Land Trust Alliance
Together, conserving the places you love

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

2012-2013 NEW YORK STATE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Land Trust Alliance, with support from Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Martens, and the New York State Legislature, is pleased to announce a tenth round of competitive land trust grants through the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP). This pioneering public-private partnership is administered by the Alliance, in coordination with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Approximately $1.4 million in funding from New York State's Environmental Protection Fund will be awarded by the Alliance in spring 2013. The Conservation Partnership Program grants are available in four categories: *Capacity & Excellence Grants, Conservation Catalyst Grants, Professional Development (Staffing) Grants,* and *Transaction Grants*.

All final applications must be submitted by Friday, December 7, 2012. Grants are expected to be announced by April 2013. [Note: Grant awards are contingent upon release of State funds.] Eligible land trusts may apply for more than one Conservation Partnership Program Grant. However, no land trust may receive more than $80,000 in total grant funding.

Prospective applicants and land trust partners are strongly encouraged to consult with Alliance staff and also attend one of the Alliance's upcoming regional land trust roundtables. These informational meetings, co-hosted by local land trusts, provide an in-depth overview of the Conservation Partnership Program's funding opportunities, guidance on grant guidelines and funding criteria, and timely updates on state and national issues that impact land trusts, landowners, and communities in New York.

CAPACITY & EXCELLENCE GRANTS

The purpose of Capacity & Excellence Grants is to build strong land trusts by enabling them to implement Land Trust Standards and Practices, to prepare for national accreditation and accreditation renewal, and to become sustainable, highly effective organizations. The grant period for all Capacity & Excellence Grants is from January 1, 2013 to July 1, 2014.

CAPACITY GRANTS of up to $50,000 are available for individual land trusts working to improve their reach, effectiveness and impact as not-for-profit, community-based land conservation organizations. Capacity grants enable land trusts to implement Land Trust Standards and Practices, prepare for accreditation or accreditation renewal, and build overall organizational effectiveness. A 25% land trust match is required (up to 50% may be in-kind).

ASSESSMENT GRANTS of $5,000 are available to enable land trusts to complete a consultant-facilitated organizational assessment and to evaluate progress in implementing Land Trust Standards and Practices. These Standards and Practices Assessments follow the Alliance's "Assessing Your Organization" (AYO) methodology and include facilitation and mentoring from an Alliance-trained and approved assessor. The Assessment Grant will also include consultation with the land trust to develop a work plan for implementing priority recommendations identified in the assessment process. Land trusts that have received an Alliance-funded assessment in the past three years are not eligible. A $500 land trust match is required (cash or in-kind).

STEWARDSHIP GRANTS of up to $10,000 are available for land trusts seeking to improve and update project records and documentation for a portfolio of fee-owned properties and/ or conservation easements. This funding is intended to improve records and documentation for "vintage" projects completed prior to 2012. Preference will be given to land trusts preparing for accreditation and accreditation renewal. Land trusts that have previously received a Stewardship Grant are not eligible for another Stewardship Grant at this time. A land trust match is not required.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (STAFFING) GRANTS

Two-year Professional Development Grants of up to $75,000 are available to enable small and medium-sized land trusts to build their organization and programs by adding professional capacity and hiring key additional staff. These competitive grants are intended to support the addition of new and/or expanded permanent position(s) deemed necessary for the organization to significantly enhance its land conservation, stewardship, community outreach, education, and/ or fundraising capabilities. The additional staff capacity should help the land trust implement best business practices (Land Trust Standards and Practices) and ultimately prepare for national accreditation or accreditation renewal. Land trusts with more than seven (7) full-time equivalent (FTE) staff are not eligible for a Professional Development Grant.

These grants typically include supplemental technical assistance funding of $5,000 to enable the grantee land trust to complete a Standards and Practices assessment or related work to implement best practices. A 25% (cash) land trust match is required. The grant period for Professional Development Grants is January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2015.

Important: As in past years, applicants for Professional Development Grants must first submit a Letter of Interest, due by Friday, October 12, 2012. Final applications are by invitation only. Applicants invited to submit a final proposal will be notified by mid-November. Final applications are due by Friday, December 7, 2012.

CONSERVATION CATALYST GRANTS

Two-year Conservation Catalyst Grants of up to $50,000 are available to “catalyze” local and regional partnerships and community initiatives that lead to greater engagement in, and increase public support for, the protection and stewardship of environmentally significant lands, including those identified in the 2009 New York State Open Space Plan, New York Wildlife Action Plan, 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy and/or other local, regional or statewide land protection plans.

Conservation Catalyst projects should involve a measure of innovation for the land trust, engage multiple partners and stakeholders, have clearly defined outcomes, and advance the land trust's mission, strategic goals, and programs. Funded projects typically involve collaboration with local municipalities, other land trusts, and/or other conservation partners.

A 25% land trust match is required (up to 50% may be in-kind). The grant period for Conservation Catalyst Grants is January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2015.

CONSERVATION TRANSACTION GRANTS

Conservation Transaction Grants of up to $50,000 are available for conservation easement and fee-acquisition projects that will result in permanent protection of environmentally significant lands in New York. Funding preference is for open space and land protection priorities identified in the 2009 New York State Open Space Plan, New York Wildlife Action Plan, 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy, county and local farmland protection plans, and/or other strategic conservation plans.

Transaction grant funds may only cover indirect transaction costs including: project-related staff and/or contractor expenses, legal fees, surveys, baseline documentation, stewardship and management plans, and/or public access improvements associated with the purchase, bargain-sale or donation of a conservation easement or fee property. Grant funds are not available for direct fee or easement acquisition expenses.

The overall goal of Transaction Grants is to accelerate the pace of private land conservation in New York State while ensuring land trusts implement Land Trust Standards and Practices.

A 25% land trust (cash) match is required, 50% of which must be allocated to a dedicated land trust stewardship/defense fund. Transaction Grant funds may be used to cover or reimburse land trusts for project-related expenses incurred between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2013.

Important: Transaction Grant funds will not be processed until and unless the proposed conservation transaction is closed, recorded and documented (e.g. executed purchase agreement, conservation easement, or conveyance) to the satisfaction of the Land Trust Alliance. Conservation transactions that will have closed prior to the December 7th grant deadline, or are under contract to close soon thereafter, are preferred. Transactions that will close at an undetermined date in the future may be better suited for another grant cycle.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please visit the New York State Conservation Partnership Program Homepage for access to:

- The online application and reporting system
- Evaluation Criteria and Description of Costs Eligible for Funding
- FAQ's, past grant rosters, background and other general information.

ROUNDTABLES & CONFERENCE CALLS FOR APPLICANT LAND TRUSTS

Land trusts interested in applying for a Conservation Partnership Program grant are encouraged to attend one of the five regional roundtables. Roundtables include an optional morning site visit.

For details and directions, please go to the Conservation Partnership Program Homepage. Please remember to RSVP to Rita Kelly (rkelly@lta.org).

Wednesday, September 19
(10:30 am - 4:00 pm) – Central/ Western (Canastota), hosted by Great Swamp Conservancy

Thursday, October 11
(10:30 am - 4:00 pm) - Capital Region (Troy), hosted by Capital District Community Gardens

Thursday, October 18
(10:30 am - 4:00 pm) – Northern (Clayton), hosted by Thousand Island Land Trust

Monday, October 29
(10:30 am - 4:00 pm) - Hudson Valley (New Paltz), hosted by Wallkill Valley Land Trust

Wednesday, November 14
(10:30 am - 4:00 pm) – Long Island (Cold Spring Harbor), co-hosted by Nassau Land Trust and North Shore Land Alliance

In addition, there will be two informational conference calls for land trust applicants:

Friday, September 14
(10:00 – 11:30 am)
General call for land trusts interested in a Professional Development (Staffing) Grant.
(888) 338 – 1010 (passcode: 17151705#)

Thursday, November 8
(10:00 – 11:30 am)
General call for all prospective applicants
(888) 338 – 1010 (passcode: 17151705#)

QUESTIONS?

Please contact:

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Visit the Conservation Partnership Program Homepage at:
http://www.landtrustalliance.org/about/regional-programs/ne/nyscpp (Bookmark it!)