

# Open Space Conservation Funding Opportunities in Cumberland County

## 1. PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

### Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)

- i. <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/pages/default.aspx>
- ii. Purpose – The C2P2 program includes grants for preservation of open space, including priorities of community recreation and critical habitat and open space.
- iii. Funding Levels – awards seldom exceed \$1 million; 1:1 match required (can be cash or donated land value)
- iv. Timing – one application round per year: opens in Jan., closes in Apr., typically awarded in late fall to winter
- v. Eligible Applicants – counties, municipalities, nonprofits, institutes of higher education
- vi. Contact – Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) – Regional Advisor, who in Cumberland County is Lindsay Baer ([libaer@pa.gov](mailto:libaer@pa.gov); 717-858-1185)

## 2. PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

### Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP)

- i. <https://dcled.pa.gov/programs/greenways-trails-and-recreation-program-gtrp/>
- ii. Purpose – Act 13 of 2012 established the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds through the GTRP for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks, and beautification projects.
- iii. Funding Levels – grants cannot exceed \$250,000; a 15% match required (can be cash or cash equivalents)
- iv. Timing – one application round per year: opens in Feb., closes in May
- v. Eligible Applicants – for-profit businesses, municipalities, nonprofits, institutes of higher education, watershed organizations
- vi. Contact – DCED – Office of Business Finance and Workforce Development – CFA Programs Division ([ra-dcedsitedvpt@pa.gov](mailto:ra-dcedsitedvpt@pa.gov); 717-787-6245)



### **3. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

#### **Highlands Conservation Act Grant Program**

- i. <https://www.fws.gov/program/highlands-conservation-act-grant>
- ii. Purpose – Program aims to permanently protect conservation lands (through acquisition or easement) in the Federal Highlands region, focused on key objectives around water quality, healthy forests, wildlife, productive agriculture, and recreation opportunities.
- iii. Funding Levels – projects with total project costs between \$200,000 and \$3,000,000; match requirement is 50% Non-Federal match
- iv. Timing – applications due to USFWS Dec. 2024; announcement in Feb. 2025
- v. Eligible Applicants – state agencies, counties, and municipalities
- vi. Contact – Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) – Highlands Program Specialist, Dan Pierce ([danipierce@pa.gov](mailto:danipierce@pa.gov); 717-772-1282)

### **4. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

#### **a. Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) Program**

- i. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/ale-agricultural-land-easements>
- ii. Purpose – ALE component of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides funding for farmland preservation.
- iii. Contact – local NRCS office in Carlisle or State Office’s Easements Coordinator, Melissa Hanner ([melissa.hanner@usda.gov](mailto:melissa.hanner@usda.gov), 717-237-2155)

#### **b. Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) Program**

- i. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/wre-wetland-reserve-easements>
- ii. Purpose – WRE component of ACEP helps private landowners protect, restore, and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.
- iii. Contact – local NRCS office in Carlisle or State Office’s Easements Coordinator, Melissa Hanner ([melissa.hanner@usda.gov](mailto:melissa.hanner@usda.gov), 717-237-2155)

#### **c. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Kittatinny Ridge Landscape**

- i. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/rcpp-regional-conservation-partnership-program>
- ii. Purpose – Kittatinny Ridge project leverages NRCS and partner contributions to implement conservation easements along the ridge.
- iii. Contact – local NRCS office in Carlisle or RCPP Lead Partner, PA Farmland Protection Bureau Director, Stephanie Zimmerman ([stzimmerma@pa.gov](mailto:stzimmerma@pa.gov), 717-783-3167)

#### **d. NRCS Funding Levels, Eligibility, and Timing (apply to ALE, WRE, and RCPP)**

- i. Funding Levels – NRCS may contribute up to 50% percent of the fair market value of the easement; at least 50% match required
- ii. Eligible Applicants – farmers and private, non-industrial forest landowners
- iii. Timing – applications accepted on a rolling basis, but ranking deadlines occur several times throughout the Federal fiscal year (FY); in FY24, they were Nov., Jan., and Mar. in PA



## 5. Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)

### Consumptive Use Mitigation Grant Program

- i. <https://www.srbcb.gov/our-work/grants/consumptive-use-mitigation-grant.html>
- ii. Purpose – Projects that improve environmental and water quality conditions to increase watershed resilience during low flow periods can be eligible for land conservation. Priorities include restoration components that provide improved groundwater recharge or preservation of critical recharge areas (see SRBC study online for areas)
- iii. Funding Levels – Minimum funding level of \$100,000 suggested; no set maximum, but total program provides \$6-8 million per year; match requirement ranges from 10-25%, depending on award amount (SRBC not considered Federal match)
- iv. Timing – One application round per year: opens in Nov., closes in Jan., awarded in Apr.
- v. Eligible Applicants – local, state, and Federal government entities; nonprofits; institutes of higher education; SRBC Project Sponsors
- vi. Contact – SRBC, Hydrogeologist – Planning and Operations Division, Pierre MaCoy ([pmacoy@srbcb.gov](mailto:pmacoy@srbcb.gov), 717-238-0423, ext. 1230)

## 6. Cumberland County

### a. Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program

- i. <https://www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/286/Agricultural-Easement-Program-Applicatio>
- ii. Purpose – ACE Program protects viable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements that preserve the land for agricultural production in perpetuity.
- iii. Funding Levels – payment based on appraisal with county cap of \$4,500/acre; county can acquire joint easements with townships/nonprofits through cost-share
- iv. Timing – applications received by Dec. 31 will be evaluated for following year's funding
- v. Eligible Applicants – private landowners
- vi. Contact – Planning Department, Senior Planning Manager, Stephanie Williams ([sjwilliams@cumberlandcountypa.gov](mailto:sjwilliams@cumberlandcountypa.gov), 717-240-5383)

### b. Land Partnership Grant Program

- i. <https://www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/4922/Land-Partnerships-Grant-Program>
- ii. Purpose – Provides financial assistance to municipalities and nonprofits for agriculture preservation, natural resource protection, creation of parks, and other purposes; land acquisitions can be either fee simple or conservation easements
- iii. Funding Levels – payment based on appraisal; county generally will not fund more than 50% of the total cost; maximum grant of \$100,000 for land acquisition
- iv. Timing – 2025 application cycle is to be determined
- v. Eligible Applicants – municipalities, nonprofits
- vi. Contact – Planning Department, Senior Planning Manager, Stephanie Williams ([sjwilliams@cumberlandcountypa.gov](mailto:sjwilliams@cumberlandcountypa.gov), 717-240-5383)



## **7. Appalachian Trail Conservancy**

### **Wild East Action Fund**

- i. <https://appalachiantrail.org/our-work/conservation/landscape/wild-east-action-fund/>
- ii. Purpose – supports projects that accelerate the pace of conservation within the Appalachian Trail landscape
- iii. Funding Levels – land protection projects must be \$100,000 or less
- iv. Timing – application period typically opens in late summer/fall of each year; notifications typically occur in late Nov.
- v. Eligible Applicants – nonprofits, government entities
- vi. Contact – Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Max Olsen ([molsen@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:molsen@appalachiantrail.org))

## **8. Open Space Institute**

### **Appalachian Landscapes Protection Initiative**

- i. <https://www.openspaceinstitute.org/funds/appalachian-landscapes-protection-fund>
- ii. Purpose – awards capital grants for land protection in portions of the Kittatinny landscape
- iii. Present Program no longer accepting applications in Kittatinny, but OSI is presently fundraising for a new, larger fund pool to restart program.
- iv. Contact – OSI, Bill Rawlyk ([brawlyk@osiny.org](mailto:brawlyk@osiny.org))

## **9. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

### **Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) Grants Program**

- i. <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund/chesapeake-wild>
- ii. Purpose – supports efforts to conserve, steward, and enhance fish and wildlife habitats and related conservation values in the Chesapeake Bay watershed
  - a. Implementation: direct on-the-ground conservation, stewardship, or enhancement
  - b. Planning and Technical Assistance: enhance capacity of local/regional partners into the future
- iii. Funding Levels – Implementation: \$75,000-\$750,000 request, 1:1 match (up to 50% of match can be Federal funds); Planning Technical Assistance: up to \$75,000 request, match encouraged but not required
- iv. Timing – generally Jan.-Apr. application period; announced late summer
- v. Eligible Applicants – all levels of government entities; nonprofits; educational institutions
- vi. Contact – NFWF, Chesapeake Programs, Program Director, Jake Reilly ([jake.reilly@nfwf.org](mailto:jake.reilly@nfwf.org), 202-857-0166)

### **Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants (SWG) Program**

- i. <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund/chesapeake-small-watershed-grants>
- ii. WILDS considered better option for land conservation, but SWG can be used for due diligence and land conservation projects with riparian benefit (same Contact as above)

