



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Rebecca Tepper, Secretary
Grant Announcement

BID ENV 26 DCS 03
Dated: March 14, 2025

Conservation Partnership Grant
FY 26

BID#: BD-25-1042-ENV-ENV01-113966

I. GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY:

A. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR: Financial assistance to qualified 501(c)(3) organizations and conservation districts for the acquisition of conservation land.

B. OVERVIEW AND GOALS: The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) protects, conserves, and restores the natural resources of the Commonwealth. To fulfill this mission, Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of EEA, makes available funding for the FY 2026 Conservation Partnership Grant Program. This program provides funding to assist qualified 501(c)(3) organizations and conservation districts in acquiring interests in land suitable for conservation or recreation purposes.

The Conservation Partnership Grant Program is a component of the Healey-Driscoll Administration's goal of providing outdoor recreational opportunities, conserving natural resources and open space, and addressing climate change. This BID is part of the Administration's efforts to permanently preserve the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage for generations to come. The Conservation Partnership Grant Program also supports Executive Order 569, which calls for state government to adapt to climate change and build a more resilient Commonwealth, by including resiliency criteria in its rating system. It is a reimbursement program.

C. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

- 1) Land or a Conservation Restriction (CR) purchase by an eligible Applicant
- 2) Due diligence costs for donations of land or CRs to an eligible Applicant

See further detail on eligible projects in Section 2B.

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: This BID is open to qualified 501(c)(3) organizations that have been formed for one of the purposes described in Section 4 of Chapter 180 of the General Laws and to conservation districts. An organization must have 501(c)(3) status at the time an application is submitted. Municipalities are not eligible for funding. See further detail on eligible applicants in Section 2A.

E. APPLICATION DEADLINE: **Friday, July 11, 2025 at 3:00 pm.** See further detail on deadlines and grant program calendar in Section 4.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY: The maximum grant award for the purchase of land or a CR is \$425,000. The maximum award for due diligence costs related to a gift of land or CR is \$20,000. The maximum reimbursement amount is 50% of the total eligible project cost up to the applicable grant award maximum. Exceptions may be made at the Secretary's discretion. There is no guarantee that monies will be awarded. See further detail on funding availability in Section 2E.

G. NON-STATE FUNDING REQUIREMENT: This is a reimbursement program. Applicants selected to receive funding must demonstrate the use of funds from non-state sources comprising at least 50% of total project costs. Approved expenditures must not be made until after the selected applicant has an executed contract with the Commonwealth. See further detail on budget requirements in Section 2F.

H. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT(S): Contracts issued pursuant to this BID must expend all eligible project costs on or before June 30, 2026 to be eligible for reimbursement. See further detail on anticipated duration of contract(s) in Section 2H.

I. REGULATIONS, STATUTES, OR AUTHORIZATION GOVERNING THIS GRANT PROGRAM: Subject to 815 CMR 2.00, this grant program provides funding to assist qualified 501(c)(3) organizations and conservation districts in acquiring property interests for conservation or recreation purposes as authorized in Chapter 286 of the Acts of 2014. See further detail in Attachment C.

J. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Melissa Cryan
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
melissa.cryan@mass.gov
(857) 274-7173
<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-conservation-partnership-grant>

2. PERFORMANCE AND CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

This BID is open to qualified 501(c)(3) organizations and conservation districts. Multiple contracts may be awarded to the same applicant under this BID. Applicants may choose to package several adjacent landholdings into one application. Unrelated, discontiguous parcels must be submitted as separate projects in individual applications.

B. ELIGIBLE PROJECT(S)/SCOPE(S) OF WORK:

EEA seeks to further the conservation of suitable conservation and recreation land so that outdoor recreational opportunities are available to every Massachusetts resident. Eligible projects include:

1.) Purchase of land or a CR

An eligible Applicant may request grant funding for reimbursement of acquisition and due diligence costs associated with the purchase of land (fee simple) or a perpetual CR as defined in G.L. c. 184, § 31 that provides appropriate public access. Conversion of a term-limited CR to a permanent CR is eligible for funding. Eligibility for funding is limited to costs associated with the purchase of land or interests in land that the Applicant intends to hold in perpetuity.

2.) Due diligence costs for gifts of land or a CR to an eligible Applicant

An eligible Applicant may request grant funding for reimbursement of eligible due diligence costs associated with a land or CR gift that provides appropriate public access or for the due diligence costs associated with the acquisition of land.

Land that is already permanently protected through Article 97 (e.g., was purchased with EEA grant funding or municipal funding for open space protection), is already held in fee by a land trust, or is protected under CR, Watershed Preservation Restriction (WPR), or Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) is not eligible for

funding. However, land purchased by a non-profit conservation organization on behalf of the Applicant no earlier than two years prior to the BID posting date for this grant where it can be documented to DCS's satisfaction that the property was purchased with the explicit intention of pre-acquiring the land on behalf of the Applicant in anticipation of successful fundraising by the Applicant, including a potential Conservation Partnership grant may be eligible for funding. Any exercise of this exemption is at the risk of the non-profit organization and the Applicant. Said documentation can, for example, be a copy of correspondence/contract/minutes between the Applicant and the pre-acquiring entity, often initiated by the Applicant, asking them to play that role due to circumstances. Any exercise of this exemption is at the risk of the non-profit organization and the Applicant.

Lands enrolled in Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B are not classified as permanently protected land and are eligible to receive funding. Unprotected state or municipal land is also eligible.

Land designated as development area priorities as described in the [South Coast Rail Corridor Plan](#), Merrimack Valley Land Use Priority Plan, or the I-495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan, or other regional plans will not be eligible for funding. See [Executive Order No. 525](#).

NOTE: Preservation of Agricultural Land: Executive Order 193 discourages the irreversible conversion of the Commonwealth's productive agricultural land base. State grants shall not be used to encourage the irreversible conversion of agricultural land to other uses when feasible alternatives are available. In the event that all feasible alternatives have been explored, and the conversion of suitable agricultural lands to non-agricultural use, such as habitat, remains the only feasible alternative to protection of open space, a mitigation plan must be developed to be eligible for reimbursement under a state grant. Projects that would convert any prime agricultural lands should consult with the Department of Agricultural Resources at (617) 626-1700 prior to submitting an application.

C. APPRAISAL REQUIREMENTS:

Applications for projects that involve the purchase of land or a CR must include the appropriate type of valuation or appraisal with the application (applications lacking the appropriate type of appraisal will be rejected). Valuations must be dated no earlier than one year prior to the application submission deadline.

- A. *Parcels with an estimated total project cost equal to or greater than \$350,000:*
One full narrative appraisal by a real estate appraiser certified or licensed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112.
- B. *Parcels with an estimated total project cost less than \$350,000:*
One narrative appraisal by a real estate appraiser licensed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 OR one contracted market analysis by an appropriate party licensed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 OR one contracted opinion of value, completed by an appropriate party licensed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112.

NOTE: The Applicant or one of the Applicant's project partners must be the client for the appraisal, market analysis, or opinion of value. The owner of the property cannot be the client and cannot donate money to cover the cost.

Applications for projects that involve a land or Conservation Restriction donation to the Applicant **DO NOT require an appraisal**, market analysis, or opinion of value.

D. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Each application will be scored using the criteria below. See Attachment B for complete project selection criteria.

I. Organizational Characteristics (13%)

Applicants with Articles of Incorporation that reflect land conservation and recreation as a mission, with demonstrated capacity to successfully complete a purchase or gift of conservation land, and with experience successfully stewarding fee or CR interests. To further the work of volunteer-led organizations, organizations

with fewer full-time employees will receive higher scores. Note that organizations of any size that meet the qualifications in Section 2A are welcome to apply.

2. Land Protection (15%)

Projects that protect larger areas and promote landscape connectivity by abutting existing protected open space.

3. Biodiversity and Natural Resource Protection (26%)

Projects within or adjacent to designated Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program BioMap Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscape, Local Landscapes, or Forest Core, that are ranked highly for climate change resiliency based on its TNC map score, and the resource value of which would be more significantly impacted by potential development.

4. Working Farms and Forests (7%)

Project parcel(s) enrolled in Chapter 61 or 61A or managed under a Forest Stewardship program, and/or will conserve forested or agricultural lands.

5. Recreational Opportunities (23%)

Project that will provide specific types of public recreational opportunities, including to people with disabilities; will serve an under-served area for outdoor recreation based on the amount of protected open space per capita; and will advance goals, objectives, or action plan items stated in the community's *current* Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and/or Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

6. Overall Project Quality and Importance (16%)

Overall quality and importance of the proposed project considering the combination of criteria described above, as well as whether the project is within an Environmental Justice population.

E. FUNDING AVAILABILITY, BUDGETING GUIDELINES & ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES:

Reimbursement rate:	50% of the total eligible project cost
Maximum award amount:	\$425,000 for purchase of conservation land or CR
	\$20,000 for due diligence costs for a gift of land or CR

Applicants must submit the appropriate type of appraisal, the estimated total eligible project cost, and the specific grant request as part of the application package.

The Conservation Partnership grant program is a **reimbursement** program. Expenses incurred prior to the execution of a contract with the Commonwealth are not eligible for reimbursement. All approved project costs must be expended by the applicant on or before June 30, 2026 to be eligible for reimbursement. Project costs are subject to approval by EEA. Only eligible acquisition and due diligence costs approved by EEA and expended by the Applicant directly will be eligible for reimbursement. Applicants must provide documentation of Applicant's payment when filing for reimbursement for each approved project cost. For acquisitions, reimbursement will be calculated using the lesser of the final purchase price OR the appraised value.

Eligible expense categories:

- Title search
- Acquisition (appraised value or negotiated price, whichever is less)
- Other contractual services, such as consultants to negotiate transaction terms, facilitate due diligence and other services for the conservation transaction (up to 10% of grant request, and with EEA approval) – include sufficient detail in project budget
- Baseline Documentation Report
- Chapter 21E assessment
- Survey
- Legal fees associated with the acquisition
- Recording fees

Ineligible expense categories:

Please note that this is not a complete list.

- Application preparation or submission costs in response to BID
- Staff salaries
- Trail construction
- Signage
- Stewardship or monitoring endowments
- Equipment or goods

All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, a contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. EEA may lift the suspension if available funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, EEA may terminate the contract.

F. BUDGET REQUIREMENT:

Applicants selected to receive grant funding must show the use of funds from non-state sources equal to at least double the grant award. The grant award will not exceed \$425,000 for the purchase of land or CR and \$20,000 for due diligence costs incurred with the gift of land or CR. Eligible funding sources include, but are not limited to, grants from private or qualified foundations and cash contributions from local partners or individuals. Funds from other state sources may not be used with this grant program. The final reimbursement amount will be determined by the total amount spent, as documented through canceled Applicant checks or other proof of payment, by the Applicant.

G. PROJECT TERMS:

Awarded projects will be required to abide by the Standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions. All final contracts are subject to successful negotiation of a Final Scope of Services. EEA does not guarantee that any contracts may result from this BID, or that any particular funding amount will be awarded. Awarded contracts will be reviewed during their course and, upon request by the Contractor, may be extended or otherwise amended at the sole discretion of EEA. Any extension granted will not necessarily change the monetary value of the contract.

H. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACTS:

Expected date of contract execution is about 120 days from the application deadline. All contracts will end on June 30, 2026. To be eligible for reimbursement, land purchase and other reimbursable expenditures must be incurred on or before this date. Extension of the contract is at the sole discretion of EEA and is unlikely to occur.

I. DELIVERABLES AND OWNERSHIP:

The purchase of fee simple land under this BID requires the conveyance of a CR to the municipality in which the project is located, a federal or state agency, a not-for-profit corporation, or combination of these entities. In the case of a CR acquisition, the CR must be co-held by the Applicant and the municipality in which the land is located, a state agency, or another land trust, as required by Chapter 286 of the Acts of 2014. **The CR must be reviewed and approved by DCS and recorded at the Registry of Deeds prior to requesting reimbursement.** The model CR is available on the [DCS website](#) along with the CR review form. When

prepared, the draft CR and CR review form should be e-mailed to DCS for review prior to signature, using the contact information on the DCS website. Please allow adequate time for CR review and approval by the necessary parties (e.g. municipal officials, DCS, and/or appropriate state agency).

J. REPORTING:

No interim reports are required.

K. INVOICING:

The Conservation Partnership Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Award recipients must submit the following documentation when filing for reimbursement:

- ☐ Reimbursement Billing Form and Project Cost Worksheet (form provided after contract has been executed)
- ☐ Copies of recorded documents (deed and/or CR)
- ☐ Copy of title certification (not title insurance)
- ☐ Copy of recent survey (recorded)
- ☐ Copies of Applicant's cancelled checks (both sides), Applicant's wire transfer statements, Applicant's bank statements, or attested statement of Treasurer indicating the amount of payment, date paid, associated check or transaction numbers, and authority of payment
- ☐ CR language that ensures appropriate public access (copy)
- ☐ Photo of sign giving Conservation Partnership appropriate funding credit
- ☐ GIS Data Entry Form (provided once contract has been executed)

3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

A. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Applicants are required to use the online application form and upload tool provided at the following site: [FY 26 Conservation Partnership Grant Program Application | Mass.gov](#)

The online application must be received by Friday, July 11, 2025 at 3:00 pm. Any application received after the deadline will be rejected. It is the Applicant's responsibility to verify receipt of the application. Due to file size limitations of the online grant submission portal, the required appraisal must be emailed separately by the grant deadline to [Melissa Cryan](#).

Failure to provide any of the materials requested in the application package may result in the disqualification of the Proposal.

Public records: Please note that all responses and information submitted in response to this BID are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66, s. 10, and to M.G.L. c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes, including marking of information as confidential, shall be disregarded. Please do not submit any information that the Applicant may not wish to disclose publicly, such as home addresses or personal telephone numbers, social security numbers, or other similar information.

B. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED IF SELECTED TO RECEIVE FUNDING:

If selected, the following forms will be required to execute a contract. Applicants are encouraged to review these forms prior to submission of a BID.

- [Commonwealth Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Commonwealth W-9 Request](#) for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- [Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form](#)
- [Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment](#)

If selected, the Applicant will be required to submit the following additional forms to be reimbursed:

- Reimbursement Billing Form and Project Cost Worksheet (form provided after contract has been executed)
- Copies of recorded documents (deed and/or CR)
- Copy of title certification (not title insurance)
- Copy of recent survey (recorded)
- Copies of cancelled checks from the Applicant (both sides), wire transfer statements, bank statements, or attested statement of Treasurer indicating the amount of payment, date paid, associated check or transaction numbers, and authority of payment
- CR language that ensures appropriate public access (copy)
- Photo of sign giving Conservation Partnership appropriate funding credit
- GIS Data Entry Form (provided once contract has been executed)

C. EVALUATION PROCESS:

A grant application review team composed of EEA staff will evaluate all applications and draft recommendations. subject to review and final approval by the Secretary of EEA.

A site visit is required for all project applications. EEA staff will contact you to schedule a visit to the property. Recreational opportunities identified in the application will be verified by EEA staff during the site visit.

4. DEADLINES AND PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

A. RELEASE OF BID: March 14, 2025

B. INFORMATION SESSION: No information session will be held for this BID.

C. APPLICATION DUE DATE: Friday, July 11, 2025, 3:00 pm

D. ESTIMATED AWARD DATE: Awards are estimated to be announced on or about 120 days after the application deadline, with contract negotiations to begin immediately thereafter. Please note this is an estimated timeframe, subject to change based on availability of funds and other factors. Applicants should not expect to close on a property in calendar year 2025.

E. ESTIMATED CONTRACT START DATE: Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form. The estimated start date for contracts resulting from this BID is mid-January 2026, subject to change as noted above.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

A. TYPE OF PROCUREMENT: Grant

B. USE OF THIS PROCUREMENT BY SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS: This BID is single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this BID will be utilized solely by EEA.

C. REQUEST FOR SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACTORS: This BID may result in multiple contracts.

D. BID DISTRIBUTION METHOD: This BID has been distributed electronically using the Commbuys system. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check Commbuys for any addenda or modifications to a BID to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended BIDs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Applicants are advised to check the “last change” field on the summary page of BIDs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent BID files.

E. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Application Form (to be filled out the following site: [FY 26 Conservation Partnership Grant Program Application | Mass.gov](#))
- B. FY 26 Conservation Partnership Grant – Response Review Rating System
- C. Chapter 286 of the Acts of 2014

Attachment A

APPLICATION FORM

**FY 26 CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**

SUBMIT: Applicants are required to use the online application form and upload tool provided at the following site: [FY 26 Conservation Partnership Grant Program Application | Mass.gov](#)
Any application received after the deadline will be rejected. It is the Applicant's responsibility to verify receipt of the application. An electronic copy of the appraisal must be emailed to [Melissa Cryan](#) by the application deadline.

This version of the form is being provided as a service for applicants to see all the questions they will be required to answer through the online application.

DEADLINE: **Friday, July 11, 2025, 3:00 pm**

A. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____

Contact Email: _____ Contact Telephone: _____

Project Title: _____

Project Location (street address, including municipality): _____

Type of grant request: Acquisition Due diligence for gift

Requested grant amount: \$ _____

B. ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
--

1a.) How many acres of land does your organization protect in fee ownership? _____ Under CR? _____

1b.) For how many acres of CR land have Baseline Documentation Reports been prepared? _____

2.) Does your organization have a strategic plan, guidelines, or policies to guide land acquisition? Please describe.

3.) Do your Articles of Incorporation specifically list permanent land conservation or habitat protection or recreation as one of your organization's goals? If yes, highlight the relevant passage in the Articles.

Yes No

4.) How do you finance stewardship, monitoring, and enforcement?

Annual Operating Budget Yes No

Segregated Stewardship & CR Monitoring Fund Yes No

Segregated CR Enforcement Fund Yes No

Other (explain): _____

What is your annual stewardship/monitoring budget? \$_____ Endowed? Yes No

5.) Does your organization have full-time stewardship or land management staff? Yes No

6.) How many full-time equivalent staff are employed by **entire** your organization, **i.e., not just in land protection**?
_____ FTE staff

7.) If no stewardship/land management staff, how do you maintain your properties?

Volunteers Contract work

8.) How do you intend to maintain the property proposed for protection in this application?

9.) Does your proposed project have board approval? Yes No

If no, when do you expect to receive it? _____

10.) Does your organization have documents or policies in place that address the disposition of land and/or CRs in the event that the organization can no longer steward and administer them? If yes, please attach them.

Yes No

C. PARCEL INFORMATION

Please complete a copy of this section (i.e. PARCEL INFORMATION) for each parcel that is part of this grant application.

1.) Total **Project Acreage**: _____

Total number of parcels (print off and fill out a copy of this page for each parcel): _____

2.) This **Parcel Information** form is being completed for:

A parcel or interest in a parcel to be **purchased**

Fee

CR

A parcel or interest in a parcel that will be **donated**

Fee

CR

3.) Parcel Information:

Owner(s): _____

Municipality: _____ Acres: _____

Street: _____

Assessors Sheet #: _____ Lot # _____

Are there building(s) on the parcel? Yes No

If yes, how will they be utilized (buildings should be removed unless they contribute to the conservation/recreation function of the property)? _____

4.) Are there any encroachments on this parcel? Yes No

If yes, how will they be addressed prior to the receipt of the grant award (note that all encroachments must be addressed prior to submitting the final reimbursement request to DCS)?

5.) Are there any of the following encumbrances on the parcel?

Mortgage

Easement

Lien(s)

Other (describe):

6.) **Appraisal** – **If** the proposed project involves the purchase of land or a Conservation Restriction, please check the required type of appraisal that is being submitted with this application.

Full narrative appraisal

Market analysis

Opinion of value

Appraiser or preparer: _____

Property interest valuation: \$_____

Date of appraisal, market analysis, or opinion of value:_____

(NOTE: Appraisal, market analysis, or opinion of value can be dated **no earlier than one year prior** to the application submission deadline)

All projects that receive funding through the Conservation Partnership Grant Program must convey a perpetual Conservation Restriction, within the meaning of sections 31 and 32 of MGL Chapter 184, to the municipality in which the project is located, a federal or state agency, or a not-for-profit corporation, or combination of these entities. In the case of a grant award for the acquisition of a CR or due diligence costs associated with a CR gift, the CR must be co-held by the Applicant and an entity eligible to hold a CR.

7.) To what public agency/agencies or organization do you intend to convey a CR or, for projects in which only the CR will be acquired, propose to co-hold the CR with?

Organization Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 1.) Using the list below as a guide, please describe your project (three page maximum):
 - a. The property interest(s) to be acquired or donated
 - b. The natural characteristics and ecological value of the property
 - c. The proposed project's ability to protect or promote sustainable working lands
 - d. The type of public recreational opportunities that will be available, and how public access will be facilitated. Please identify how recreational opportunities that provide access to people with disabilities will be incorporated.
 - e. Whether the project advances objectives in the community's *current* Open Space and Recreation Plan (note: it is not sufficient to attach Goals and Objectives from the OSRP, some analysis is needed)
 - f. Whether the project advances objectives in the [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) (note: it is not sufficient to attach Goals and Objectives from the SCORP, some analysis is needed.)
 - g. The impact development would have on the property's conservation and recreational value
 - h. If the project is located within a State Priority Preservation Area as shown on the [South Coast Rail Corridor Plan](#), Merrimack Valley Land Use Priority Plan, 495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan or other regional plan. See [Executive Order No. 525](#).
 - i. Whether your organization works with Native American tribes and whether they will be involved in the project
 - j. The project's location in or near an area with Environmental Justice populations and how the community has been involved in this project
- 2.) Attach a proposed budget that includes the following (two page maximum):
 - a. An itemized list of estimated project costs
 - b. Estimated total project cost
 - c. Grant request amount
 - d. Description of the methods/sources of project financing
 - e. Timeline reflecting start and end date of steps needed to successfully complete your proposed project on or before June 30, 2026, including how any encroachments will be dealt with.

E. LAND PROTECTION

- 1.) How many acres would this project protect? _____ acres
- 2.) Does the proposed project abut other protected open space?*
- Abuts >25.0 acres of protected open space
- Abuts 11.0-24.9 acres of protected open space
- Abuts 1.0-10.9 acres of protected open space
- Does not abut open space

*Chapter 6I, 6IA, and 6IB lands are not considered protected open space

F. BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

1.) Does the proposed project lie within or abut mapped NHESP BioMap Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscape, Local or Regional Components, ~~Landscape Blocks~~, or Forest Core?

Lies within BioMap core habitat or critical natural landscape or abuts

Lies within Local Landscapes or abuts

~~Lies within Landscape Blocks or abuts~~

Lies within Forest Core habitat or abuts

None of the above

Percentage within NHESP designated Core Habitat

> 75.0%

51%-74%

26%-50%

1%-25%

abuts

Percentage within NHESP designated Critical Natural Landscape

> 75%

51%-74%

26%-50%

1%-25%

abuts

Percentage within BioMap ~~Local~~ Landscape Blocks

> 50%

1%-50%

abuts

Percentage within NHESP designated Forest Core

> 50%

1%-50%

abuts

2.) What is the project location's average climate resiliency score as defined by The Nature Conservancy's [Resilient Mapping Tool](#)?

Most resilient

More resilient

Slightly more resilient

Average or median

3.) How many acres of wetland are on the property? _____ acres
How many acres of upland are on the property? _____ acres
How many potential house lots are on the property? _____

G. WORKING FARMS AND FORESTS

1.) Is the property enrolled in Chapter 6I or 6IA, or has a forest stewardship or other forest management plan been prepared for the property?

Chapter 6I

Chapter 6IA

Forest Stewardship or Management Plan

2.) Will the project parcel conserve forested or agricultural lands?

Yes

No

If yes, describe:

H. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

1.) What public recreational opportunities will the project provide (explain in the project description)?

Preference will be given to projects that provide opportunities for people with disabilities. *Recreational opportunities will be verified by DCS staff during the site visit.*

Trail-based activities (eg, walking, Nordic skiing, biking, horseback riding)

Water-based activities (eg, canoeing, fishing, swimming, skating)

Wilderness activities (eg, camping, hunting)

Group activities (eg, nature education, picnicking, outdoor fitness class)

2.) Will the proposed project advance priorities, goals, or objectives in the **CURRENT** local Open Space and Recreation Plan?

Yes

No

3.) Will the proposed project advance priorities, goals, or objectives in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan?

Yes

No

4.) Will the proposed project advance a local or regional greenway plan or the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan, Merrimack Valley Land Use Priority Plan, 495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan, Metro North Plan, or CMRPC Plan?

Yes

No

I. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This application was prepared by:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

I affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information and data contained in this application for the FY23 Conservation Partnership Grant, including attachments, are true and correct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

J. ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST

Please include the following with your application:

- ☐ **Attachment 1:** Project narrative
- ☐ **Attachment 2:** Budget proposal, grant request, funding sources/methods, and project timeline
- ☐ **Attachment 3:** USGS topographic map with parcel(s) clearly identified, as well as additional applicable maps necessary to reflect:
 - Surrounding other protected open space (identify)
 - NHESP BioMap designations, including Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscape, Local Landscape, **Landscape Blocks**, and Forest Core
 - TNC Resiliency Score
 - Applicable local or regional recreation and/or preservation priorities including local/regional greenway plans or regional preservation areas shown on the State Priority Development or Preservation Areas as shown on the [South Coast Rail Corridor Plan](#), Merrimack Valley Land Use Priority Plan, or the 495/Metrowest Development Compact Plan (if applicable)
- ☐ **Attachment 4:** Letter of commitment from each municipality, state agency, or land trust (or combination thereof) proposed to hold CR on purchased or gifted fee property, or to co-hold gifted CR
- ☐ **Attachment 5:** Documentation of parcel enrollment in the Chapter 61 or 61A, Forest Stewardship program.
- ☐ **Attachment 6:** Appraisal, market analysis, or opinion of value (due to file size limitations of the online grant submission portal, this should be emailed to [Melissa Cryan](#))
- ☐ **Attachment 7:** Articles of Incorporation **with appropriate sections highlighted**, IRS 501(c)(3) letter, and a copy of 2024 Massachusetts Annual Report as filed to the Secretary of State's office
- ☐ **Attachment 8:** Letter of review from Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. To request comments, please send an email to NHESP at natural.heritage@mass.gov. The email's subject line should read "Conservation Partnership comment letter request" and its body should include a brief description of the acquisition, and a shapefile or map of the acquisition or project location. There is no charge for this comment letter.
- ☐ **Attachment 9:** Representative photos of the site
- ☐ **Attachment 10:** Latest survey of the property at time of grant submission

The following forms will be required if selected for funding.

- [Commonwealth Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Commonwealth W-9 Request](#) for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- [Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form](#)
- [Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment](#)

Attachment B
FY 26 CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP GRANT - RESPONSE REVIEW
RATING SYSTEM
100 TOTAL POINTS

I. Organizational Characteristics (13 points maximum)

- 1.) Applicant currently protects land in fee ownership and/or under CRs and has policies or procedures that guide the land acquisition process:
Yes = 1 pt
No = 0 pts
- 2.) Applicant has proven capacity to properly steward fee or CR protected lands:
Yes = 2 pts
No = 0 pts
- 3.) Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff:
0-3 FTE = 3 pts
4-7 = 2 pts
8-11 = 1 pt
- 4.) Articles of incorporation specifically state permanent land protection, land conservation, recreation as one of its missions:
Yes = 4 pts
No = 0 pts
- 5.) Organization has documents or policies that address the disposition of land and/or CRs in the event the organization can no longer steward and administer them:
Yes = 3 pts
No = 0 pts

II. Land Protection (15 points maximum)

- 1.) Total acreage protected (via purchase and/or donation):
>25 acres = 11 pts
20-24 acres = 9 pts

14-19 acres = 7 pts
8-13 acres = 5 pts
2-7 acres = 3 pts
<2 acres = 1 pt

- 2.) Proposed project abuts or links other protected open space:

Abuts >25 acres of protected open space = 4 pts
Abuts 11-24 acres of protected open space = 2 pts
Abuts 1-10 acres of protected open space = 1 pt

III. Biodiversity and Natural Resource Protection (26 points maximum)

- 1.) Project is within designated NHESP BioMap Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscape, or abuts designated lands:

>75% is designated = 6 pts
51%-75% is designated = 5 pts
26%-50% is designated = 3 pts
1%-25% is designated = 2 pts
Project abuts designated lands = 1 pt

- 2.) Project is within designated NHESP BioMap Local Landscapes, or abuts designated lands:

>50% is Local Landscapes = 5 pts
1%-50% is Local Landscapes = 3 pts
Project abuts Local Landscapes = 1 pt

- ~~3.) Project protects BioMap Landscape Blocks, or abuts designated lands:~~

~~>50% is BioMap Landscape Blocks = 5 pts~~
~~1%-50% is BioMap Landscape Blocks = 3 pts~~
~~Project abuts BioMap Landscape Blocks = 1 pt~~

- 4.) Project protects BioMap Forest Core, or abuts designated lands:

>50% is BioMap Forest Core = 5 pts
1%-50% is BioMap Forest Core = 3 pts
Project abuts BioMap Forest Core = 1 pt

5.) How does the property rank for climate change resiliency according to [TNC's mapping score](#)?

Most resilient = 5 pts

More resilient = 3 pts

Slightly more resilient = 1 pts

Average or median = 0

6.) How significantly will the subject parcel's resource value be impacted by its development (rating determined based on how this application compares to others received)?

High impact = 5 pts

Medium impact = 3 pts

Low impact = 1 pt

IV. Working Farms and Forests (7 point maximum)

1.) The majority of the project parcel(s) will remain (or be) enrolled in one or more of the following programs:

Chapter 6I = 2 points

Chapter 6IA = 2 points

Forest Stewardship program = 1 point

2.) The project parcel will conserve forested or agricultural lands:

Yes = 4

No = 0

V. Recreational Opportunities (23 points maximum)

1.) Project provides public recreational opportunities (especially those that go above and beyond to provide access for people with disabilities):

	Yes (3 pts)	Marginal (2pts)	No (0pts)
Group activities (eg, nature study, fitness classes, picnicking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wilderness activities (eg, camping, hunting)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trail-based activities (ie, hiking, biking, walking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water-based activities (eg, swimming, kayaking, fishing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.) Does the project serve an under-served area for outdoor recreation (rating determined by the amount of protected open space per capita and how it compares to other applications received)?

High impact = 5 pts

Medium impact = 3 pts

Low impact = 1 pts

3.) Project meets priorities, goals, or objectives identified in the community's Open Space and Recreation Plan

Yes = 2 pts

No = 0

4.) Project meets priorities, goals, or objectives identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Yes = 1, 2, 3, or 4 pts

No = 0

VI. Overall Project Quality and Importance (16 points)

1.) What is the overall quality and importance of the proposed project?

High = 8-12 pts

Medium = 4-7 pts

Low = 0-3 pts

2.) Is the project within a designated [Environmental Justice population](#)?

Yes = 4

No = 0

Attachment C

Policies, Statutes, Legislation Guiding this Grant Program

Chapter 286 of the Acts of 2014

2000-7056... For the conservation partnership grant program to assist not-for-profit corporations and conservation districts defined in sections 19 to 24, inclusive, of chapter 21 of the General Laws, in acquiring interests in lands suitable for purposes of conservation or recreation; provided, that the corporation shall be formed for 1 of the purposes described in section 4 of chapter 180 of the General Laws and the corporation shall be considered an exempt organization within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; provided further, that grant funds shall be expended to reimburse an eligible corporation or conservation district for money expended by it in establishing a project approved by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs under this program in an amount that the secretary shall determine to be equitable in consideration of anticipated benefits from the project, but in no event shall the amount of the reimbursement exceed 50 per cent of the cost of the project; provided, however, that no reimbursement shall be made under this item to a corporation or conservation district unless a project application is filed by the corporation with the secretary setting forth the plans and information that the secretary may require and approved by the secretary, nor until the corporation or conservation district shall have certified, in a manner approved by the secretary, its ability to provide an amount equal to the total cost of the project, nor until the project has been completed, to the satisfaction of the secretary, in accordance with the approved plans; provided further, that all projects shall include the grant by the corporation or conservation district of an appropriate perpetual conservation restriction, within the meaning of sections 31 and 32 of chapter 184 of the General Laws, to the city or town in which the project is located, to be managed by either its conservation or its recreation commission, or a federal or state agency, or a not-for-profit corporation, or combination of these entities; provided further, that all projects shall provide appropriate public access as determined by the secretary; and provided further, that the secretary may adopt rules and regulations to carry out this item.

Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018

2000-7072.. For grant programs for land, soil, water and natural resource conservation; open space preservation; watershed remediation; coastal resource protection, including securing access to protected coastal lands and lands to provide for the inland migration of coastal habitats; recreation; environmental equity and wildlife and endangered species protection including, but not limited to, the local acquisition for natural diversity grant program, the parkland acquisition and renovation for communities grant program, conservation partnership grant programs, including programs to support landscape-scale land conservation projects, the drinking water supply protection grant program, grant programs to assist and provide funding to conservation districts, grants to support projects and initiatives that promote carbon sequestration and climate change resiliency through sustainable forestry and salt marsh restoration, including associated educational initiatives, and grants to support local, regional and state land use planning and management capabilities to advance smart growth efforts, all pursuant to rules or regulations adopted by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs to

effectuate this item; provided, that the secretary of energy and environmental affairs may provide guidance for planning, prioritization, selection and implementation of projects in furtherance of the goals of climate change mitigation and adaptation and consistent with the integrated state hazard mitigation and climate change adaptation plan; provided further, that all projects shall provide appropriate public access as determined by the secretary...