

2010 Land Conservation Grants

Request for Proposals
July 1, 2010

Overview: A New Conservation Funding Opportunity

In September 2010, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) will award grants up to \$50,000 to fund transaction-related expenses on land conservation projects in the “Quabbin-to-Cardigan” region of western New Hampshire. The area is part of the larger two-state Q2C region that spans one hundred miles from the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts northward to the southern boundary of the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. The region is bounded to the east and west by the Merrimack and Connecticut River Valleys. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forests in New England, and is a key headwater of the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers.

Launched in 2003, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership is a collaborative effort of 27 private organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in the two Q2C states. The Q2C partners share a vision of consolidating the permanent protection of the region’s most ecologically significant forest blocks, and key connections between them for wildlife passage and human recreation. Q2C partners worked for more than three years to develop the Quabbin-to-Cardigan conservation plan, which combines state-of-the-art natural resource science and the consensus vision of the Q2C partner organizations.

Completed in 2007, the Q2C plan identifies approximately 600,000 acres of core conservation focus areas that represent the region’s most ecologically significant forests. These conservation focus areas represent about 30 percent of the two-million-acre region. An additional 400,000 acres, or another 21 percent of the region, are identified as “supporting landscapes” that buffer and link the core areas. The extent to which proposed projects protect land in Q2C focus areas and supporting landscapes will be the primary criteria used to assess applications for funding.

For more information on the Quabbin-to-Cardigan region and conservation plan, grant application materials, maps, a list of towns in the region, etc. visit the “grants” section of www.q2cpartnership.org. If you need help determining whether your project is eligible for funding, please call Chris Wells at (603) 224-9945.

Funding for the 2010 round Q2C Land Conservation Grants is being provided by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), and was requested by U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen. The program is administered by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests on behalf of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership, through a cooperative agreement with NRCS.

What Can Grants be Used For?

- ✿ **Transaction-related expenses on land protection projects (fee or easement).** These expenses may include but are not limited to the procurement of surveys, appraisals and appraisal reviews, attorney's services to applicant related to the acquisition of easements, title searches, closing services, deed preparation and negotiation, baseline document preparation, easement and land recording, and other professional services.

The Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership may also consider grant requests to fund the direct cost of the acquisition of conservation easements (i.e. purchase of the property interest), but such requests are not encouraged at this time given the limited pool of grant dollars available. Grant funds cannot be used to acquire the full fee interest in land. Grant funds also cannot be used to fund stewardship funds/endowments or fundraising-related expenses.

Who Can Apply and Receive Funding?

- ✿ Nonprofit tax exempt 501(c)(3) organizations that have land conservation as their primary function;
- ✿ State agencies that have land conservation as a primary function;
- ✿ Local governments (see list of eligible communities).

All other entities, including but not limited to units of federal government and individuals cannot apply to or receive funding from this grant program. Maximum grant amount per project is \$50,000. Applicants may apply for grants for more than one project, but no more than \$50,000 will be awarded to any one applicant, unless there are no other qualified applications. Expenses incurred before May 27, 2010 are not eligible for funding through this grant round.

How Will Projects Be Selected?

Primary Criteria

A.1. Eligible projects must be located in the Quabbin to Cardigan region of New Hampshire. See list of towns at www.q2cpartnership.org to determine whether your project is eligible to apply.

A.2. The project must protect land that has been identified as “conservation focus area” and/or “supporting landscape” in the Quabbin to Conservation Plan. To determine whether your project protects land in one or both of these categories, see maps on “download” page of www.q2cpartnership.org. Geographic Information System (GIS) users will also find “shapefiles” of these Q2C priority areas. All applicants are required to submit a GIS shapefile of proposed project with their application, or if one is not available, supply other information from which GIS shapefiles can be created. See application form for details.

Applicants are advised that the GIS shapefiles will be used to calculate total acres of Q2C “conservation focus area” and/or “supporting landscape” protected by proposed projects. Projects with a higher total number of acres and/or a higher percentage of acres in these priority areas will be more competitive than projects that protect smaller number of acres and/or a smaller percentage of acres in these areas.

A.3. The project must *permanently* protect the land through acquisition of fee interest or with a permanent conservation easement or conservation restriction.

A.4. The project must be completed and all grant funds spent no later than April 30, 2012.

A.5. Applicant must demonstrate that the current owner(s) of the land to be conserved through the project has been notified that a Q2C grant application is being submitted, and is willing to donate and/or sell their land or an easement to the applicant organization if funding is awarded.

A.6 Applicant must demonstrate the capacity and financial ability to execute the transaction and ensure perpetual stewardship of the protected property.

Additional Considerations (not in order of priority)

B.1. Extent to which the project adds to existing protected land, and/or provides linkage between protected lands.

B.2. Extent to which the project provides financial leverage of grant dollars invested, in terms of total value of land protected.

B.3. Type and degree of conversion threat to land.

B.4. Extent to which project provides public recreational access. *The provision of public pedestrian access is not required, but is encouraged and will be considered in the grant review process*

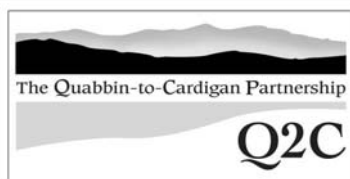
Application Deadline

Completed applications may be submitted electronically to cwells@forestsociety.org, and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, **September 3, 2010**. Completed applications may also be sent by mail, and must be *postmarked* no later than Friday, September 3, 2010. Mail applications to: Chris Wells, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301

Successful grant applicants will be notified in writing no later than September 30, 2010.

For questions regarding the grant program and the application process please contact: Chris Wells at (603) 224-9945 x355 or cwells@forestsociety.org.

The Q2C Partnership and NRCS reserve the right to modify this and other application materials in future grant rounds, based on experience gained from administering the program, changes in funding and/or legal requirements.



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