Watershed Association in 1964. We are a part of the William Penn Foundation's Delaware River Watershed Initiative Schuylkill Highland Cluster which segues with our mission. Currently we are monitoring 45 sites on a quarterly basis for various nutrients, bacteria, and macroinvertebrates; we also maintain two Stroud Mayfly

remote monitoring sensors on tributaries to the Pickering Creek. Using ESRI's Arc GIS program staff is creating a delivery data system to make the water quality data collected by multiple organizations in one location. Our Schuylkill Water Stewards volunteers are key to assisting us with water quality monitoring. We are actively engaged with implementing agricultural and stormwater best management practices to protect and improve water quality in the Exceptional Value and High Quality streams in northern Chester County. We are working with township Environmental Advisory Councils, especially those in the Phoenixville Regional Partnership, to upgrade their riparian protection buffers and are engaged with the Chester County Water Resources Authority update of the county's *Watersheds* document.

Our environmental education program has grown steadily, with summer nature camps being our largest reach and most profitable education program. Since moving to Welkinweir we have been able to offer many more, diverse programs for a range of ages – from preschool, both on-site and at local libraries, to family oriented, interactive community nature programs, educational lectures, in-school programs, and boy and girl scout badge programs. We also do programs for community groups such as garden clubs, Environmental Advisory Councils or other municipal committees, churches, or other civic groups.

Land stewardship at Welkinweir connects our mission to how we care for our headquarters. The estate house, which now serves as our offices, has undergone an energy audit to operate as efficiently as possible, along with the installation of solar PV to generate electricity in order to preserve and protect our natural resources as well as our financial resources. Our visitor parking area and pavilion infiltrate rainwater back into the ground instead of running off. We have planted trees to buffer the stream and ponds, minimize lawn, and limit the use of pesticides. Wherever possible our tools are battery operated. We want to protect the wildlife and the habitat that use the property and be a safe place for people.

Specific needs and issues to be addressed

Chester County continues to be one of the fastest-growing counties in Pennsylvania, with associated development pressure as land is converted from open space to roads, buildings, and other impervious surfaces. Northern Chester County retains Exceptional Value and High Quality designated streams, unique in Southeastern PA, because of the amount of conserved forested land in the region. As a contributing property to that conserved land, Welkinweir, which is open to public, offers the kind of outdoor recreation that makes Chester County such a desirable place to live.

Why it is important to fund this now

We have grant funding from the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative mini grant program and the PA DEP Water Quality Improvement Program to conduct a trail assessment at our headquarters Welkinweir, which is now complete. The second part of the work, a conceptual trail plan to update Welkinweir's trail system to incorporate the 62-acres of land acquired as additions to the preserve which will enable visitors and the community to explore and appreciate the forest habitat of the now 224-acre Welkinweir preserve. In November, our trail consultants, Penn Trails LLC, will be conducting a two day trail workshop for up to twelve participants that will utilize Welkinweir's trails for the training. We hope that we'll be able to use these trained volunteers to help us implement the trail plan once it is complete. Funding from the Chester County Community Foundation will help us close the gap and complete the conceptual plan.

How impact and results will be demonstrated

The result is that we will have a complete plan that we can then use for additional fundraising for implementation as well as engaging volunteers to help with the implementation. Impact will be demonstrated by having a logical trail system that: eliminates problem areas including very steep slopes which lead to trail erosion or extreme wet areas that render parts of the trail system unusable at certain times of the year; will streamline maintenance, making it easier for volunteers to do much of the work; makes better use of the existing Horse-Shoe Trail, and eliminates duplication of trails; and has increased use by visitors, including local hiking and walking groups, and offers a number of trails length options and a variety of physical challenges.