

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- We **connect people who care with causes that matter, so their philanthropy makes a difference now & forever.**
- We are a **collection of Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds** with **@\$3.5M granted annually** to nonprofits in Chester County & beyond.
- **99%** of our grants are made by our generous Fund Advisors, who make grant decisions all year.

Proposals submitted by nonprofits are considered for 2 types of grants:

Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds (No Deadline)

- ◇ Grants **focus on Chester County** causes & issues, but are not limited to Chester County.
- ◇ Charitable nonprofits working **in all fields of interest** are considered for grant awards. (I.e. arts, culture, & humanities; education; community improvement; environment; religion; health; & human services)
- ◇ **General operating** grants are encouraged. Nonprofits should be specific about their mission, goals, & measurable outcomes.
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year.**
- ◇ Grant decisions are made **intermittently** all year, as Fund Advisors desire.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500-\$7,500.**

Fund for Chester County Capacity Building Grants (Due 9/15)

- ◇ For eligibility in this grant program, nonprofits must be **located in & serve Chester County.** NPO's with budgets of \$500,000 or less are given preference.
- ◇ The goal of capacity building grantmaking is to **strengthen the effectiveness of NPO's serving the Chester County region,** in areas including:
 - Mission, Vision & Strategy
 - Governance & Leadership
 - Partnerships & Collaborations
 - Operations & Technology
 - Fundraising, Development & Marketing
- ◇ Proposals must be submitted by **September 15** to be eligible for consideration.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500-\$5,000,** with monies distributed by **February.**

- Use this form @ www.chescocf.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to grants@chescocf.org**
- Proposals are considered "complete" when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments.**
- Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
- Per IRS Regulations, applicants **must be** charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & **cannot** be individuals.

Please contact Grants Administrator **Kevin Baffa** at **(610)-698-8211** or grants@chescocf.org with any questions.

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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

Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's **Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.**

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

Date 4/5/2021

Contact Information

Organization Name: WeConservePA
Address: 119 Pine Street, 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 717.230.8560
Website: weconservepa.org
Year Incorporated: 1995
FEIN: 23-2789029

ED/CEO Name: Andrew Loza
ED/CEO E-mail: aloza@weconservepa.org
Board Chair Name: Kim Murphy
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Sara Painter
Primary Contact E-mail: spainter@weconservepa.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: WeConservePA helps 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. WeConservePA 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. WeConservePA also fosters public understanding of conservation, advocates for sound governmental policy, and leads state and national endeavors to achieve far-reaching advancements in conservation.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): All of Chester County, Pennsylvania, and nationally.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Annual Budget \$ 959,363 _____ 6 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
92 _____ % of budget for program expenses 10 _____ # of Board Volunteers
4 _____ % of budget for administrative expenses 42 _____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
4 _____ % of budget for fundraising expense 525 _____ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

1. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
2. The William Penn Foundation
3. Colcom Foundation

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating ?

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

Proposal Summary: WeConservePA respectfully requests a grant of \$7,500 in general operating funds. WeConservePA advocate for pro-conservation, life-sustaining governmental policy and assist individuals and organizations in effectively and efficiently conserving natural areas, farms, forests; restoring our waters and shared natural environment; promoting sustainable land use practices; and connecting people with nature. During this pandemic we have witnessed the greatest number of visitors to parks and preserves for health and respite in history. The dramatic increase in visitorship makes our services even more critical: without our model documents, technical assistance, and tools, conservation organizations would not be able to as effectively and efficiently achieve permanent protection and stewardship of Pennsylvania's natural resources. Demand for our services has grown steadily over the past several years to keep pace with development, and the global initiative to conserve at least 30% of land and oceans by 2030 gives greater urgency to our mission. According to our annual land census, Pennsylvania land trusts will have permanently protected one million acres by 2025. \$7,500 in vital operating support will help us help land trusts reach one million acres since these conservation gains would not have been possible without our work year after year, making sure that state investments are protected.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

WeConservePA started in 1991 as an informal gathering of land trust leaders seeking to advance common interests. These leaders incorporated the "Pennsylvania Land Trust Association" in 1995 to address and focus on broad needs of land trusts, the initiatives, and activities that no single organization could effectively handle or wish to handle on its own. Those needs include safeguarding land conservation from harmful state legislation, boosting public investments in conservation, ensuring that all conservation acquisitions use solid legal documents, and making quality training and educational materials easily accessible to all conservation volunteers and staff. Since the 1990s, the organization's mission has expanded to help people protect, wisely use, and enjoy what nature offers, whether that is through land trusts, local government open space programs, environmental advisory councils, trail groups, or other organizations. Today, WeConservePA is made up of 70 dues-paying, voting conservation organizations as well as hundreds of individuals who contribute their time, energy, and money to the organization's endeavors. The voting organizations elect the board of directors and set WeConservePA's purposes.

WeConservePA envisions a Pennsylvania where people know that their treasured green places will endure: a commonwealth where the lands that provide healthy water quality are safeguarded, where outdoor recreation opportunities abound, where productive farmlands and forests are conserved, securing food and wood supplies, and where natural areas are protected so future generations can experience the beauty, the water, the productive lands, and wildlife that Pennsylvanians enjoy today.

WeConservePA keeps a close eye on legislative proposals in Harrisburg that might impact conservation – for example, efforts to allow local governments to sell off parks and other public open space to balance municipal budgets. In 2012, WeConservePA led the campaign to derail the "sell-parks-for-cash" bill that legislative leaders had fast-tracked through the General Assembly. When developers lost this legislative battle, they turned to the courts. WeConservePA vigorously opposed this threat to parks as well. This led to the PA Supreme Court in 2017 adopting the arguments made by WeConservePA in its amicus curiae briefs of 2014 and 2016 in defense of parks and other open space lands held by government.

In 2018, the beloved Stoneleigh Gardens in Lower Merion Township and the historic McCormick Farm in Silver Spring Township were threatened with eminent domain. At that time, Executive Director Andy Loza was quoted in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*: "If school districts and others can just go around and liquidate lands that have been carefully and thoughtfully conserved, we're going to impoverish future generations." After a whirlwind legislative campaign by WeConservePA and Natural Lands, the governor signed Act 45 of 2018, which requires school districts, local governments, and others to prove to court that there is no reasonable and prudent alternative before taking a conservation easement by eminent domain. The conserved properties were saved, future threats to conserved land were pre-empted, and we set a landmark national precedent.

2. Funding request

• Description of key initiatives

Staff and volunteers of organizations—big and small—serve and benefit from WeConservePA’s community. Through WeConservePA, they and their organizations are united and empowered to better lead, protect, and restore water and wildlife, and foster healthy communities. Running an effective organization on a day-to-day basis, while seeking to greatly increase the pace and quality of land conservation, is challenging. WeConservePA helps organizations of all sizes and conservation priorities achieve this. “As a staff of one, WeConservePA’s Conservation Easement Assistance Program grants are lifesaving. Same with legal support—when a document already exists, it saves tons of time and money,” says Laurie Crawford, executive director of Lebanon Valley Conservancy. President and CEO Tom Saunders of Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, one of the nation’s largest land trusts, knows “the strong leadership of WeConservePA over the years and to the present time has enabled the organization to be invaluable to those of us working to conserve our lands and rich natural resources in Pennsylvania.”

WeConservePA is the national leader providing free conservation tools, and “is a national model representing numerous nationally accredited land trusts, and we support all the efforts made by WeConservePA to advance land conservation, protection and stewardship throughout Pennsylvania,” affirms Christopher Beichner from Allegheny Land Trust.

The conservation of lands is only as secure as the legal documents underpinning the real estate transactions. At no charge, WeConservePA provides nonprofits and local governments with easily customizable, state-of-the-art model documents—twenty in all—that they need to effectively acquire land and conservation easements; ensure that parks remain parks, establish trails, and accomplish other conservation-related work. (See conservationtools.org/model-documents) The models, accompanied by extensive commentaries rich with optional and alternative provisions, are the products of research and analysis of proven methodology, scrutiny by legal professionals, real world testing, and numerous cycles of user review and feedback. The models reduce costs by ending the need for each organization (and its legal counsel) to reinvent the wheel and enabling productive sharing of experiences that comes from using a common document. (Attorneys instead can focus their time (and billings) on customizing the models to specific situations for their clients.) The model documents’ carefully crafted provisions have already ensured permanent protections for multiple organizations who have had to defend their conservation easements in court. That is one of the reasons the models are used by organizations—big and small—from Alaska to Florida. “The model documents are just invaluable, including the commentary. There is no way that a small land trust like ours would be able to keep up on the latest language, requirements, and trends to develop our own easements and agreements from scratch,” says Bill Kern, executive director of Countryside Conservancy. WeConservePA provides 140 guides free of charge to conservation professionals and volunteers. (See ConservationTools.org/guides.) These guides—ranging from one page to over 100 pages each depending on the topic—feature original content and serve as an essential curriculum and resource library for conservation professionals and volunteers.

WeConservePA’s Conservation Easement Assistance Program (CEAP) provides small grants to organizations to help cover the costs of completing conservation, trail, and fishing access easements, amending, and restating older easement documents, establishing or updating baseline documentation, and installing signs on eased properties. The program increases the quantity of easements completed and special places protected, and increases the quality and long-term viability of easements. Since 2004, over 1.6 million dollars have been awarded, protecting 26,000 acres, 41 square miles, providing land trusts with a resource to conserve land they would not have been able to

accomplish otherwise. “We have used the CEAP to help preserve over 260 acres of land, including lands along the Kittatinny Ridge in Dauphin County. We believe we would not have been nearly as successful in preserving land in our service area if we had not had CEAP as a resource,” says Sally Zaino, president of the Manada Conservancy.

WeConservePA provides education for conservation organization and local government staff and boards throughout the year. The annual conference features three days of seminars, networking, and informative field trips attended by 300-400 people. James Engel, executive director of Tinicum Conservancy commented, “Great local training that was very cost effective. There are so few opportunities for specific land trust education and collaboration with land trust professionals.” In 2020, WeConservePA quickly pivoted in response to the COVID-19 crisis, holding dozens of online roundtable discussions on the many facets of organizational operations during the pandemic and dozens more online workshops on conservation topics for several hundred conservation professionals and volunteers. Remarkd Annie Socci Maloney of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests: “The COVID-19 roundtables are great. It is really helpful to know what other people in the state are doing.”

WeConservePA also supports environmental improvements by local governments by facilitating the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Network and organizing the annual conference for the state’s 120 EACs, and assisting county farmland preservation administrators by hosting their fall meeting. In November, we hosted a virtual summit specifically for conservation professionals who work in the western part of the state.

• **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

The need for WeConservePA’s services has dramatically increased over the past five years, resulting in the need for increased staffing support. WeConservePA is an essential service agency to the state’s conservation organizations and conservation community. Without it, there simply will not be enough, or better conservation of Pennsylvania’s natural resources.

2020 saw WeConservePA extend an invitation to conservationists to form a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Community (DEIJ). The Community is a forum for people to share experiences, learn about and advance effective practices, and identify opportunities individually and collectively to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in conservation work and organizations. To ensure that this effort makes a lasting difference, WeConservePA invested in the services of a nationally renowned DEIJ expert to guide the Community. In 2021 the community is serving over 100 staff, volunteers, and board members from over 65 organizations throughout PA, DE, DC, NJ and MD with free training, resources, technical assistance, and peer support.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, support from funders enabled WeConservePA to adapt organizational operations, reprioritize and reorganize projects and programs to be relevant in the new circumstances. We held regular support calls to help conservation volunteers and professionals navigate challenges to land protection and stewardship work as well as organizational operations. (We did this both for PA and for land trust leaders across the country.) We facilitated forums to address public access problems stemming from unprecedented visitorship to parks, nature preserves, and trails; develop approaches to accomplishing conservation with only limited human interactions; support conservation organization leaders and the morale of all working in conservation; and assist with operational issues such as CARES Act funding, staff health and safety, and furloughs. WeConservePA delivered at little or no charge a rich series of all-virtual programming to organizations in need across the state. We navigated a name change and consolidated and expanded

the content of four WeConservePA websites—ConserveLand.org, EACNetwork.org, ConservationAdvocate.org, and GreenwaysandTrails.org—into the new WeConservePA.org to better serve conservationists.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

WeConservePA works as a fierce proponent for conservation across the commonwealth, with a proven track record of success. Elaine Paul Schaefer of the Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area writes that: “I feel like we are constantly under attack in terms of state funding and we really do rely on WeConservePA to take the lead in doing the heavy lifting in terms of direct advocacy, and more importantly keeping us informed about the threats and the issues so that we can do our own advocacy.” WeConservePA provides an essential service by uniting organizations and individuals in advocacy efforts, creating a powerful voice for conservation in Pennsylvania. This voice has ensured \$3 billion in state investments in land conservation, water protection, and outdoor recreation. Legislative proposal by legislative proposal, WeConservePA has also improved the framework of laws in which conservation work and prevented numerous bills hostile to conservation from getting passed in the General Assembly. WeConservePA advocates for pro-conservation, life-sustaining governmental policy. We serve as a convener, facilitator, and public voice for conservationists and conservation organizations, helping to identify common interests and concerns, and then leading them in formulating and taking appropriate action.

- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

WeConservePA’s history of successfully improving public policy for conservation is described at length at weconservepa.org/about. Also described there are WeConservePA’s many milestones increasing the capacity of conservation organizations and local governments to achieve more and higher quality conservation.

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 & financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant’s proposal, if applicable)
6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

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