Evaluation Criteria

2012-13 New York State Conservation Partnership Program

Projects will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria:

CAPACITY & EXCELLENCE GRANTS

Primary Evaluation Criteria

- Project has well defined metrics, goals, and objectives.
- Project is aligned with the land trust's mission, goals and strategic priorities.
- Project aids in the implementation of specific *Land Trust Standards & Practices*.
- Project will develop systems or practices that build organizational capacity and effectiveness and are likely to be sustained beyond the grant period.
- Project is likely to increase the pace of land conservation in the land trust's service area and supports statewide environmental priorities such as those referenced in the 2009 New York State Open Space Plan, 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy and/or New York State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Project can be accomplished within the stated grant period.
- Project has a high likelihood of success but is dependent on matching NYSCPP investment.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to complete the proposed grant-funded activities.

Secondary Evaluation Criteria

- Match is greater than minimum required.
- Land trust demonstrates a high level of competence, accountability, and due diligence, including satisfactory completion of previously awarded NYSCPP projects and final performance reports.
- New NYSCPP Grant Recipients: Preference but not absolute priority will be given to first-time applicant land trusts, all-volunteer land trusts, and land trusts preparing for accreditation or renewal in the next three years.
- Land trust is accredited or shows intent to become accredited within the next 3 years.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Primary Evaluation Criteria

- Project has well defined metrics, goals, and objectives.
- Project is aligned with the land trust's mission, goals and strategic priorities.
- Convincing demonstration of need for new and/or expanded staff capacity, clear description of expected outcomes, and a vision for how enhanced professional capacity will lead to a stronger land trust.
- Likelihood that investment in professional capacity will achieve stated objectives
- Extent to which project builds on existing strengths, organizational achievements, and board commitment
- Likelihood that new and/or expanded staffing capacity will advance financial sustainability and dramatically enhance the organization's ability to conserve land, particularly in areas prioritized in the 2009 New York State Open Space Plan, 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy and/or New York State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Likelihood that new or expanded staff will assist in full implementation of *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and/or help prepare the organization for accreditation or reaccreditation.
- Project can be accomplished within the stated grant period.
- Soundness of the land trust's plan to provide training and professional development opportunities to new and/or expanded staff.
- Security of matching funds and strength of fundraising plan.
- Project has a high likelihood of success but is dependent on matching NYSCPP investment.

Secondary Evaluation Criteria

- Match is greater than minimum required.
- Land trust demonstrates a high level of competence, accountability, and due diligence, including satisfactory completion of previously awarded NYSCPP projects and final performance reports.
- All-Volunteer to Staffed: Position being funded is the land trusts first staff person.
- Land trust is accredited or shows intent to become accredited within the next 3 years.

CONSERVATION CATALYST GRANTS

Primary Evaluation Criteria

- Project has well defined metrics, goals, and objectives.
- Project is aligned with the land trust's mission, goals and strategic priorities.
- Project complements land protection strategies of the 2009 New York State Open Space Plan, New York Wildlife Action Plan, 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy or other local and regional protection plans.
- Project can be accomplished within the stated grant period.
- Demonstrated community and municipal support for the project as evidenced by letters of support, municipal resolution, etc.
- Project enables a partnership, collaboration, or community initiative involving other conservation partners, public and/or private that:
    - serves as a "catalyst" for local or regional open space protection;
    - builds community support for and involvement in land conservation;
    - advances an innovative model for collaboration, outreach, constituency-building, and/or community engagement in New York's land trusts.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to complete a complex multi-year project.
- Project has a high likelihood of success but is dependent on matching NYSCPP investment.

Secondary Evaluation Criteria

- Project acreage and/or relation to other protected areas.
- Match greater than minimum required.
- Land trust demonstrates a high level of competence, accountability, and due diligence, including satisfactory completion of previously awarded NYSCPP projects and final performance reports.
- Land trust is accredited or shows intent to become accredited within the next 3 years.

TRANSACTION GRANTS

Primary Evaluation Criteria

- Project has well defined metrics, goals, and objectives.
- Project is aligned with the land trust's mission, goals and strategic priorities.
- Project complements land protection strategies of the 2009 New York State Open Space Plan, New York Wildlife Action Plan, 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy or other local and regional protection plans. Please cite and include highlighted pages or sections of relevant plan(s).
- Project can be accomplished within the stated grant period.
- Transaction has already closed or land trust can demonstrate with a high degree of certainty that the project will close within grant period.
- Demonstrated landowner, community and local government support for project as evidenced by letters of support.
- Degree to which the project:
    - conserves environmentally significant land and resources;
    - protects land within an assemblage of other protected lands;
    - demonstrates the public benefits of private land conservation;
    - expands access for public use and enjoyment of protected lands.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to managing conserved fee lands and monitoring conservation easements.
- Project has a high likelihood of success but is dependent on matching NYSCPP investment.

Secondary Evaluation Criteria

- Project acreage and/or relation to other protected areas.
- Match is greater than minimum required.
- Land trust demonstrates a high level of competence, accountability, and due diligence, including satisfactory completion of previously awarded NYSCPP projects and final performance reports.
- Land trust is accredited or shows intent to become accredited within the next 3 year.