

DCNR'S GRANT PROGRAM----- TYPES OF PROJECTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) provides cabinet-level status for conservation and recreation programs dealing with local recreation, heritage parks, rivers conservation, greenways, trails, and open spaces. A key priority of this agency is to bring its programs into towns and cities across Pennsylvania and to provide leadership linking agency resources with local conservation efforts.

Whether its developing a trail that connects a sub-division to a borough's downtown business district, rehabilitating a community athletic field, building a safer playground, preparing a watershed or greenways plan, protecting a critical natural or open space area or constructing a snowmobile or ATV Trail, DCNR's Bureau of Recreation & Conservation's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) can provide communities, land conservancies and nonprofit organizations with the technical assistance or grant funding to undertake these and other types of recreation and conservation projects.

The C2P2 grant program is a tool for DCNR to partner with communities, nonprofit groups and the private sector to conserve Pennsylvania's valuable natural and cultural heritage and support community recreation and park initiatives. DCNR partnerships involve greenways, open spaces, community parks, rail trails, river corridors, natural areas, indoor and outdoor recreation, heritage areas and environmental education. Agency programs are linked with other State agency efforts to conserve historic resources, protect water quality, enhance tourism, and foster community development.

DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation provides a single point of contact for communities and nonprofit conservation agencies seeking state assistance through its C2P2 program in support of local recreation and conservation initiatives. This assistance can take the form of grants, technical assistance, information exchange and training. All of DCNR's funding sources are combined into one annual application cycle (generally early spring), and there is a single application format and process with one grant manual (except for the Heritage Parks program). Some C2P2 applications are selected for federal Land and Water Conservation Funds, which require some supplemental information to enable submission of the application to the National Park Service (NPS). Generally, all components require a match, usually 50% of cash contributions. To obtain this assistance contact one of DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation's six regional offices at http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/Regional_Map.pdf

The demand for DCNR's C2P2 funds has been steadily increasing, as communities and conservancies seek to meet the recreation and conservation needs of residents for access to outdoor recreation, natural areas to enhance their overall quality of life, and preserve critical landscapes. Over the past five years, DCNR has been able to fund on average 40% or less of the applications received.

Types of Projects Eligible for Funding

Community Projects are awarded to municipalities and authorized non-profit organizations for recreation, park and conservation projects. These include the rehabilitation and new development of parks and recreation facilities (development projects); acquisition of land for active or passive park and conservation purposes (acquisition projects); and technical assistance for feasibility studies, trails studies, conservation plans, site development planning, and comprehensive recreation, greenway and open space planning (planning projects). The majority of funding sources used for funding community projects require a 50 percent match except for some technical assistance grants and development projects eligible as small community projects whose total project cost is \$60,000 or less. The small community development projects provide a municipal applicant with a population of 5000 or less with an alternate method of funding for rehabilitation and development of minor park, recreation and conservation areas and facilities.

Land Trust Projects are awarded funding to acquire open space and natural areas. Eligible applicants for land trust projects include pre-qualified nonprofit land trusts and conservancies. The majorities of funding sources used for funding land trust projects require a 50% cash match and or land donation value. Priority is given to protecting the Commonwealth's critical habitat areas.

Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Projects develop and maintain recreational trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. Eligible applicants include federal and state agencies, local governments and private organizations. Match requirements for Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program Grants are 80% grant money, up to a maximum of \$100,000, and 20% project applicant money. However, acquisition projects will require a 50/50 match. "Soft match" (credit for donations of funds, materials, services, or new right-of-way) is permitted from any project sponsor, whether a private organization or public agency. Eligible project categories include: maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; construction of new recreational trails (with restrictions on new trails on Federal land); and, acquisition of easements or property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors.

Rails-to-Trails Projects entail the planning, acquisition or development of rail-trail corridors. Eligible applicants include municipalities and nonprofit organizations established to preserve and protect available abandoned railroad corridors for use as trails. Funding used for rails-to-trails projects require a 50% cash or in-kind match.

River Conservation Projects include developing river conservation plans, as well as implementation projects involving acquiring land, and developing facilities such as trails, pavilions, and fishing access areas along river corridors. Eligible applicants include municipalities, counties, municipal and inter-municipal authorities, and river support groups. River support groups must be non-profits, which are designated to act on behalf of interested municipalities. Implementation grants are available to carry out projects or activities defined in an approved river conservation plan. Grants require a 50% match.

Heritage Area Projects promote public-private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historic and recreation resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are available only to projects located in Pennsylvania's 12 designated Heritage Areas. These projects are awarded for a variety of purposes including feasibility studies; development of management action plans for heritage park areas; specialized studies; implementation projects; and hiring of state heritage park managers. Grants require a 25-50% local match. Applications for Heritage Area funds are made through a separate process directly to each of the Heritage Areas. (For information go to <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/heritageparks>).

Sources of Funding

The C2P2 program funds various types of grants with several different funding sources:

- The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (Key 93),
- The Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener 1)
- Growing Greener Bond Fund (Growing Greener 2)
- Act 68 Snowmobile and ATV Trails Fund.
- The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- The Federal Recreational Trails component of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

DCNR determines which funding source is used to fund a project based on a number of factors including matching requirements, amount of funding request and the type of applicant. Before submitting a grant application, applicants should discuss this and other issues relating to their proposed project with their DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Regional Recreation and Parks Advisor. To contact your Regional Recreation and Park Advisors please refer to our regional office map found at http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/Regional_Map.pdf

Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (Key 93)

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Act (Key 93) became law in July 1993 with an approval of 48-0 in the Senate and 196-3 in the House. The Keystone Fund is DCNR's primary source of funding to support grants for recreation and land conservation (approximately 60% of all funding sources). Grants are awarded to project types including Community Grants for planning, development, acquisition; Rivers Conservation Projects; Land Trust Projects; and Rails-to-Trails Projects.

The Keystone legislation provides for 15% of the Realty Transfer Tax collected by the State to be put in the Keystone Fund for distribution to several state agencies. DCNR receives 65% of the funding, State System of Higher Education receives 18%, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission receives 13% and the Department of Education receives 4% to support community libraries. DCNR's 65% allocation is divided (by law) for the following uses: 30% for State Park and Forestry facility rehabilitation and construction (up to 10% of this amount can be used for rails-to-trails projects and up to 10% can be used for rivers conservation projects); 25% for grants for Community Recreation; and 10% for grants to Land Trusts.

Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener 1)

In 2000, the Legislature approved the establishment of a new fund – the *Environmental Stewardship Fund* – that provided funding to several state agencies and authorities for the purpose of clean water and sound land use, land reclamation, natural resource conservation and community recreation. DCNR's portion of the Fund is invested in State park and forestry facilities as well as grants for greenways, trails, open space, natural areas, river corridors and watersheds, community parks and recreation and other projects to conserve the biological diversity of the Commonwealth. Funding for Growing Greener 1 is from additional tipping fees placed on disposal of municipal waste.

Growing Greener Bond Fund (Growing Greener 2)

In a 2005 public referendum, a majority of Pennsylvania voters approved a \$625 million Growing Greener bond recognizing that the demands for open space conservation, environmental protection and agricultural farm preservation were of such urgency that more funding was needed to protect and invest in Pennsylvania's environmental well-being. DCNR's portion of bond proceeds is being invested in State park and forest improvements, open space preservation and municipal parks and recreation facilities. DCNR's bond funds are anticipated to be fully spent by 2010.

Federal Funding:

DCNR has a limited source of funding for motorized, passive, and multi-use trail projects and large park development and acquisition types of projects with Federal funding it receives and administers.

Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program---In Pennsylvania, the Recreational Trails Program is administered by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation & Conservation (BRC) in consultation with the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB), which is composed of both motorized and non motorized recreational trail users.

Eligible applicants include federal and state agencies, local governments and private organizations. Grants are provided to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. The Department provides grant funding not to exceed 80 percent of eligible costs except for acquisition projects, which is not to exceed 50 percent of eligible costs. Funding for the Recreational Trails Program is provided to the Commonwealth through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21).

This funding must be distributed among motorized, non-motorized, and diverse trail use, as follows:

- 40% minimum for diverse trail use
- 30% minimum for motorized recreation
- 30% minimum for non-motorized recreation

Snowmobile/ATV funding---Funds municipalities, appropriate/authorized organizations, educational institutions and for-profit organizations for the planning, development and acquisition, and maintenance of snowmobile and all terrain vehicle trails and areas. The department is actively seeking opportunities to expand motorized recreation throughout the Commonwealth by fostering public and private partners in strategic locations across the state.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Program --- Only political subdivisions (municipalities, municipal agencies and school districts) are eligible to receive LWCF funding. Annual appropriations of federal funds are made to the states to provide 50% matching grants for general public outdoor park, recreation and conservation projects.