

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.

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Date

Contact Information

Organization Name: Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation
Address: 704 Lisburn Road, Suite 102, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Phone: 717-236-7644

Website: <http://paparksandforests.org>

Year Incorporated: 1999

FEIN: 25-1859016

Executive Director/CEO Name: Marci Mowery

Executive Director/CEO E-mail:

mmowery-pdff@pa.net

Board of Directors Chair Name: Brad Mallory

Primary Contact Name: Marci Mowery

Primary Contact E-mail: see above

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): We are a statewide organization, but for the purpose of this grant proposal we will focus on state parks and libraries within Chester County (primarily) and the surrounding counties of Berks, Montgomery, Philadelphia, and Delaware (secondarily).

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: PPF is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and promoting Pennsylvania's 121 state parks and 20 state forests, which see more than 3 million visitors from within the state as well as from much further afield. These visitors represent all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, income levels, and backgrounds. Admission to Pennsylvania state parks and forests is free, and they are located within 25 miles of nearly every PA resident, thereby allowing for easy access to anyone who wants to enjoy these public resources.

Through PPF's Friends Group program, which consists of volunteer chapters made up of volunteers who take care of projects and special events within 47 state parks and forests across the Commonwealth, we work directly with nearly 3,300 volunteers who give more than 76,000 volunteer hours each year.

Mission: PPF's mission is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests through public engagement in volunteerism, education and recreation. Our vision is "Building the voice for Pennsylvania's state parks and forests."

Proposal Summary:

On April 22, 2020, people around the world will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. The original

Earth Day in 1970 brought together 20 million Americans to launch the modern environmental movement. PPF plans to mark this momentous occasion with 50 service projects across the Commonwealth's state parks and forests, getting thousands of Pennsylvanians involved in environmental conservation efforts, including tree plantings, trash pick-ups, invasive weed removal, trail maintenance, and repairs to fencing and other structures. We will also partner with libraries across the Commonwealth to feature documentary film screenings and book readings that showcase the importance of Earth Day and environmental conservation efforts.

For the purpose of this grant application, we will focus our efforts on the state parks and libraries within Chester County primarily, and those in the other counties of the Philadelphia region secondarily. These include Ridley Creek and Marsh Creek in Chester County, as well as Nolde Forest, French Creek, Neshaminy, Washington's Crossing, Tyler, Norristown Farm Park, Evansburg, Benjamin Rush, Nockamixon, Ralph Stover, and Delaware Canal state parks.

We are requesting \$7,000 from the Chester County Community Foundation to help fund this initiative at the 13 state parks and many local libraries within the greater Philadelphia region. Dollars will be allocated to pay for staff time to administer the volunteer events, purchase trees, paint and other supplies, advertise the service projects, and update the PPF website to promote the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and the related activities.

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Strategic Relationships
 Fundraising & Development Technology Other: _____

Annual Budget \$543,419

89 % of budget for program expenses

4 % of budget for administrative expenses

7 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

1 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

11 # of Board Volunteers

3,344 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

76,373 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Richard King Mellon Foundation

Campbell Foundation

Private donations

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$7,000

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF), established in 1999 as an independent 501(c)(3) organization, works closely with all 121 state parks and 20 forest districts across the commonwealth. PPFF's mission is to promote and support the natural and cultural resources of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests through leadership in recreation, education, conservation, and volunteerism.

Currently, there are 47 state park and forest friends groups, or chapters, functioning under our nonprofit umbrella. These chapters are geographically dispersed throughout the commonwealth. These local, public-private partnerships build bridges between the community and their neighboring state parks and forests, take on tasks and projects that would not otherwise be accomplished, and engage the public in active recreation and the opportunity to contribute to the places they know are important.

In addition to our support of volunteer friends groups, we strive to improve the visitor experience through inclusive recreation, events, habitat protection, promotion of parks and forests as tools for improving human health, volunteer experiences and opportunities, improvements and expansion of parks and forests infrastructure, and by being a voice for parks and forests.

We engage with the public through organized events, volunteer opportunities, outreach, and infrastructure improvements (such as our work restoring heritage sites and promoting CCC historical education), and through communication pieces and publications. We are an active partner in the Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project, a multi-agency and organization initiative to preserve the rich heritage of the people, places, events and policies that shaped Pennsylvania and the nation.

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation has a strong history of success to date. While small in staff, we are mighty in our programming. A brief summary of our past, current and future work can be found below.

Land Acquisition—when PPFF first began, we assisted DCNR in acquiring in holdings and indentures in state parks and forests. These purchases didn't just clean boundaries, they protected critical bat habitat, removed a safety hazard, and protected an exceptional value watershed.

Habitat Protection—habitat can be compromised through many different human and natural conditions—from storm incidences to over-use. PPFF accomplished such projects as invasive species removal, native tree plantings, rare ecosystem protection, native demonstration gardens and the training of stewards to ensure these special lands remain special.

Safety first—PPFF work enabled such projects as radios and bicycles for rangers, repairs to warming huts, trail signage, lifeguard training and equipment, dock improvements and safety fencing.

Accessibility—To date we have organized and hosted trainings for state park/forest staff and volunteers on accessible recreation; coordinated a panel discussion on accessible recreation for a statewide gathering; sponsored a training for a train-the-trainer program in adaptive canoeing and purchased

adaptive equipment for programming; organized a body mechanics workshop; coordinated a panel on understanding autism for environmental educators; identified and raised funds for improved ADA compliant trails and docks at various parks across the state; and ensured that accessibility was a key element in the 2014-2019 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Volunteerism—Volunteers are the backbone of building, maintaining and conserving our parks and forests. In 2018 we had more than 76,000 hours of volunteer time donated through our workdays and friends groups.

Play—A simple playground provides a child with a tool to not only build imagination, but engage in decision making, develop problem solving and leadership skills, and to build life-long learning habits. We and our chapters have installed more than 20 play systems in the past 10 years.

Education—*Give a man a fish, and he eats for day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.* Supporting education programs such as teacher workshops, community education, campfire programs, mural projects and recreation skills development ensures a legacy of conservationists.

2. Funding request

Description of Key Initiative(s)

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote Pennsylvania's state parks and forests and encourage more people to get involved in natural resource conservation activities on those public lands, we plan to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day with 50 service projects across the Commonwealth's state parks and forests. These volunteer activities will get thousands of Pennsylvanians – many of whom will be new to this sort of participation - involved in environmental conservation efforts, including tree plantings, trash pick-ups, invasive weed removal, trail maintenance, and repairs to fencing and other structures. We will also partner with libraries across the Commonwealth to feature documentary film screenings and book readings that showcase the importance of Earth Day and environmental conservation efforts.

As was mentioned earlier, for the purpose of this grant application, we will focus our efforts on the state parks and libraries within Chester County primarily, and those in the other counties of the Philadelphia region secondarily. These include Ridley Creek and Marsh Creek in Chester County, as well as Nolde Forest, French Creek, Neshaminy, Washington's Crossing, Tyler, Norristown Farm Park, Evansburg, Benjamin Rush, Nockamixon, Ralph Stover, and Delaware Canal state parks. We will seek additional funding to organize similar events in other state parks and forests across the rest of the state.

We will use grant funding to pay for staff time to administer the volunteer events, purchase trees, paint and other supplies, advertise the service projects, and update the PPF website to promote the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and the related activities.

Specific Needs and Issues to Be Addressed

- Planting one tree, according to the Urban Forestry Network, provides \$62,000 in air pollution control over its 50-year lifetime. This project will plant hundreds of trees across the greater Philadelphia region (and beyond), so imagine the clean air that will result.

- For every 10 percent increase in forest cover, according to the Trust for Public Land, water treatment plan costs are decreased by 20 percent. Again, this effort will have a dramatic impact on water quality improvement in the region.
- Pennsylvania's forests hold 1.5 billion tons of carbon, thus buffering against the impacts of climate change. As we plant more trees through this project, the amount of carbon being sequestered increases as well.
- Invasive species harm the U.S. environment to the tune of billions of dollars each year. Invasive insects like the spotted lanternfly, emerald ash borer, and hemlock wooly adelgid are just some of the many small creatures killing trees and crops across the Commonwealth. Volunteers can help remove egg masses and pull invasive weeds, helping restore the ecosystem.
- Litter is a costly problem. For instance, PennDOT spends millions of dollars a year cleaning it from the state's roadways. Litter in PA's state parks and forests is unsightly and can harm wildlife and our waterways. Thankfully litter cleanup is something volunteers can easily help with, as opposed to some of the other maintenance needs in our state parks and forests, like herbicide spraying and roof repair.

Why Is it Important to Fund this Now?

The time for these actions is now... not just because the 50th anniversary of Earth Day will take place in 2020, but also because the need for action within Pennsylvania's state parks and forests is great NOW. There is a \$1 million infrastructure maintenance needs list for these parks and forests, which includes the need for new cabin roofs, updated bathroom facilities, repaired docks, and modernized dams, to name but a few. The budget does not exist for staff to take care of each issue on their own; they must rely on volunteers to take care of some of the repairs, while letting others languish until the funds can be found.

Volunteering is good for people's health, especially if those volunteer activities occur outdoors. Research shows that spending time outdoors can lower the risk of diabetes, certain cancers, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease, as well as reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Volunteering boosts self-esteem, makes people happier, has positive effects on physical well-being, and combats stress. By tying in 50 service projects in PA state parks and forests with the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we not only improve the conditions within these public lands, but we improve the lives of those who volunteer. And hopefully, by participating in these Earth Day service projects, these people will keep coming back to our state parks and forests to recreate and volunteer, thus continually improving their quality of life.

How Impact and Results will Be Measured

The results of this project will be measured by tracking the number of service projects that are held at the state parks within the greater Philadelphia region, as well as the number of volunteers participating in each event (and the subsequent total number of volunteer hours). In addition, details like the number of trees and shrubs planted, the number of bags of trash picked up and disposed of, and the total length of trails maintained will be tracked and recorded. Staff at the parks will also be surveyed informally to gauge their impressions on how the events went and how they could be improved on for the future. All this will give us a good sense of the success of our efforts and provide guidance on how to modify our overall volunteer efforts for subsequent years. We will also measure public programming using our documentaries to inform about the conservation legacy.

III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescocf.org.** Receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.
 - Please contact Grants Administrator Kevin Baffa at (610) 696-8211 grants@chescocf.org with questions.

Chester County
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their legacies make a difference.*

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WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building helps bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission.

Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) projects which address:

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY**
Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning - Financial Planning
- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**
Board Development - Executive Transition/Succession Planning - Leadership Development - Staff Training & Professional Development
- **STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS**
Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions - Strategic Restructuring
- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**
Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development - Marketing, Branding & Communications
- **OPERATIONS**
Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements

Capacity Building Grants have been used to fund:

- Strategic plan development
- Technology enhancements, including website design; donor tracking software; computer hardware
- Marketing plan & marketing materials development
- Financial management and internal control system improvements

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