

**MARJORIE L. AND ARTHUR P. MILLER FUND
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FUND FOR OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Across Chester County, local citizen groups are emerging as stewards of their local land resources while other organizations with an environmental focus are forming as issue groups, non-profit agencies, and municipal land trusts. Other non-profits serve as stewards for important parcels of land being used in creative ways for education and demonstration purposes. Each community has valuable resources that are worthy of being preserved— streams, wetlands, green space, areas important to wildlife, scenic vistas, and areas of historic or community significance.

The Chester County Community Foundation is now accepting applications for the Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller Fund. ***One challenge grant of up to \$2,500*** is available each year to support a non-profit organization which provides creative solutions to open space preservation and the wise use of environmental resources. The challenge portion of this grant can be met through such diverse means as new forms of in-kind donations and volunteer support and/or new grant dollars. The Miller grant can be used for the following:

- **The creation of a park, trail, or recreation area**
- **A public or school-based environmental education effort**
- **Research and publication about an important environmental issue**
- **Environmental enhancement and preservation of a significant site**
- **Volunteer and leadership development**
- **A demonstration project with wide-use application**

Successful projects will be those that:

- **Involve collaboration with environmental agencies & organizations**
- **Demonstrate high impact relative to the dollars expended**
- **Are of a lasting nature.**

Programs with a significant educational component are encouraged.

Proposals will be accepted until September 15. Upon review of the initial proposals, a site visit may be conducted of the finalists. The grant will be awarded in November.

Please use the attached Grant Proposal Format to apply for the grant. Please explain how you will meet the challenge component in your grant proposal narrative. Grant applications should be submitted no later than 5:00 P.M., **September 13** to: grants@chescocf.org. **Subject: Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller Fund Grant Application**

For more information, please contact Stephenie Stevens, Grants and Outreach Manager at the Chester County Community Foundation at 610-696-0501 or steph@chescocf.org Thank you!



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SUMMARY SHEET (One page only) Note: If Philanthropy Network Common Grant Application is used, this Summary Sheet MUST accompany application. Please visit our website at www.chescocf.org to obtain an electronic version of this application.

Date: 9/12/2024

Contact Information:

Organization Name: **French & Pickering Creeks Cons. Trust**
Address: **P.O. Box 288**
Devault, PA 19432
Contact E-mail: **bgladden@frenchandpickering.org**
Web Address: <https://frenchandpickering.org/>

Contact Name: **Bill Gladden**
Contact Title: **Executive Director**
Phone: **(610) 933-7577, ext. 116**
Year Incorporated: **1967**

Have you previously received the Miller Grant Award: Yes X No _

If "Yes", please indicate date and amount of each grant, if any, received from the Foundation:

- (1) Year 2023 – Amt Rec'd: \$2,000 (3) Year 2015 – Amt Rec'd: \$2,500
- (2) Year 2019 - Amt Rec'd: \$2,500 (4) Year 2014 – Amt Rec'd: \$2,500

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served (*If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County municipalities served*):
North Coventry, South Coventry, East Coventry, East Vincent, Spring City, East Pikeland, Phoenixville, Schuylkill, Charlestown, West Pikeland, West Vincent, East Nantmeal, Warwick, Elverson, West Nantmeal, and Upper Uwchlan

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: *110,567 population in immediate service geography. Over 1.3 million engagements via social media. Expanded programming through online zoom programs on mission-related topics reached roughly 1,000. We are expanding the number of people served at our preserves through additional trails and improvements plus hikes and walks offered free to the public. We are also working to introduce underserved populations to nature via scheduled guided visits.*

Mission Statement: *To preserve, steward, and connect people to the land in northern Chester County.*

Organization Description: *French & Pickering Creeks Conservation is a community-based nonprofit conservation organization. Founded by Sam and Eleanor Morris in 1967, the organization has: ensured the permanent protection of more than 13,500 acres of farms, forests, fields, parks and preserves; created greenways and trails along French & Pickering Creeks (and is beginning to establish a trail network on land we own and manage); and continues to monitor and defend all protected lands. As of 2023, we hosted over 3,000 participants in our major events, free lectures, hiked, and demonstrations at our two largest nature preserves.*

Annual Budget: \$989,570

7.5 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

77 % of budget for program expenses

12 % of budget for administrative expenses

11 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

20 # of Board Volunteers

42 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

575 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: *Raymond B. and Therese G. Bentley, Archie W. and Grace Berry Foundation, Virginia Cretella Mars Foundation, The Allerton Foundation, L. Stockton Illoway, and Dr. Lawrence Stone and Harriet W. Stone.*

Proposal Information:

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

Description of Grant Purpose: **Riparian Buffer & Lawn Conversion Program**

**MARJORIE L. AND ARTHUR P. MILLER FUND
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

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

History

French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust was founded in 1967 by Sam and Eleanor Morris. The organization is recognized as a land conservation leader and has protected over 13,500 acres of farms, fields, forests and park lands through collaboration with individual landowners, local, county, and state governments, and partner conservation organizations. French & Pickering works to ensure land is preserved within the northern Chester County watersheds, which contain some of the most scenic and environmentally sensitive lands in Pennsylvania.

Goals

Land Preservation and Stewardship, Community Engagement, Environmental Education, Public Access, Sustainability, Physical and Mental Health through Nature, Water Quality Improvements, Air Quality Improvements, and Wildlife Habitat.

Key Achievements

Founded in 1967, French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust has had many land preservation achievements including:

- The permanent protection of more than 13,500 acres of agricultural, natural, and park lands through donated and purchased conservation easements and public/private partnerships including additions to the State Game Lands, Warwick County Park, Brightside Farm Park (Charlestown Township) and French Creek State Park.
- Establishment of Greenways and more than 10 miles of trail right of ways along the French and Pickering Creeks.
- The monitoring and advocacy for sound stewardship practices on all lands protected by French & Pickering conservation easements.
- Accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance, a designation awarded only to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

To help meet the increased demand for public access during the Covid-19 pandemic, French & Pickering expanded and enhanced public access to lands that it owns. This increased public access was made possible in part with funding administered by the Community Foundation and the Chester County Commissioners. Since then, the organization has maintained a robust educational program and has consistently improved the Preserves through enhanced trail networks. Several of the milestones along the way include:

- In September of 2019, French & Pickering opened its first publicly accessible preserve, the Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, French & Pickering opened a second 550 acre preserve, the Great Marsh Preserve in 2020 and tripled the parking capacity in 2021.
- In 2020, French & Pickering transitioned Third Thursday Talks program to an online platform. These programs highlight locally relevant environmental topics such as owls, bird migrations, and invasive pests. Attendance regularly exceeds 100 with the most popular at 332.
- In 2022, French & Pickering unearthed four Revolutionary War Cannons on the Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve. The goal then became to create a permanent structure to display a cannon with interpretive signage on the publicly accessible Bentley Preserve. With that, we could allow a wider audience of people to connect with this industrial and sustainable forestry history as another part of the conservation story.

- In 2023, with assistance from the Miller Fund award of \$2,000, French & Pickering created and installed a stone display structure with interpretative signage for one cannon at the Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve. We have taken another cannon to 12 community events to share the story more broadly. In 2024, we reached an agreement with the Chester County Historical Society to loan a cannon for them to display.
- In 2023, French & Pickering was awarded a grant of \$162,000 by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to design and permit habitat improvements along the South Branch of French Creek in and around the Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve.
- In 2023, French & Pickering, with funding from DCNR and the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape, launched the Conservation Corps, a structured volunteer program which trains local supporters in sound land management techniques to apply to volunteer work on our preserves and on their own properties.
- In 2024, French & Pickering partnered with the Stroud Water Research Center to plant and maintain over 3,000 trees along waterways on properties we own or where we hold easements.
- In 2024, French and Pickering launched the Riparian Buffer and Lawn Conversion program with support from Aqua PA and the DCNR Community Watershed Forestry program. This program brings resources and expertise to eased landowners looking to improve the conservation value of their properties.

Distinctiveness

French & Pickering is the only community-based land trust working exclusively in northern Chester County and serves the public by preserving and restoring land, providing public access, creating awareness and appreciation of nature, and fostering a sense of community through lectures and programs.

In addition to increased visitation and program participation, land development pressures have increased in recent years. While higher density living and less property maintenance was becoming popular, the pandemic was a catalyst for renewed interest in larger residences (to provide work at home opportunities), in less populated areas, with ready access to natural areas, trails, and general outdoor recreational opportunities. In fact, pressure to develop unreserved lands is increasing while complex finances that create delays and challenges to completing conservation easement transactions are also on the rise. In response, French & Pickering is doing more owner outreach and engagement and working hard to identify funds for additional preservation staff.

2. Funding request: \$2,500 to be used as a match for our Riparian Buffer and Lawn Conversion Program, a Community Watershed Forestry project with DCNR.

Our inaugural year of this program was extremely successful, with two large projects underway and a number of potential projects in the queue. To continue the program, we are requesting \$2,500 to cover the required local match for our management of the program as part of a second funding round in the 2025 DCNR grant cycle. This specific program carries an 80/20 match formula, which means your \$2,500 leverages an additional \$10,000 for the development and implementation of highly visible demonstration projects for proper stewardship of riparian lands under easement.

Specific needs and issues

With approximately 200 properties under easement, French & Pickering is in a unique position to aggregate, prioritize, and implement projects on eased lands with willing landowners. Identifying projects, managing vendors, and working with landowners throughout the process requires the investment of significant staff time. This investment generates tangible benefits in improved landowner engagement, better education of landowners in stewardship techniques and, of course, trees in the ground.

Organizational impact

Projects such as this allow French & Pickering to magnify its impact. While protection of these properties is critically important, it is merely the first step. Long term conservation of this landscape requires engagement and investment to improve resilience and ecological function. These projects deepen our relationship with our landowners, serve as high-visibility examples of sound ecological restoration work to surrounding community, and improve habitat in quantifiable ways.

Overall strategies to implement the project

The funding requested will leverage significant additional funds from DCNR and allow French & Pickering Stewardship staff to complete more landowner outreach and to identify, scope, and manage projects. Implementation of lawn-to-meadow conversions and riparian buffer plantings are completed by expert third-party contractors vetted by both French & Pickering and DCNR. Importantly, this program includes several years of post-planting maintenance to ensure the establishment of new plantings.

Why important to fund now

Funds awarded in response to this request will be used as the required “in-hand” match as part of the application for a second round of funding under the DCNR CWF program in early 2025. Having this funding in-hand is a requirement of the DCNR application.

How we will meet challenge component

Funds awarded will be matched with anticipated continued funding from the Essential Foundation (Aqua) as well as the grant award from DCNR. It is important to note that the 20% cost share for implementation of these projects is borne by the property owner. This funding request is intended to cover the 20% share for staff time and outreach associated with the program.

Timetable with anticipated outcomes and relevance to mission

December 2024: Miller funding

December 2024: Aqua funding

April 2025: DCNR Application

2025-2027: Outreach and Implementation; reporting

How impact and results will be demonstrated

Results will be demonstrated through:

Number of landowner contacts associated with the program

Number of projects successfully identified, started, and completed

Total acreage of pollinator meadow planted

Total length of streambank planted

***Please send completed applications to:
grants@chescocf.org
(610) 696-8045
THANK YOU!***