

THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Guidelines for Nonprofit Conservation Organization



A Partnership in Conservation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



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Stewardship Contact Information

For information about Stewardship grants, contact your Regional Community Services Specialist (CSS) or <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/orgcaer/cfa/LR/stewardship/stewardship.html>.

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Welcome to the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Program. The Wisconsin Legislature created this innovative program in 1989 to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation. The program was renewed and expanded for a second decade in 1999 and will continue until June 30, 2010. Named for two of Wisconsin's most revered conservation leaders, Governor Warren Knowles and Senator Gaylord Nelson, the program has been an outstanding success story.

Each year \$60 million is available through general obligation bonds to preserve Wisconsin's most significant land and water resources. The state of Wisconsin sells bonds to investors to raise the funds, and then pays back the debt over the next 20 years. This spreads the cost over time so it is shared with future users of public lands. Foundations, businesses, and private citizens also contribute to Stewardship projects, and landowners may donate land and easements too. This leveraging of private resources with public funds is an important ingredient in the Program's success.

Stewardship dollars are used to acquire conservation lands for a myriad of purposes, including: state and local parks, recreational trails, natural areas, state and county forests, wildlife habitat areas, fisheries, urban green spaces, river and stream corridors, flowages, and wild lakes. Stewardship funds are also used to improve amenities at state and local parks and restore prairies and wetlands.

The Program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Stewardship Advisory Council (SAC) advises the Department on matters relating to the program. Council members represent local units of government and nonprofit organizations.

The Stewardship Program was established to ensure that the things people love about Wisconsin—its natural beauty and promise of outdoor fun—will be here for future generations. To date, Stewardship has funded hundreds of DNR, local government, and nonprofit projects in 71 of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

Over 50,000 Wisconsinites are involved as members, volunteers, or donors of Wisconsin land trusts and other conservation organizations taking an active role in conserving the land and water resources of their communities.

Stewardship builds upon a long Wisconsin tradition of land conservation. The cultural and economic history of our state is grounded in its landscape, and perhaps we can provide no greater gift to the citizens of the 21st century than to preserve parts of this landscape for future generations. The places we save today will be a permanent and lasting investment in their future. We invite you to join in this endeavor.

Stewardship Grants – Working Together for Wisconsin

A key component of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is cooperation and partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, local units of government, and nonprofit organizations. To foster this partnership, Stewardship provides 50% match grants to eligible sponsors for qualified projects. The grants enable the state to stretch its dollars by leveraging those dollars with other funding sources. Approximately \$8 million is available each year for grants to nonprofit conservation organizations, and another \$8 million is available to local governments.

These guidelines are for nonprofit organizations interested in applying for Stewardship grants to purchase land or easements. See the section *Getting Help* for information on other funding opportunities that are available under the Stewardship Program and other related programs.

Eligible Organizations



The Stewardship Program recognizes the important role nonprofit organizations and private citizens play in meeting the conservation and recreation needs of Wisconsin.

Two types of organizations can receive grants under the program:

- (1) **Nonprofit conservation organizations (NCOs)** An NCO is defined as a nonprofit corporation, charitable or other nonprofit association whose mission includes the acquisition of property for conservation purposes. This mission should be reflected in the charter, incorporation papers or bylaws of the organization. The group must also be a 501(c)(3) organization exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue code.

Over 45 NCOs have been awarded more than \$47 million dollars in Stewardship grants to acquire conservation lands and easements around the state. They have raised well over \$47 million to directly match the state's investment. These lands provide the public with many opportunities for outdoor recreation and education, whether it be a place to enjoy the dwarf lake iris, launch a canoe, observe a red fox, or shoot a ring-necked pheasant.

NCOs may receive grants for the following purposes:

- Acquire property for resource protection and outdoor recreation.
- Develop recreational facilities on state-owned lands.
- Restore habitat on state-owned lands or other lands that are dedicated as State Natural Areas.
- Develop the Ice Age National Scenic Trail on state-owned lands or lands dedicated for the Trail.

In addition to the basic eligibility requirements described above, any organization applying for a grant must also be able to demonstrate that it has the capacity to carry out and complete the project and provide for its maintenance over time. This determination is made when a group applies for a grant for a specific project.

To learn if your organization is eligible to receive a grant, complete and submit the *Stewardship Program Eligibility Application Form* found in Appendix D.

- (2) **State Property Friends Groups** A Friends group is defined as a nonprofit corporation that has been certified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) or (4) organization exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue code. One of the missions of the organization must be to raise funds for a Department property. The group needs to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department confirming this mission.

Friends groups may receive grants of up to \$20,000 per year for the following purposes:

- Develop recreational facilities on state-owned land
- Restore habitat on state-owned lands or lands dedicated as State Natural Areas
- Develop the Ice Age Trail on state-owned lands or other lands dedicated for the Trail

A Friends group may receive grants for property acquisition if it also qualifies as a NCO.

A Special Message for other organizations. We welcome and encourage other groups to participate in the program also, even if they are not eligible for a grant. There are many opportunities to partner with an organization or government unit that is eligible. For instance, if you are a garden club, you may want to support a Stewardship project in your area by providing volunteer or funding support to a local land trust undertaking the project. Many groups also provide valuable assistance to the Department of Natural Resources and local governments. To learn more about partnering opportunities, go to the NCO Stewardship web page at see <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/cfa/LR/Stewardship/NCO/nonprofit.html>. Look on the left side of the screen under *Stewardship Is For Everyone*.

Eligible Projects and Program Priorities

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is actually an umbrella for several subprograms, two of which have multiple components with their own clearly defined goals and criteria. These subprograms are summarized in the



“Stewardship Family Tree” on the next page. In addition, there is more detailed information about the different components of the program in Appendix C.

The Department may award a grant for a project that benefits the public and meets the criteria of one or more of these subprograms. Both fee simple and easement acquisitions are eligible for funding.

In addition to the criteria listed in Appendix C, other factors will also be considered when evaluating a grant application including:

1. Whether the project has regional, statewide or local significance.
2. Whether a property is part of an existing project (that may be pursued in collaboration with others), where the acquisition of adjacent parcels will provide greater benefit for natural resource conservation than single parcel projects.
3. Whether the project has been identified as important for natural resource protection in a Smart Growth Plan; comprehensive natural resources or outdoor recreation plan; the Natural Heritage Inventory database; or the Department’s Land Legacy Report (go to

Friends of State Properties

Over sixty-five Friends groups operate throughout Wisconsin providing vital support to state parks and other state properties. Groups sponsor many different types of projects partially funded with Stewardship grants from restoration of the Rock Island Lighthouse to development of a wildlife garden display at Kohler-Andrae State Park.

Since 1994, approximately \$2 million has been awarded to Friends groups and nonprofits for 268 projects on state lands.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/NCOeligibility.html> and search on Land Legacy Report).

4. The degree to which the site is threatened by development or other conversion of land use.
5. Likelihood of success. Whether an organization has the capacity to complete and maintain the project. An organization will not receive funding until there is a sound land management plan that ensures the long-term viability of a project.

Ineligible Projects

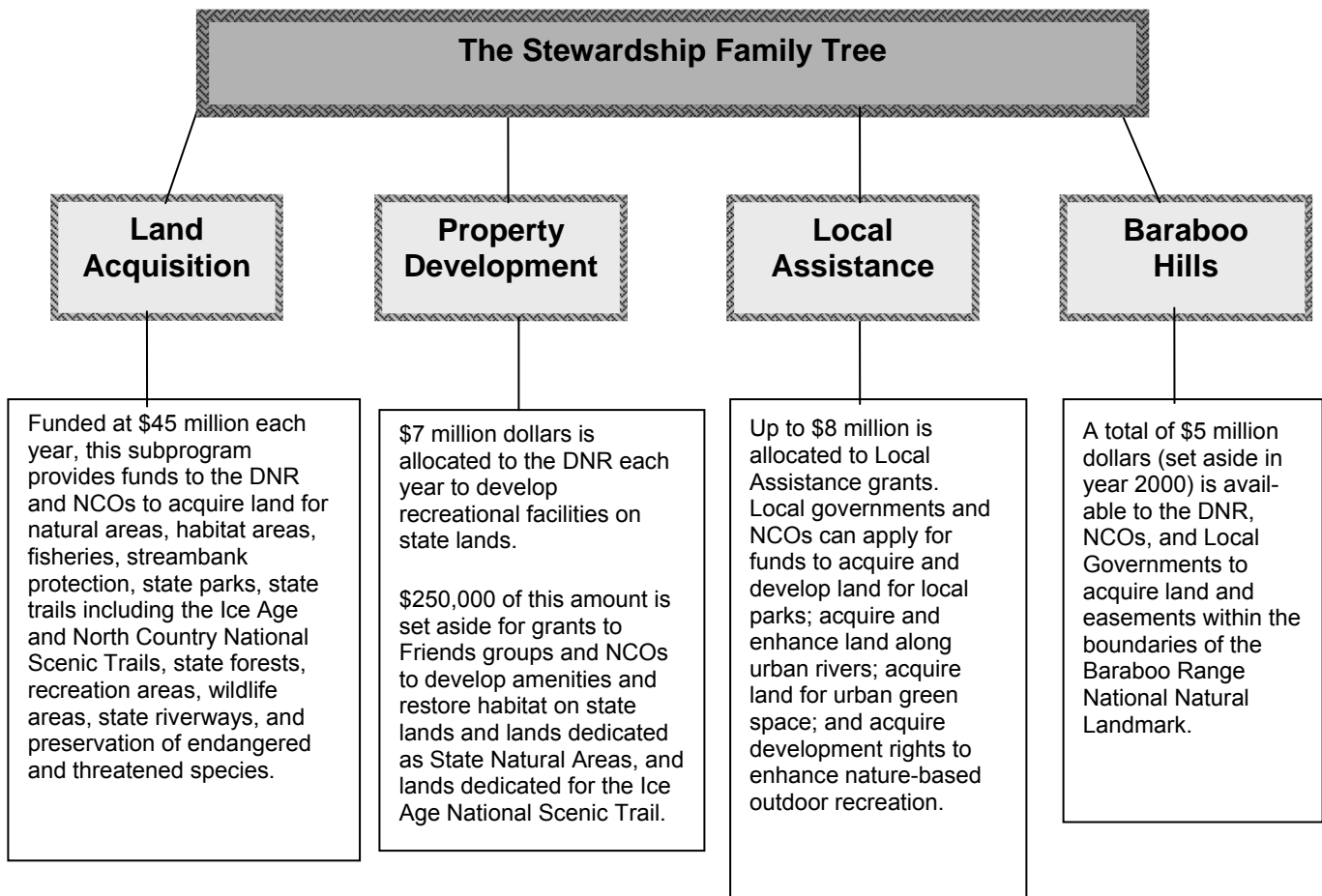
Property that is not eligible for grants includes:

1. Property that was acquired more than one year before a grant application is submitted for that property. (Eligible parcels that are not awarded grants in the fiscal year in which they are submitted due to insufficient funds may be considered for funding in the following fiscal year.)
2. Property that has restrictions or other covenants that prevent or limit the property from being managed for the conservation or public recreational purposes of the Stewardship Program or that would pre-empt the Department’s reversionary interests in the property.
3. Property that is used or may be used for licensed game farms, deer farms, shooting preserves, forest nurseries or experimental stations.
4. Property that will be used for non nature-based outdoor recreation. “Nature-based outdoor recreation” is defined as activities where the primary focus or purpose is the appreciation or enjoyment of nature. Typical activities are hiking, bicycling, wildlife or nature observation, camping, nature study, fishing, hunting, picnicking, cross-country skiing, canoeing and multi-use trail activities.



Ineligible activities are activities where the primary focus is not appreciation or enjoyment of nature, such as sports that require extensively developed open spaces, such as dedicated sports fields, swimming pools, and tennis courts.

5. Property where negotiations were not conducted on a “willing seller – willing buyer” basis. (More applicable for local government grants where the local government has the right to condemn land).



Getting Help

The Bureau of Community Financial Assistance

The Bureau of Community Financial Assistance administers most grant programs for the Department of Natural Resources. The Bureau provides both central office and regional support to Stewardship grant applicants.

These guidelines are designed to serve as your map through Stewardship and should answer most of your initial questions regarding grants for acquisition of property. One DNR Community Services Specialist (CSS) in each of the five DNR regions works with NCOs, and is your primary contact for additional information. That person will walk you through the grant process from project conception to issuing the final check. Your CSS will explain the requirements of the program, assist you in evaluating project alternatives, bring in other DNR staff as needed, and suggest other funding sources if your project does not qualify for a Stewardship grant.

The CSS will also determine which of the Stewardship subprograms is appropriate for your project. We recommend that you carefully review the program criteria, explained in Appendix C, but do not spend a great deal of time trying to determine which program is appropriate. Your CSS will do that for you. Their names are listed on the inside front cover of this publication. We encourage you to call your CSS early in the process of project selection and whenever you have a question.

Stewardship Website

Information on the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is available on the Department web page. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/stewardship.html> and search on the word "Stewardship" or "Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program." Start at the home page.

Grants for Conservation Easements

Stewardship grants are sometimes awarded for acquisition of conservation easements. Easements may also be used for "Sponsor Match" (see the section on *Financing Your Project*). The Department has specific requirements for easements, and if you would like more information about these requirements, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/grants/easement.html> or call your CSS. If you plan on applying for a grant for an easement or using an easement for match, do not begin the easement until you have carefully reviewed this information. Otherwise your easement will be unlikely to qualify for the program.

Other Publications

Below is a list of other Department guidelines that may be useful to you. These are available on line or from your CSS.

- *Land Acquisition Guidelines for Nonprofit Organizations*
- *Grant Guidelines and Application for Stewardship Local Assistance Programs, Federal Land and Water Conservation Program, and Federal Recreation Trails Program*
- *DNR Real Estate Appraisal Guidelines*
- *Stewardship Property Development and Restoration Grants for State Properties and Dedicated Natural Areas*
- *Guidelines and Application for Lake Management Planning Grant Program and Lake Protection and Classification Grant Program*
- *Guidelines and Application for River Protection Grant Program*
- *Directory of State and Federal Financial Assistance Programs Administered by the Department of Natural Resources*



Gathering Waters Conservancy

Gathering Waters Conservancy is a land conservation organization established in 1994 to assist land trusts, landowners, and communities in their efforts to protect Wisconsin's land and water resources. It serves as an education and technical assistance center, providing expert advice on land conservation issues and working statewide to preserve Wisconsin's natural heritage and rural landscape. You may reach Gathering Waters by calling 608-251-9131 or going to their web page at www.gatheringwaters.org. Their address is 211 S. Paterson St., Suite 270, Madison, WI 53703.

Land Trust Alliance

The Land Trust Alliance is a national organization located in Washington, D.C., which also provides education and technical assistance on land conservation issues, but from a national perspective. The two organizations complement each other, with Gathering Waters Conservancy able to provide more local assistance. LTA publishes a number of excellent books and other reference materials on land conservation topics. You may reach the Land Trust Alliance by calling 202-638-4725 or going to their web page at www.lta.org. Their address is 1331 H St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20005-4734.



Stewardship Terms and Conditions

When a nonprofit organization signs a Grant and Management Contract accepting Stewardship funds, it is also agreeing to comply with program requirements. These requirements are spelled out in the grant contract and in Chapter 51 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The grant contract is a legal document that will be recorded as a permanent encumbrance on the property. All obligations, terms, conditions, and restrictions of the grant contract are limitations on the use of the property *in perpetuity*.

Below is a list of the major conditions of the Stewardship Program:

1. **Land Management.** The NCO is responsible for ensuring that the natural values of the property are protected and maintained in perpetuity, and that the property is managed according to the terms of a Land Management Plan. This requires ongoing control and oversight of the property. The Land Management Plan is developed by the NCO and approved by the DNR. When a property acquired with a grant is within the boundaries of a DNR project, the Land Management Plan must be consistent with the DNR's plan for the project.

See Appendix B for information on Developing a Project Narrative and Land Management Plan.

2. **Public Access.** Property must be open to the public unless the Department determines it is necessary to close the property to protect plants, wild animals or other natural features, or unless the NCO is purchasing an easement and the right of public access is not being purchased with the easement.

If the property is landlocked, you will need to obtain an access easement over adjoining property for your organization, the DNR and the public. The Department's Model Access Easement is available on our website or call your CSS for a copy.

3. **Reversionary rights.** If a NCO violates any essential condition of the grant contract and fails to correct it within six months after written notification, all title, right, and interest in the property held by the NCO shall vest in the state. In the event the NCO dissolves, the property shall revert to the Department unless it approves transfer to another NCO or government agency.

4. **Conveyance of property or property rights.** An NCO may not convey any interest in the property to a third party nor allow any leases, permits, or encumbrances without the prior written approval of the Department. Property may not be used as security for any debt unless the Department previously approves the incurring of the debt, which is not likely. If necessary, the Department could take action to avoid the placement of liens, judgments, or encumbrances against the property. If the Department should approve a transfer to a third party, the property remains subject to all requirements of the Stewardship Program.

? Who acquires the property and who holds title to the land once it is acquired. The NCO both purchases the property and holds title to it. If a NCO wishes to transfer title to a third party, such as a local unit of government, it will need permission from the DNR to do so. This permission is granted through a legal document called an "Assignment of Stewardship Responsibility."

5. **501(c)(3) status.** The NCO must maintain its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and inform the Department of any changes or challenges to that status.
6. **Land Acquisition Guidelines.** Land acquisition projects must be completed in accordance with DNR land acquisition and appraisal requirements. These requirements are detailed in a publication entitled *Land Acquisition Guidelines for Nonprofit Organizations*, which is available on our website or from your CSS.
7. **Property taxes.** The NCO is responsible for paying property taxes on time unless property taxes are not required.
8. **Compliance with laws.** An NCO must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal statutes, regulations, administrative rules, and ordinances in fulfilling the terms and conditions of the grant contract, including but not limited, to general and special zoning, land use permit requirements, accessibility for people with disabilities, environmental quality, and historical and archaeological preservation.



- 9 **Public uses.** NCOs provide a variety of opportunities for the public to recreate on their lands. Activities may include hiking, birdwatching, hunting, fishing, environmental education, swimming, canoeing, wildlife observation, to name a few. As with local government and Department properties, there will occasionally be differences of opinion and user conflicts between various special interests groups regarding activities that are permitted on a particular property. The Bureau of Community Financial Assistance will work with the project sponsor to resolve these conflicts on a project-by-project basis.

The two parties shall jointly consider such factors as goals of the project, natural features and potential for damage to those features, mission and focus of the organization and its capacity to manage for specific uses, potential for conflicts and compatibility of different uses, public safety and safety of volunteers and staff, local ordinances, and potential conflicts with adjoining landowners. If the NCO plans to transfer the property to a local government, their policies will also be considered.

10. **Signage.** Project sponsors must post signs on the property acknowledging Stewardship assistance in acquiring fee title ownership and notifying the public that the lands are open for public use. We also expect the signs to indicate what activities are permitted or not permitted on the property. The Department may develop more specific policies on signs. If so, that information will be available on our website or from your CSS.
11. **Natural Areas dedication.** If an organization is awarded a grant through the Natural Areas Program, the group must offer the property for dedication as a State Natural Area under ss. 23.27 and 23.29, Wis. Stats., unless the Department exempts the property.
12. **Department access for inspections.** The project sponsor is responsible for inspection, management, and maintenance of the property. However, the Department reserves the right of access to monitor compliance with the conditions of the grant contract or carry out management activities necessary to ensure the public's rights and safety.
13. **Easements.** When a Stewardship grant is awarded for acquisition of an easement, the NCO must complete a baseline report by the closing date, and monitor the easement once a year to ensure that the conditions of the easement are being satisfied. For detailed information on the Department's easement requirements, go to: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/grants/easement.html>.
14. **Project income.** Any income that is earned from a property receiving a Stewardship grant must be used to further the purpose of the project as stated in the Grant and Management Contract or to further the objectives of another Stewardship project. If a property is entered into the County Forest Law Program, then any income derived from the property may be divided according to the laws for that program.

If any structures or improvements that were included in the appraisal are subsequently sold, then one-half of the receipts from the sale must be reimbursed to the Department.

15. **User fees.** Reasonable user fees may be charged by the project sponsor to offset operation and maintenance costs. Daily user fees may not exceed the current cost of a daily pass at a Wisconsin State Park.
16. **Overhead power lines.** For acquisitions of property, we require that any new electrical or communication lines be installed underground, unless there is a pre-existing easement that specifically allows installation above ground. For easements, we also recommend, but do not require, that existing lines be buried, removed or relocated when possible.



The Grant Process

Application Deadlines

The chart below lists the deadlines for different components of the Stewardship Program and for three related water programs. **Applications must be received or postmarked by these dates.** Applications received after a deadline cannot be considered until the next grant cycle for that program.

In some cases, it may be necessary for a project sponsor to acquire a property before the grant is awarded. This is most likely to occur when there is an annual deadline. Please keep in mind that the grant application must be received no later than one year after the property is purchased by an organization. In practice, most applications are received well before the acquisition because organizations need to complete their funding plan before the closing.

Grant Program	Application Deadline
Stewardship-Land Acquisition Subprogram <i>Natural Areas, Habitat Areas, Wild Lakes, Streambank Protection, and State Trails</i>	No deadline
Stewardship-Baraboo Hills Subprogram	No deadline
Stewardship-Local Assistance Subprogram <i>Urban Green Space, Acquisition and Development of Local Parks, Urban Rivers, Acquisition of Development Rights.</i>	May 1
Stewardship-State Property Development Grant Program (includes habitat restoration funds for lands dedicated as State Natural Areas)	November 15
Lake Management Planning Grant Program	February 1 and August 1
Lake Management Protection and Classification Grant Program	May 1
River Protection Grant Program	May 1

Timelines

We recommend that you seek an Option to Purchase that is at least six months long. The Department prefers 6-9 months for its own transactions. This should allow adequate time to evaluate the project, do appraisals, and take care of “due diligence” matters. Keep in mind that an easement project is likely to take longer than a fee simple one, and that property valued at over \$200,000 can take considerably longer than property valued at \$200,000 or less due to additional statutory requirements for appraisals.

Incomplete applications will cause delays and may move your project to the bottom of the pile, which is sometimes deep. The season of the year may also have a bearing on the time needed to process your application. (Field evaluations can be difficult or impossible in winter.)

When necessary, a project sponsor that submits more than one Stewardship project at a time in a Region may be asked to prioritize those projects so we balance the needs of different organizations.



Finally, all materials required for an escrow closing must be submitted to your CSS at least 20 business days prior to the date you need the check. This is a new requirement for us, necessitated by the rising number of grant applications and the tendency of project sponsors to provide important information at the last minute, sometimes only a day or two before the closing. This causes undue stress on our staff, all of whom are juggling many projects on any given day. Our staff regrets the need to make this decision, but both Region CSSs and Central Office Grant Managers feel a longer time frame will allow for a more orderly review of documents by both NCOs and our staff in the Region and Central Office. We need to work together to make this work.

If you are late in submitting needed information, you can make other arrangements knowing that we will provide our share as a reimbursement as soon as possible after the closing.

Seven Steps to Applying for a Grant

STEP 1. Contact your CSS

Begin by discussing your project with your CSS who can give you initial feedback on whether or not it is likely to qualify. The CSS will also explain the Department's land acquisition requirements, which are detailed in the publication *Land Acquisition Guidelines for Nonprofit Organizations*. **Failure to meet these requirements could disqualify your organization from receiving a grant so it is important to have these discussions early.**

You will also wish to discuss timing. CSS's are often responsible for several grant programs and at any given time are working on a number of grant requests. They need to know if you have specific deadlines, such as an expiration date on an option to purchase.

As soon as we know about your proposal, we will add it to a statewide list of potential or pending projects. This enables us to track upcoming projects and determine whether funds are adequate to meet demand.

STEP 2. Determine if your organization is eligible to receive a grant

The DNR must determine if your organization is eligible for the Stewardship Program before awarding a grant. If you are not already certified for the Stewardship, Lakes and Rivers Programs, submit the following materials to your CSS:

Organization Eligibility Application (see Appendix D)

Articles of Incorporation

By-Laws

IRS letter confirming tax-exempt status

Please also submit any additional information about your organization you believe would be helpful, such as brochures, newsletters, annual report, information about your land acquisition priorities, etc.

The Department will send you a certification letter if your organization qualifies for the program. Once you have received this letter, you do not need to resubmit these materials again unless the group's mission or 501(c)(3) status changes.

If you have already been certified, you will still need to submit some organizational information (a current list of your Board of Directors and financial statement) with your project application unless you have already done so in the current year. See the *Application Checklist and Instructions* for details on application requirements. If you have been certified under the *Lakes or Rivers Programs*, submit a copy of the Department's certification letter with your Stewardship application.



STEP 3. Request a Resource Pre-Screening (Optional)

It may be possible to “pre-screen” your project before you actually apply for a grant. In the pre-screening process, your CSS will coordinate an initial internal review of resource values of your project to determine whether or not it is likely to qualify for the Program. While you will learn whether your project is likely to qualify for a grant, we cannot confirm that you will receive a grant until we have evaluated your complete application and all required attachments. If you would like a pre-screening, you must make this request to your CSS and provide **two copies** of the following information:

- One page description of the project, which includes discussion of the natural values of the property and how it relates to other natural resource initiatives in the area.
- Plat map showing the location of the property.
- Aerial photo of the property, with property boundaries delineated.

We cannot conduct a pre-screening until we have received two copies of these documents.

STEP 4. Decide to apply for a grant

Every land transaction undertaken by your organization should be approved by your full Board of Directors. The Board should also approve the decision to apply for a Stewardship grant. Board members will want to know the terms and conditions of the program before doing so. See *Stewardship Terms and Conditions* for this information (Pg. 7).

Every application must include a resolution adopted by the Board of Directors. The resolution shall:

- Formally request financial assistance.
- Authorize a representative from the organization to act on its behalf.
- Agree that the sponsor will abide by the terms and conditions of the Stewardship Program.

The application materials in Appendix D include a *Resolution Requesting a Stewardship Grant*.

STEP 5. Determine the size of your project

A project may include one parcel of land or any number of parcels that are contiguous or in close proximity. Organizations are encouraged to design their projects with ecological boundaries in mind, boundaries that will ensure the permanent protection of the natural values of the site. This often includes more than one parcel of land.

If a group submits a project that encompasses several adjacent parcels of land (a “Big Scope” project), the Department will evaluate all parcels at one time. Once the size of the project has been approved, an organization can proceed with acquisition of any parcel that falls within the project’s boundaries without having to go through the entire grant approval process again. A group may not be able to purchase all of the parcels at once, but it knows that when one of them becomes available, it will be eligible for funding (as long as there have been no changes that diminish its conservation values). Please keep in mind, however, that this does not automatically assure funding. The number of grants awarded in any given year is limited by the amount of money available. If there are more requests than can be accommodated, projects will be ranked and funded according to their ranking. If you do wish to undertake a “Big Scope Project”, discuss this option with your CSS.



What can we do to expedite the application process?

- ◆ Follow the Application Checklist and Instructions, and send us a completed application as soon as possible.
- ◆ Order your appraisal early and use an appraiser who is familiar with DNR appraisal standards. We strongly recommend that before you commission an appraisal, you discuss the appraisal assignment with a DNR Real Estate Specialist, and require that your appraiser do so before beginning the job. You will be disappointed if we are not able to accept your appraisal because it does not meet DNR standards.
- ◆ Order your title commitment early, and send us a copy as soon as you have it. Any title problems must be resolved before we can release a check.
- ◆ If the grant is for an easement, we recommend that you ask the DNR to review your draft easement before you present it to the landowner.

STEP 6. Complete the Grant Application according to the instructions provided

You will find application materials in Appendix D. **Two** copies of the grant application and attachments are required to complete the application. Both copies should be mailed to your CSS by the deadlines previously provided. The *Application Form and Application Checklist and Instructions* are also available electronically and may be downloaded from the Stewardship web page.

An application is considered to be complete only when all information requested in the application checklist is received and is satisfactory. Please do not submit your application until at least Attachments 2-8 are “complete.” It is your responsibility to keep track of what has been submitted because your CSS rarely has time to remind you of what is missing.

Step 7. Ask a qualified attorney to review the title work and any legal documents

The Department now requires that an attorney review title work and legal documents for both fee simple and easement transactions. Attorney fees are an eligible acquisition cost with a limitation that we will not reimburse more than \$1,000 in legal fees for any grant. If you have questions about this, talk to your CSS.

Project Evaluation and Selection

Projects are evaluated according to how well they meet the criteria for the different Stewardship programs outlined in Appendix C and the other factors listed under *Eligible Projects*. The evaluation is based on information in the application as well as site visits and technical review comments. This is usually an interactive process between Department staff and the applicant with discussions about project scope, boundaries, land management plans, etc.

As part of the project evaluation, the Department will:

- Visit the site to evaluate its natural resource values;
- Determine if the project is part of any plan;
- Review and certify the appraisal(s);
- Evaluate potential environmental hazards and review various hazards lists;
- Check resource inventories for known archaeological sites or historic buildings;
- Check the Natural Heritage Inventory for identified heritage sites;
- Review and approve a Land Management Plan; and
- Review the Title Commitment/Title Policy and legal documents associated with the transaction.

If the application is for property valued at \$200,000 or higher, the Department is required by law to commission an independent appraisal in addition to the appraisal you have obtained. Please be aware that this can be a lengthy process taking many months. See *Land Acquisition Guidelines for Nonprofit Organizations* for more information on the appraisal process.

One step in the Department's approval process is fulfilling the requirements of the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA). WEPA requirements vary depending upon the type and size of a project. Typically, it involves the issuance of a public notice or press release and a two-week public comment period. However, it could require development of an Environmental Assessment, which could take longer.



What can we do to increase our chance of receiving a grant?

- ◆ Put together a team or advisory committee to assess potential project sites in your area, prioritize those sites, and then concentrate on priorities. Valuable team members will be individuals with a resource management background who are familiar with local resources, have the skills necessary to do site assessments of natural features, and can help with the development of land management plans. An advisory committee or team can choose the best projects for your region, and these projects will be more likely to receive funding than marginal ones.
- ◆ Collaborate with others and tie your project to other resource protection efforts taking place in your area. These might include greenway or open space plans; river corridors; priority watershed plans; trail systems; national or state programs to preserve specific types of habitat or species of plants and animals. You should also review the DNR's Land Legacy Report, which identifies places that are critical to meeting Wisconsin's future conservation and recreation needs. DNR staff will be pleased to meet with your group to discuss resource protection goals and priorities in your region.
- ◆ Write a sound project narrative and land management plan.

Finally, if your grant is \$250,000 or more, the Governor must also approve the project.

Confidentiality should be respected in all real estate transactions. However, if you are applying for a grant, DNR staff will need to know the details of the transaction. Therefore, we recommend that you notify the seller that you are applying for grant assistance from the state and that you will be sharing information about the transaction with DNR staff involved in evaluating the project. All parties should also know, that in many cases, at some point in the grant process the DNR is required by law to notify the public about the grant and ask for public comment.

If confidentiality is an important concern to the landowner or any other affected party, please advise your CSS. We will work with you to ensure confidentiality as long as possible.

There may be considerable competition for available funds. If more eligible projects have been submitted than the Department is able to fund, the projects will be rated and ranked. Because the components under the Local Assistance Program (*Urban Green Space, Urban Rivers, Acquisition and Development of Local Parks, Acquisition of Development Rights*) are always oversubscribed, applications for these programs are always rated and ranked. This occurs once a year in late June.

Projects that qualify for the Land Acquisition Program and are not funded in one year due to lack of funds will automatically be reconsidered the following year. Applications for the Local Assistance Subprogram will need to be resubmitted.

Your CSS will keep you informed of the status of the review, and you will receive written notification once a decision has been reached on a grant. If your request for a grant is denied, you will have 30 days to appeal that decision.

Awarding the Grant

After the project is approved, the Department will issue two original copies of the Grant and Management Contract that outlines the conditions of the grant. We cannot provide a firm commitment on a grant until a grant award letter and grant contract are issued. The contract defines the state's interest in the property and describes how the land will be managed to preserve its natural and recreational values. Read the contract carefully and all your CSS if you have any questions about the terms.

Both originals must be signed by an authorized representative of your organization and notarized. Return one original to your CSS within 30 days. The other must be recorded after the closing at the Register of Deeds Office in the county where the property is located. If the property (including sponsor match) is located in more than one county, the contract must be recorded in each.

We will encumber funds for the project after the signed contract has been returned.

When a NCO signs a Grant and Management Contract accepting Stewardship funds, it is also agreeing to comply with program requirements. These requirements are spelled out in the grant contract and in Chapter 51 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. All obligations, terms, conditions, and restrictions of the grant contract are limitations on the use of the property *in perpetuity*.

Grant Payment Options

Grant recipients have two options for receiving their grant payment. Each option has slightly different requirements as to what documentation is needed by the Department before payment can be authorized. Information about these requirements is provided in the *Grant Payment Checklist and Instructions* and *Grant Payment Request Form*, both of which can be found in Appendix D and are also available on our web site or from your CSS.



Option #1: Escrow closing

In an “escrow closing”, a third party, typically a title insurance company, receives all funds for the transaction and handles the closing on the property. The Department sends a check for the Department’s share of the purchase price of the property to the escrow agent along with a letter containing escrow instructions. The escrow agent is responsible for ensuring that all conditions contained in the escrow letter are met before releasing the funds. The Warranty Deed or Conservation Easement and the Grant Contract must be recorded immediately after the closing.

Within 60 days of the closing, you must submit final documentation for the transaction as well as a second *Payment Request Form* for miscellaneous acquisition costs. We can then authorize a second grant payment for up to 50% of those costs.

Option #2: Reimbursement after the closing

In this case, you do not need to submit required documentation before the closing because the Department provides its share of project costs as a reimbursement after you have closed on the property. We will authorize one payment that covers all eligible acquisition costs after all required materials have been submitted and reviewed by Department staff.

Accounting Standards

All accounting for the project must be in conformance with generally accepted accounting practices. In addition, all documentation, including materials used to substantiate financial claim(s), is subject to state audit, and must be retained by the project sponsor for four years from the date the final payment is made. Grant records held by the Department are available to the public under Open Records laws.



Financing Your Project

Grant Amount and Eligible Expenses

The Stewardship grant covers up to 50% of eligible acquisition costs (the “state share”). Eligible acquisition costs include the value of the property plus the following transaction costs:

- Land surveys
- Appraisals
(If the property is over \$200,000, two appraisals are needed; the NCO must pay for the first, the Department for the second. If a third appraisal is needed, each will pay 50% of the cost)
- Relocation payments
- Title evidence
- Recording fees
- Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Reports
(Environmental inspections completed by NCO staff or volunteers are not eligible for funding.)
- Historical and cultural assessments if required by the Department.
- Legal fees, up to \$1,000 for the state share)

? **Can we receive additional grant funds if our costs are higher than we originally anticipated?** Perhaps! The DNR may be able to amend the grant contract and increase the grant amount, but only if adequate funds are available. Talk with your CSS.

Expenses not covered by the grant include environmental clean-up costs, brokerage fees paid by the buyer, demolition of buildings, real estate transfer taxes, and other costs not identified above.

Calculating the Value of the Property

The statutes for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program have specific requirements on how land and easements are to be valued for the purpose of calculating the grant amount. In most cases, the value is based on an appraisal that meets Department appraisal standards. However, there are circumstances in which the value is based on what the landowner paid for the property. In these cases, an appraisal may not be needed. See the chart *Calculating Property Values for NCO Stewardship Grants* in Appendix A to determine what valuation method is appropriate for your project.

Please note that while appraisals are not always necessary, they are required in most cases, and when they are required, you must follow DNR appraisal procedures. These procedures are described in detail in the publication *Land Acquisition Guidelines for Nonprofit Organizations*, which is available on our website or from your CSS. Also note that the Department must order a second, independent appraisal if the fair market value of the property is over \$200,000.

Because property valuation methodology can be complicated, we recommend that you talk with your CSS before ordering an appraisal. During this discussion, be sure to indicate whether part of your sponsor match is being provided by the federal government. The federal program may have different valuation and appraisal review requirements than the Stewardship Program.

? **Can we receive a grant for land we are purchasing with a mortgage or land contract?** No, the DNR is not able to subordinate the state's interests to the prior interests of a mortgage holder; therefore we cannot award a grant for property on which you have a mortgage or land contract. There may be some exceptions for the following scenarios:

- ◆ If you have the funds needed for sponsor match, but are working with a landowner who wishes to extend payment over several years for tax reasons, it is possible to arrange scheduled payments through an escrow or annuity payment account.
- ◆ If the NCO transfers the mortgage to another property they own that is not under the Stewardship program or to a part of the Stewardship property that is not covered by the grant.
- ◆ If an NCO has a mortgage on the property, but since incurring the debt, has raised enough to cover their sponsor match. The DNR may then release the state's share if other requirements have been met. In this case, the NCO must provide the DNR with evidence that the mortgage has been satisfied within 30 days of the grant payment.
- ◆ The mortgage holder agrees to subordinate its rights to the rights of the DNR.

Sponsor Match

Sponsor match is that portion of the acquisition costs not funded by the state. The sponsor must provide at least 50% of project costs. Sponsor match may be cash, in-kind contributions or a combination of the two. Eligible sources of sponsor match include:

- Cash from the project sponsor.
- Cash from a third party, such as a business, foundation, private individual.
- Funds from a local unit of government or the federal government.
- Property contributions from a third party, if the contribution was made within 3 years prior to the acquisition.
- Property acquired by the applicant within 3 years prior to the acquisition if the property was not purchased with state funds.
- Property value donated by the property owner (as in a bargain sale).

Using the value of donated property as sponsor match instead of cash is an excellent way for project sponsors to include the contributions of private landowners in the Stewardship Program. The sponsor retains title to the donated property or remains the holder of a conservation easement, but the property becomes part of the Stewardship Program.

There are some limitations on using property donations for sponsor match:

1. The donated property must be eligible for the same Stewardship program as the parcel being acquired. For instance, if a NCO is receiving a grant under the Natural Areas Program to purchase a parcel of land, any property the NCO uses for sponsor match must also be eligible for the Natural Areas Program.
2. The NCO cannot receive more in grant funds than the amount of cash it actually needs for the purchase. If the value of the donated property is more than the amount of cash needed for the purchase, then any residual value from the donation that is left over may be used in subsequent applications if they are submitted in the same fiscal year or the next one.
3. The value of the donated property must be determined by an appraisal that meets DNR standards.
4. All donated property used as sponsor match becomes part of the Stewardship Program and is covered by a Stewardship grant contract which encumbers the property in perpetuity.
5. Land must be donated within three years prior to the date of application.
6. Land to be donated must be in "private" ownership and not previously dedicated to conservation purposes or public outdoor recreation.
7. Lands obtained through a subdivision parkland dedication ordinance are not eligible for donation purposes.

The rules surrounding property donations can be confusing at first glance and you will want to discuss your particular situation with your CSS. Here is an example that might help you understand this concept:

An NCO purchases a piece of land for \$8,000, but the land is appraised at \$12,000. The landowner has donated \$4,000 in property value to the NCO. This is called a "bargain sale." The Stewardship grant is based on appraised value, not purchase price, so the grant amount would be \$6,000 which is 50% of the appraised value of the property. The sponsor match would be \$2,000 in cash from the NCO plus \$4,000 in property value, which was donated by the landowner.



Let's also assume the NCO wants to use another parcel of land, which was donated to it as part of its sponsor match. The appraised value of the donated parcel is \$20,000. Assuming both properties qualify for the Natural Areas program, here's how the grant amount would be calculated: the total appraised value of the two properties is \$32,000 (\$20,000 for the donated parcel and \$12,000 for the purchased parcel). The state match would normally be \$16,000, which is 50% of the combined appraised value of the two properties. But because only \$8,000 was actually spent to purchase the land, and since a grant in excess of that amount would constitute a profit to the NCO, the state share is reduced to \$8,000. The remaining \$8,000 in donated property value may be used by the NCO in subsequent applications in that fiscal year or the next.

A Caution About Sponsor Match

There are three important points to remember about Sponsor Match:

1. Funds from other state funding sources cannot be used as sponsor match.
2. Funds from the federal government or a local government may be used, but the total amount of funding from all government sources cannot exceed 100% of the cash needed for the project. If funding from other government sources exceeds 50% of the funding that is needed, then Stewardship funding will be reduced accordingly.
3. All sources of Sponsor match should be fully disclosed on the application form. If you learn about a government grant after you have applied for a Stewardship grant, you must advise your CSS. If it is found that a project sponsor has received more than 100% of project costs from government sources, the Department will seek an appropriate remedy.

Appendix A

CALCULATING PROPERTY VALUES FOR NCO STEWARDSHIP GRANTS (Rev. 11/05)

- I. **When property has been owned by a landowner for MORE THAN THREE YEARS**, the acquisition cost of the property shall be based on the current fair market value of the property as determined by appraisal.

Note: When the landowners are joint tenants or tenants in common and the landowners have held title for differing lengths of time, the ownership date shall be the earliest date of ownership. Example: transfer to a spouse.

- II. **For property that has been owned by a landowner for LESS THAN THREE YEARS**, the acquisition cost of the property shall be based on the following:

- A. When the property being sold to the project sponsor is the same as the property acquired by the landowner: ["Same" means same size, physical condition, and same property interests being sold.]

Number of Years Property Owned by Landowner	Basis For Determining Land Value
Less than 1 year	Price landowner paid
More than 1 year, less than 2	Price landowner paid plus 5%
More than 2 years, less than 3	Price landowner paid plus 10%

Note: It is not necessary to submit an appraisal for a property owned by the landowner for less than three years if the property is valued at \$350,000 or less. However, according to the law, if the property is valued at over \$350,000 the Sponsor must submit an appraisal (and the Department must order a 2nd appraisal) even if the grant amount must be based on the price the landowner paid for the property, not the appraised value.

- B. When the property being sold to the project sponsor is the same as the property acquired by the landowner, and the landowner acquired it by:

- 1) gift or devise (by inheritance)
- 2) means other than traditional sale, gift or devise, or a landowner's acquisition price cannot be ascertained (e.g. foreclosure, trade lands)

Number of Years Property Owned by Landowner	Basis For Determining Land Value
Less than 1 year	Appraised value at the time the landowner acquired the property
More than 1 year, less than 2	Appraised value at the time the landowner acquired the property plus 5%
More than 2 years, less than 3	Appraised value at time the landowner acquired the property plus 10%

- C. When the property or property interests being sold to the project sponsor is fundamentally different than the property acquired by the landowner, for example:

- (1) Purchase of fee title by landowner and sale of easement to project sponsor.
- (2) Purchase of acreage X (e.g. 40 acres) by landowner and sale of acreage Y (e.g. 20 acres) to project sponsor.
- (3) The landowner has made a material change to the property since he or she acquired it, such as brownfield remediation or harvesting the trees.

Number of Years Property Owned by Landowner	Basis For Determining Land Value
Any	Current appraised value



Appendix B

Developing A Project Narrative and Land Management Plan

All grant applications for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program must include a project narrative and land management plan that describes the benefits and natural values of the project and explains how those values will be maintained over time. Decisions regarding project funding are based, in part, on information in this document. It should also serve as a long-range planning tool for the project sponsor. Check with your CSS if you have questions about your project narrative and land management plan.

Please submit the narrative and management plan with the application form, but as a separate “stand alone” document. The DNR may recommend or require revisions to the management plan as part of its evaluation of the project and for that reason may request an electronic copy. The management plan may be incorporated into the Stewardship grant and management contract, referenced as a separate document or incorporated into a Conservation Easement. If it is referenced as a separate document, that document must be signed by both the DNR and project sponsor. Whether attached or separate any changes to the management plan must be made in a written document that is signed by both parties.

The following points should be addressed in your narrative and management plan. If some of the issues are not applicable, please indicate they are not and explain why. Some sections may require more detail than others, depending on the type of project.

1. Primary goals of the project

Concise statement explaining the goals and public benefits of the project, why the site should be preserved, and how it will be managed.

2. Description of the site

Indicate the size of the project and describe the natural features of the land; provide information about natural communities, land cover, species, topography, water resources, and special features (including archeological and historic features, if any).

Describe existing conditions, current uses of the land, and provide a brief history of past uses and disturbances. Also describe any present threats to the natural values of the site.

If an inventory of plant or animal species has been done, please attach as an appendix.

3. Improvements and structures

General description of existing and proposed physical improvements and structures, if any. These might include, but are not limited to: trails, parking areas, signage, interpretive displays, boardwalks, bridges, boundary markers, picnic grounds, buildings, athletic facilities, waterway modification devices, restrooms, roadways, etc.

Identify public access points, plans for vehicle parking and posting of property to indicate that the property is open to the public and the uses that are permitted or restricted.

Provide a site plan that delineates improvements and public access points.

4. Problems

Describe any problems such as exotic species, erosion, over-grazing by deer, dumps, toxic wastes and contamination, debris that needs to be removed, environmental intrusions such as overhead power lines, trespassing issues, etc.



5. Adjacent land uses

Describe how adjacent properties are being used and any anticipated changes in those uses.

6. Public uses

Describe how the public will be able to use the site and what recreational activities will be permitted, such as hiking or walking, nature study, bird watching, hunting and fishing, bicycling, research, environmental education, etc. To assist us in completing the WEB Mapping Tool for your property, we need to know if the following specific activities will be permitted (these activities will be listed on a check-off in the information section): canoeing, picnicking, swimming, mountain biking, camping, horseback riding.

If the grant application is for an easement, indicate if the property will be open to the public. If so, the specific uses allowed should be stated in the easement document.

7. Land management practices

Describe general land management practices that shall be followed to meet the goals of the project and conserve the natural resources of the site.

Describe management requirements for specific communities, features or species of concern and the proposed management strategy for each to ensure long-term viability or to correct problems. If there are any water bodies on or adjacent to the property, such as ponds, lakes, streams, wetlands, etc., describe any management practices that will be undertaken to improve or protect those resources.

Explain plans to control invasive species.

Identify any management issues and proposed solutions. Describe any site enhancement and restoration plans. Discuss plans to deal with any of the problems cited in #4 above.

8. Implementation

Identify proposed time line for implementing key management activities and priorities. When and how will the land management plan be accomplished? What ongoing maintenance activities will be needed (such as trash removal, surveillance, vehicle/visitor control, exotic species removal, controlled burning etc)?

Who is responsible for maintaining the property and implementing the plan?

Describe any partners who will play an active role and attach any third party management agreements.

9. Monitoring

Describe plans for maintaining oversight and control of the property and for assessing progress in meeting management plan objectives.

10. Maps

In addition to other maps that are required elsewhere, if this is a "Big Scope" project, and the project includes a number of parcels of land, attach a 'project map' with proposed boundaries for the entire project. For projects where active management activities will be undertaken, provide a map indicating locations.

Appendix C Detailed Program Descriptions

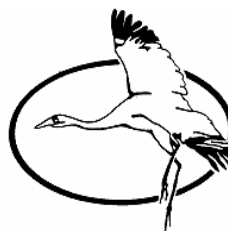
The Natural Areas Program (NA)

S. 23.27, Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. III, Wis. Adm. Code

Many of the plant and animal communities that evolved following the melting of the last glaciers about 12,000 years ago have been displaced or lost. Places that have escaped most if not all disturbance are often the last refuges in the state for rare and endangered plants and animals. The Natural Areas Program is dedicated to preservation of these high quality native communities.

State Natural Areas are set aside for protection of their natural values for future generations, scientific research, and teaching conservation and natural history. They are not intended for intensive recreational use such as picnicking or camping.

The Land Management Plan for a Natural Areas project must ensure the permanent protection of the natural communities on the property. Staff in the Bureau of Endangered Resources will assist NCOs in developing their plans.



Mink River Estuary

The Mink River Estuary is one of the few high quality estuaries remaining in the nation. An important spawning area for fish, it is also a critical migration site for more than 200 species of birds that pass through Wisconsin. Owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy, the 1,600 acre sanctuary provides a quiet Door County retreat for resident and visitors alike.

The Natural Heritage Inventory

The Natural Heritage Inventory was established in 1985 by the DNR in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy to provide an ongoing, up-to-date storehouse of ecological information. Data is collected during on-site resource surveys and then catalogued into an integrated system of maps, computer databases, and paper files. The Inventory contains the location and biological status of each natural community and rare species that has been evaluated. It also ranks communities and species according to how rare they are in Wisconsin and worldwide. Analysis of a site for inclusion in the Natural Areas Program begins with the information furnished by the Inventory.

Property Dedication

Articles of Dedication provide the strongest long-term legal protection for Natural Areas in the state. Legally dedicated sites are protected in perpetuity as State Natural Areas and may not be taken for other uses without a finding of urgent and greater public need by the DNR and subsequent approval by the Governor and the appropriate Standing Committee in both houses of the Legislature.

NCOs purchasing property with Natural Areas grants must offer those properties to the Bureau of Endangered Species for dedication. The bureau will choose to dedicate those properties as a State Natural Area in most cases. The DNR may, on rare occasions, and for good causes, exempt a site from the dedication requirement. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, sites that have previous deed restrictions or sites with ephemeral natural values such as rookeries and bird concentration areas.

Grant Criteria

The DNR maintains a priority listing of potential Natural Areas sites that is updated regularly. If a project is on the list, it automatically qualifies for a Natural Areas grant. The following criteria are used to evaluate the natural values of proposed projects that are not on the priority list:

- ◆ The quality of the natural value to be protected.
- ◆ The condition of the natural value to be protected, including an analysis of the degree to which the natural value has been damaged or altered from its optimal condition and character.
- ◆ The long-term viability of the natural value to be protected, including the extent to which the project meets the minimum area required by area dependent species of concern; the adequacy of the project to maintain community function and dynamics; the impacts that fragmentation, isolation, and size of community may have on its longevity; and the ability of the project to support minimum viable populations of species to be protected.
- ◆ The defensibility of the natural value and the project from adverse effect that threaten it.
- ◆ Additional criteria used to evaluate and rank proposed projects including:
 - The rarity of the natural value to be protected.
 - The number of natural values to be protected.
 - The degree to which the natural value and the project are threatened and the degree to which they are already protected.
 - The value of the area for research and education.
 - The degree to which acquisition, as opposed to other protection tools, will protect the natural value.
 - The degree to which this type of natural value is already protected in the state.



*Perched high on the bluffs above the Mississippi River in Grant county, the **Cassville Bluffs***

***State Natural Area** —Roe Preserve adjoins the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Refuge. A Stewardship grant to the Mississippi River Valley Conservancy enabled the to partner with DNR to protect this outstanding site which features oak savanna, prairie insects, impressive vistas, an eagle roost, and one of the largest bird effigies in the region.*

The Streambank Protection Program

S. 23.094, Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. VII, Wis. Adm. Code

The purpose of the Streambank Protection Program is to protect the water quality and fish habitat of Wisconsin streams by establishing buffers along selected streams. Whenever possible, these buffers should be at least 66 feet from either side of the stream and at least 66 feet beyond riparian wetlands.

Management Requirements

The following activities are prohibited on land and easements acquired unless approved by the DNR:

- ◆ Alteration of vegetative cover or other natural features. An exception may be made when necessary to reestablish native grasses or protect vegetative cover deemed essential to prevent erosion.
- ◆ Planting or production of agricultural crops. An exception may be made for management of wildlife species (i.e. food patches, nesting cover).
- ◆ Mowing or spraying with chemicals. An exception may be made when necessary to control pests on an emergency basis when such control is necessary to protect public health or for habitat restoration purposes.



Pine Creek is the focus of conservation-minded community residents who know the fragile wonder of the creek and the picturesque valley it bisects. The West Wisconsin Land Trust is working with landowners to protect the quality of the Class 1 trout stream. When a key parcel of land at the mouth of the creek was offered for sale, the land trust turned to the Stewardship Program for help purchasing it. With steep wooded bluffs, and the creek flowing through the property for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, this is an idyllic fishing spot.

The Land Management Plan for property acquired under this program may require the landowner to plant trees or seed at seeding rates determined by the DNR to establish and maintain perennial cover.

The DNR may allow installation and maintenance of management practices meeting USDA soil conservation service standards, such as cattle stream crossings, rip-rap and cattle watering areas, if the management practice does not conflict with the purpose of the easement.

Grant Criteria

A NCO should begin by discussing a proposed streambank project with their CSS. The CSS will bring into the discussion the appropriate regional water resource staff to determine what efforts have been made or are being made on the stream, and whether or not the project meets the criteria of the program.

The DNR will evaluate NCO streambank projects based on the following criteria:

- ◆ The extent to which the water quality and fish habitat of the stream are threatened by urban or agricultural runoff.
- ◆ The extent to which the threat to the water quality and fish habitat of the stream can be protected through the acquisition of land rights.

Streams satisfying the above criteria shall be further prioritized based on the following:

- ◆ The extent to which the streambank project provides protection of endangered or threatened resources including natural communities and habitat for rare species.
- ◆ The inclusion of the stream in or adjacent to other projects.
- ◆ A determination that the stream's riparian lands are enrolled in a federal or state program that protects water quality or fish habitat including the Conservation Reserve Program, the Erosion Control Planning Program, a soil and water conservation plan, the Soil and Water Resources Management Program, and the Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Grant Program.

The Habitat Areas Program

S. 23.092, Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. V, Wis. Adm. Code

The purpose of the Habitat Areas Program is to protect, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat in Wisconsin in order to expand opportunities for wildlife-based recreation such as hunting, bird watching, fishing, nature appreciation, and viewing of game and non-game species. The goals of the program are achieved through the use of easements, land acquisition, and habitat restoration.

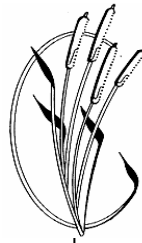
Grant Criteria

Habitat Areas grants are available to NCOs and conservation organizations to purchase land or acquire easements on land that furthers the objectives of the program. Priority is given to projects that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Projects that protect, enhance, or restore ecologically significant plant and wildlife communities, biological diversity, unique or outstanding ecosystems, or rare wildlife and plant species.
- ◆ Sites identified as regionally important for wildlife and plants in a comprehensive plan or the Natural Heritage Inventory.

Projects **not eligible** to receive grants include:

- ◆ Property containing or planned to contain buildings or other facilities designed for intensive recreational use—such as playgrounds, roads, picnic areas, boating and camping facilities, playing fields or shelters—unless the facility occupies only a small portion of the property and the DNR determines it does not diminish the property's wildlife habitat value.
- ◆ Timber plantations.
- ◆ Property intended for agricultural use.



Jefferson Marsh.

Wildlife needs two things to prosper: space to live and food to eat.

Pheasants Forever had both in mind when it acquired a 2,700 acre muck farm in Jefferson County. A grant from the Stewardship Program was the key to their success. The property contains the largest tamarack swamp in Southern Wisconsin, a high quality southern sedge meadow, upland woods, and over 900 acres of drained wetland that will be restored. The property also contains one of the largest Indian Mounds in Wisconsin.

The State Trails Program

S. 23.175, Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. VIII, Wis. Adm. Code

The goal of the State Trails Program is to establish a balanced system of state trails for use by hikers, equestrians, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers. Trails that qualify as State trails are: 608-576-1561?

- ◆ Near urban areas or near or within scenic, historic, or culturally significant areas.
- ◆ Likely to receive significant use.
- ◆ Of more than local significance.

Stewardship sets aside \$3 million annually for acquisition of land for state trails, and the two National scenic trails—the Ice Age Trail and North Country Trail.

NCOs and local units of government may nominate additional trails for state trail designation. Nominations need to document that nominated trails meet the purposes of the program and provide recreational opportunities for equestrians, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, or hikers. The trail must also:

- ◆ Be reasonably accessible to urban areas, or within or in close proximity to areas of significant natural beauty, historical, or cultural significance, state or national parks, forests or recreational areas, or provide connections to existing state trails.
- ◆ Be of a width sufficient to provide the purposes for which acquired, generally not less than 33 feet wide in rural areas and not less than 10 feet wide in urban areas, not have more than 25 acres per mile averaged over a five mile distance.
- ◆ Be likely to receive significant use as determined by the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan or similar study.
- ◆ Have a reasonable expectation of being completed and of successful management and operation.

The DNR shall give higher priority to trails that:

- ◆ Provide connections between other state trails.
- ◆ Are of a length sufficient to provide at least one day's recreational experience.
- ◆ Provide connections to resource areas of statewide significance or areas of outstanding natural scenery.
- ◆ Provide for more than one use.
- ◆ Contribute to a geographically balanced system of trails.



When complete, The Ice Age National Scenic Trail will extend over 1,200 miles across Wisconsin, blazing a path from

Potawatomi State Park in Sturgeon Bay to Interstate Park in St. Croix Falls. The Stewardship Program has provided funds to the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation, local units of government, and the DNR to acquire many vital links in the trail corridor, making this the longest partnership in the state.

Existing state trails include the Ahnapee "400", Badger, Bearskin, Buffalo River, Chippewa River, Elroy-Sparta, Friendship, Fox River, Gandy Dancer, Glacial Drumlin, Great River, Green Bay/Wausau, Green Circle, Hillsboro, La Crosse River, Military Ridge, Mountain Bay, Nicolet, Old Abe, Pecatonica, Red Ceder, Saunders, Sugar River, Tomorrow River, Tuscobia, Urban, White River, Wild Goose, Wild Rivers, and Wiouwash. The National Scenic Ice Age Trail and the North Country Trail are also designated as state trails.

The Wild Lakes Program

S. 23.0917, Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. VI, Wis. Adm. Code

Wild lakes in Wisconsin are rapidly disappearing due to development. The purpose of the Wild Lakes Program is to protect and preserve high quality endangered wild lakes. The goals of the program are achieved through the use of easements and land acquisition.

For the purposes of the Stewardship program, a “wild lake” is defined as

A lake or flowage of at least 5 acres, or significant portions thereof, identified in the Wisconsin registrar of waterbodies, where human influence, such as structural development of its shorelands, is not significant or can be removed at costs deemed warranted by the DNR.

If the waterbody is not found in the Wisconsin registrar of waterbodies database, DNR staff will make a determination on whether to add the waterbody to the register as a lake or flowage.

Grant Criteria

The DNR considers the following factors when evaluating priority lake projects:

- ◆ Existence of no or low levels of structural development on adjacent shoreland.
- ◆ Lake or flowage has larger surface area.
- ◆ The extent to which water quality and fish and wildlife habitat are threatened by development.
- ◆ The extent to which the lake provides habitat for rare species or harbors high quality natural communities.
- ◆ The extent to which the lake provides quality habitat for fish and wildlife.
- ◆ The extent to which threats to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat can be protected through acquisition of property as determined by the percent of the lake’s shoreline or watershed captured by the acquisition.
- ◆ Degree to which the acquisition reduces fragmentation of terrestrial or aquatic habitat as evidenced by the proximity to other public lands, clusters of lakes and linkages to other surface waters.
- ◆ Other unique features, including but not limited to, natural scenic beauty, archeological, geological, or cultural features.

Acquisition and Development Rights Program

S. 23.09 (20M), Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. XV, Wis. Adm. Code

The purpose of the Acquisition of Development Rights Program is to protect natural, agricultural, or forest lands that enhance nature-based outdoor recreation. "Development Rights" are the rights of a landowner to develop their property to the greatest extent allowed under state and local laws. The goals of the program are achieved through the purchase of those development rights and compensating landowners for limited future development on their land. Ten percent of the funds available in the Local Assistance Program are allocated to this program. For more specific information about this program, including rating and ranking information, refer to the Grant Guidelines for the Local Assistance Program, which you can obtain on our website or from your CSS.

Grant Criteria

To be eligible for funding a project must provide or enhance nature-based outdoor recreation. Priority shall be given to projects that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Property with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes or estuaries.
- ◆ Property that creates a buffer between land that has been permanently protected for natural resource and conservation purposes and potential or existing residential, commercial or industrial development.
- ◆ Property that is within the boundaries of an acquisition project established by the DNR, a government unit or a NCO where the uses of the property will complement the goals of the project and the Stewardship Program.
- ◆ Property that is within an environmental corridor that connects 2 or more established resource protection areas.

The DNR considers the following factors when evaluating acquisition of development rights:

- ◆ Recreational opportunities provided or enhanced.
- ◆ Proximity to other permanently protected land.
- ◆ Natural, scenic, geological and archaeological values of the property.
- ◆ The degree of development pressure.
- ◆ Whether the project has been identified in a comprehensive plan pursuant to s. 66.1001, Stats., another plan that has as one of its purposes the protection of natural resources, or the natural heritage inventory database.
- ◆ The amount of funding available from other sources.

Deadline

The deadline for receipt of applications for this program is May 1. Applications received after this date cannot be considered until the following year.

General Provisions of the Program

- ◆ If a project sponsor submits a grant application for a property as part of an "Acquisition of Development Rights Program", and that property is subsequently withdrawn from consideration, the sponsor may substitute another property if it achieves the same or a higher ranking as the property that was originally submitted.



- ◆ The project sponsor may not convert or approve conversion of land encumbered by the easement to uses inconsistent with the easement. Residential, industrial or commercial development is prohibited on those areas of easement property that are encumbered by a Stewardship grant. Additional restrictions or conditions may be imposed by the easement or grant contract.
- ◆ Agriculture and forestry may be permitted on property encumbered by an easement as long as those activities are compatible with the purposes of the Stewardship Program and the acquisition project.
- ◆ Any agriculture within the area encumbered by an easement shall be carried out in accordance with the conditions, standards and specifications of a soil and water conservation plan approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service office located in each county.
- ◆ Harvesting of timber within the area encumbered by an easement shall be carried out in accordance with the conditions of a forest management plan approved by the Department.
- ◆ Vegetative buffers shall be established and maintained along lakes, ponds, wetlands, marshes, rivers, streams and ditches. Whenever possible, the area of the vegetative buffer shall extend at least 75 feet from each edge of the surface water or wetland. There may be no activity that adversely affects the natural flow of surface or underground waters within the area of the easement.

Acquisition and Development of Local Parks

S. 23.09(20), Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. XII, Wis. Adm. Code

Stewardship sets aside 50% of the funds in the Local Assistance Program for projects that improve community parks and acquire land for public outdoor recreation. Funds are available to towns, villages, cities, counties, Indian tribes, and NCOs. Funds are allocated on a regional basis with 70% distributed on the basis of each county's proportionate share of the state population and 30% distributed equally to each county.

Funds may be used for both land acquisition projects and development projects for nature-based outdoor recreation, such as fishing piers, hiking trails and picnic facilities. Funds are not available for non nature-based activities such as baseball and soccer fields. Costs associated with operation and maintenance of parks and other outdoor recreation facilities are not eligible for Stewardship funds. NCOs may only apply for funds for land acquisition; they are not eligible for funds for development rights.



*Winding for 24 miles through Stevens Point, the **Green Circle trail** provides a recreation and transportation haven for bicyclists, walkers, joggers, and others. The recipient of several Stewardship grants, the Green Circle Committee is part of a unique public-private partnership involving private citizens, businesses, and the Stevens Point Parks and Recreation Department, all of whom work closely together over several years to make the trail a reality.*

Deadline

The deadline for receipt of applications for this program is May 1. Applications received after this date cannot be considered until the following year.

General Provisions of the Program

This is a very competitive program, and a comprehensive ranking system has been developed to evaluate projects. For additional information on the rating and ranking system and on specific questions, refer to the Grant Guidelines for Local Assistance Program which you can obtain from our website or your CSS. The DNR considers the following factors when evaluating projects:

- ◆ Implements priorities contained in state and local comprehensive outdoor recreation plans.
- ◆ Meets needs and deficiencies identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the approved local comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, or the approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plans of other units of government including regional or integrated management plans.
- ◆ Acquires land where a need for additional land acquisition is supported by an approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.
- ◆ Is regional or statewide in nature and can be documented as such.
- ◆ Documentation shows benefits to tourism.
- ◆ Results in a first of a kind facility for the project sponsor or service area.
- ◆ Provides or supports a water-based activity.
- ◆ Serves the greatest population.

- ◆ Involves volunteers, local donations or cooperation by two or more service clubs.
- ◆ Applicants that have never received an outdoor recreation program grant.
- ◆ Provides for completion of a project already started where the sponsor has shown the ability to provide quality outdoor recreation facilities for its citizens without grant assistance.
- ◆ Sponsor has completed prior LWCF, ADLP, UGS, URGP or projects successfully.
- ◆ Involves two or more governmental agencies.
- ◆ Acquires land where a need for additional land acquisition is supported by an approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan;
- ◆ Serves as a demonstration project for other project sponsors.
- ◆ Corrects a documented health or safety problem.
- ◆ Renovates existing facilities which are in danger of being lost for public use.
- ◆ Sponsor is able to adequately maintain and operate the area or facility.
- ◆ Provides multiple season, multiple activity use.
- ◆ Serves the recreation needs of elderly persons, minorities and disabled persons. Facilities provided must exceed those required by state or federal regulations.

Eligible Project Examples

- ◆ Land acquisition projects that will provide opportunities for nature based outdoor recreation.
- ◆ Property with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, and reservoirs that will provide water based outdoor recreation.
- ◆ Property that provides special recreation opportunities, such as floodplains, wetlands, and areas adjacent to scenic highways.
- ◆ Natural areas and outstanding scenic areas where the objective is to preserve the scenic or natural values, including areas of physical or biological importance and wildlife areas. These areas shall be open to the general public for outdoor recreation use to the extent that the natural attributes of the areas will not be seriously impaired or lost.
- ◆ Land within urban areas for day use picnic areas.
- ◆ Land for nature-based outdoor recreation trails.

Ineligible Project Examples

- ◆ Project that are not supported by a local comprehensive outdoor recreational plan,
- ◆ Land to be used for non nature-based outdoor recreation.
- ◆ Acquisition and development of golf courses.

Urban Greenspace Program

S. 23.09 (19), Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, sub ch.XIII, Wis. Adm. Code

The intent of the Urban Green Space Program (UGS) is to provide open natural space within or in proximity to urban areas; to protect from urban development areas that have scenic, ecological or other natural value and are within or in proximity to urban areas; and to provide land for noncommercial gardening for the residents of an urbanized area.

UGS provides grants to cities, villages, towns, counties, and public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, and NCOs. Twenty percent of the funds available in the Local Assistance Program are allocated to the Urban Green Space Program.

For more specific information about this program, including rating and ranking information, refer to the Grant Guidelines for the Local Assistance Program, which you can obtain from the web or from your CSS.

Deadline

The deadline for receipt of applications for this program is May 1. Applications received after this date cannot be considered until the following year.

Grant Criteria

This is a very competitive program, and it has been necessary to develop a comprehensive rating and ranking system to evaluate projects. Those projects that receive the highest scores will receive funding. For additional information on the rating and ranking system and on specific questions, refer to the Grant Guidelines for Local Assistance Program, which you can obtain from our website or your CSS.

Priority is given to projects that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Planning Considerations, including:
 - Specifically implementing a priority of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
 - Implementing the approved master plans of 2 or more units of government or regional planning agencies.
 - Preserving land that is listed on the natural heritage inventory database.
 - Implementing elements of water quality plans or initiatives.
- Project Considerations, including:
 - Serving the greatest population centers.
 - Serving areas of rapidly increasing populations.
 - Providing accessibility.
 - Having unique natural features, threatened or endangered species, or significant ecological value.



Working with Ozaukee County and the Town of Grafton, the Ozaukee Washington Land

*Trust leveraged a Stewardship grant with funds from the Coastal Management Program and other sources to spearhead a local community-based effort to permanently protect the **Lion's Den Gorge** in Ozaukee County. One half mile of shoreline along Lake Michigan makes this scenic site a popular spot for local residents in an area where public access to Lake Michigan is scarce.*

- Providing open natural linear corridors connecting open natural areas.
 - Having water frontage.
 - Containing or restoring wetlands.
 - Protecting sensitive wildlife habitat.
 - Protecting an area threatened by development.
 - Preserving a natural community or one that could be restored.
 - Having regional or statewide significance.
 - Relating to brownfield redevelopment.
- ◆ Administrative considerations, including:
- Projects that are ready to be implemented and/or continue previously started projects.

Eligible Land Acquisition Projects

- ◆ Projects that implement priorities contained in local master plans.
- ◆ Projects that acquire land for open natural space within or in proximity to urban development.
- ◆ Projects that protect areas or naturally formed features that have scenic, ecological, or other natural values.
- ◆ Project that provide land for noncommercial gardening for inhabitants of urbanized areas.

Ineligible Projects

- ◆ Acquiring land to be used for non nature-based outdoor recreation purposes.

Urban Rivers Program

S. 30.277(2), Wis. Stats.; ch. NR 51, subch. XIV, Wis. Adm. Code

Stewardship allocates 20% of the funds available in the Local Assistance Program annually to restore or preserve the character of urban riverways through the acquisition of land or easements adjacent to rivers. Funding will be provided for projects that are part of a plan to enhance the quality of a river corridor. The purposes of the program are:

- ◆ To provide for economic revitalization through the restoration or preservation of urban rivers or riverfronts
- ◆ To improve outdoor recreational opportunities by increasing access to urban rivers for a variety of public uses, including but not limited to, fishing, wildlife observation, enjoyment of scenic beauty, canoeing, boating, hiking and bicycling
- ◆ To preserve or restore significant historical, cultural, or natural areas along urban rivers.

UR provides grants to municipalities and NCOs. There is a cap of 20% which means that no sponsor can receive more than 20% of the funds that are available in any fiscal year.

Deadline

The deadline for receipt of applications for this program is May 1. Applications received after this date cannot be considered until the following year.

General Provisions of the Program

This is a very competitive program, and it has been necessary to develop a comprehensive rating and ranking system to evaluate projects. Those projects which receive the highest scores will receive funding. For additional information on the rating and ranking system and on specific questions, refer to the Grant Guidelines for Local Assistance Program, which you can obtain from our website or your CSS. Priority is given to projects that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Acquires land or land rights that preserve or restore natural values, including aesthetic values, and enhance environmental quality along urban waterways.
- ◆ Provides new or expanded diverse recreational opportunities to all segments of urban populations.
- ◆ Provides new or expanded access to urban waterways.
- ◆ Acquires blighted lands that will be restored to complement riverfront redevelopment activities.
- ◆ Encourages comprehensive riverway planning within and between municipalities and other agencies.
- ◆ Provides opportunities for increasing tourism.
- ◆ Acquires lands that through proper management will improve or protect water quality.



APPENDIX D

APPLICATION MATERIALS

NOTICE: Personally identifiable information will be used to administer the grant and will not be used for other purposes. Information will be made accessible to requesters under Wisconsin's Open Records law (Sec. 19.31-19.39 Wis. Stats.).

Send your completed application with attachments to the Community Services Specialist in your local DNR Regional Office

The DNR will send your organization an official letter of certification for the Stewardship Program if your organization qualifies. Once you have received your letter you do not need to re-submit this application with subsequent grant requests. However, you will need to become re-certified if your 501(c) (3) tax-exempt status or mission changes.

Nonprofit Conservation Organization (NCO)

NCO Addresses

Name of Official Contact Person

Telephone Number (include area code)	Fax Number (include area code)	E-Mail
1. Is the organization incorporated under chapter 181, Wis. Stats.?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Date of Incorporation: _____
2. Is the organization certified by the IRS as 501 (c) (3) tax exempt ?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Date of Certification: _____
3. Is one mission of the organization, as evidenced in articles of incorporation or by-laws, to acquire land for conservation purposes?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Page Reference: _____
4. Does the organization have an attorney review legal documents related to land and easement acquisitions?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
5. Does the organization have an endowment for long-term management, maintenance costs or monitoring of property?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

Required Attachments

- A copy of the NCOs by-laws
- A copy of the NCOs articles of incorporation
- A copy of the IRS letter of tax-exemt status determination
- Description of endowment funds if applicable
- Miscellaneous. Brochures about organization, newsletter, annual report, copy of any land acquisition policies, criteria for evalutaion of land, or other pertinent information (optional)

I hereby certify as the NCO's authorized representative that to the best of my knowledge the information on this application is true and correct.

Signature of Authorized Representative	Typed or Printed Name	Date Signed



Grant Request

Amount of cash award requested: \$ _____	Grant payment option: <input type="checkbox"/> Reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Escrow Closing – Date check needed: _____
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Project Budget

Appraisal value of property or easement being acquired: \$ _____	Date seller acquired the property: _____
Appraised value of property being used as sponsor match; <i>(NA if none)</i> \$ _____	Date of conveyance to grant applicant: _____

Were either of these appraisals commissioned by the seller (or donor)? Yes No

<u>Estimate of Eligible Transaction Costs</u>	<u>Funding sources for Sponsor match</u>
Appraisal..... \$ _____	Sponsoring NCO..... \$ _____
Title Insurance..... \$ _____	Other government funds: Specify source: _____ \$ _____
Survey..... \$ _____	_____ \$ _____
Phase I Assessment Report \$ _____	_____ \$ _____
Historic & Cultural Assessment (if required by DNR) \$ _____	Property Contribution From Landowner \$ _____
Recording Fee..... \$ _____	Other Property Contribution..... \$ _____
Relocation \$ _____	TOTAL:
Attorney’s Fee \$ _____	NOTE: All sources of sponsor match must be accurately stated. Indicate if any source listed is an estimate. Notify your CSS of changes in Sponsor Match.
TOTAL: \$ _____	

What is your actual purchase price for the property or easement? \$ _____

Required Attachments (submit two separate application packets)

Check all that are included:

1. <input type="checkbox"/> Application Form 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Organization information (submit only once each year) <input type="checkbox"/> List of Current Board of Directors <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Statement or IRS Form 990 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Project description <input type="checkbox"/> Project has previously been approved and therefore project description is not included 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Property Information 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Board Resolution authorizing the grant application 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Maps 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment Form-1800-1/Phase 1 Report	8. <input type="checkbox"/> Seller’s Warranty Deed 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate appraisal (1 original/2 copies) 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted Option and/or Offer to Purchase 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Draft easement (for easement grants only) 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Title Commitment or Title Insurance Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Backup information included 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Access Easement, if needed 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Mortgage Subordination, if needed 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental information for second appraisal, if needed 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental information for match property, if needed
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Certification

I certify that the information in this application and all its attachments is true and correct and in conformity with applicable Wisconsin Statutes. An attorney experienced in real estate transactions shall review title work and legal documents associated with the transaction.

Printed/Typed Name of Authorized Representative	Title of Authorized Representative
Signature of Authorized Representative	Date



APPLICATION CHECKLIST AND INSTRUCTIONS

This checklist includes all materials required to complete a Stewardship application for property and easement acquisition. **We cannot make a final decision on a grant until all materials have been received and approved.**

Please submit **two separate copies** of your application materials (**one original and two copies of the appraisal**) to your Region Community Services Specialist (CSS), and use this checklist to track what you have submitted. Attachments 2-8 must be included with your application form. Other attachments may be submitted as they become available. If you are applying for a grant under the Local Park Aids, Urban Green Space, Urban Rivers or Acquisition of Development Rights Programs, there is an advantage to sending us the appraisal before projects are rated and ranked because you will receive extra rating points if you do so.

1. Application Form 8700-259

2. Organization Information (submit once each year)

Board of Directors

➤ Name, address, telephone number and affiliation of current Board members

Financial Statement

➤ Copy of most recent audited financial statement or most recent 990 filing to the IRS (talk to your CSS if you do not have either of these documents)

3. Project Description

Project narrative and proposed land management plan

➤ The project narrative and management plan is used to evaluate, rate and rank projects. A complete, concise narrative will improve your chance of receiving a grant. Please follow the format contained in the guidelines, "Developing Project Narratives and Land Management Plans" (see Appendix A).

Planning

➤ List any plans the project supports, including Smart Growth comprehensive plans or other plans that have as a purpose protecting natural resources or providing opportunities for nature-based outdoor recreation. Explain how the project implements recommendations in the plan. Indicate if the site is listed in the Natural Heritage Inventory or the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report.

Linkages

➤ If your project complements other land conservation efforts in the area, discuss the relationship between the projects.

Community support and partnerships

➤ Describe support or opposition to the project by local governments and other organizations. Also list organizations or government agencies involved in the project and explain their roles. Indicate if you plan to transfer title to a third party.

Note: If this application is for acquisition of a parcel of land that is within the boundaries of a Big Scope Stewardship Project that has already approved for grant funding, you may skip this section. If the application proposes to expand the boundaries of an existing Big Scope Stewardship Project, you may explain the reason for the expansion rather than redoing the entire project description.

4. Property Information

Name of property owner and address of property

Property description

➤ If you included a description of the property as part of the project narrative, you may skip the property description here. However, if the property is part of a larger Big Scope Stewardship Project that contains a number of parcels, and therefore was not specifically described in the projective narrative, please describe the parcel and its importance to the overall project, including the degree to which it is threatened by development. Include a physical description, number of acres, unique features, current usage and land management problems. If you intend to employ any land management practices different from those contained in the management plan for the Big Scope Stewardship Project, also discuss those.



- Zoning
 - *How is the property zoned?*
 - Relocation
 - *Indicate if relocation is applicable. See NCO "Land Acquisition Guidelines" for information on relocation. (You may need to prepare a relocation plan and pay relocation benefits if the acquisition displaces a tenant.)*
 - Encumbrances and/or problems
 - *Describe any easements, liens, deed restrictions, leases or special agreements that encumber the property or will be placed on the property as part of the transaction. If the property is currently being leased, attach a copy of the lease if it will continue after conveyance to the grant applicant. Include any special agreements with the landowner that will be a future encumbrance. If there are any threatened civil or criminal proceedings that could impact the property, claims of adverse possession or other problems, describe those here also.*
 - Other government programs
 - *If the property is enrolled in another other government program that restricts use of the property, you must submit a copy of any written agreements that exist, and explain how the program impacts the property. For instance, if the property or part of the property has a Forest Management Plan under the Managed Forest Law, we will need to see a copy of the management plan. The DNR will evaluate whether the restrictions under the other program are compatible with the goals of the Stewardship subprogram funding the grant.*
 - Legal description of the property covered by the grant
 - *Correct legal description that clearly defines the property for recording purposes. If the legal description refers to a Certified Survey Map (CSM), enclose a copy of the CSM, which is needed for GIS mapping.*
- 5. Board Resolution authorizing the application and identifying authorized representative**
- *See Sample Board Resolution Form*
- 6. Maps showing location and boundaries of the project/property**
- County map*
 - Plat map*
 - Topographic map*
 - Aerial photograph*
 - Site plan map*
- Do a simple site development map for the property that shows existing or planned buildings, parking areas and other improvements; easements of record; habitat restoration areas; special features and archeological sites.*
- 7. Environmental Hazards Assessment Form 1800-1**
- *Form 1800-1 may be completed by the grant applicant. A Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report prepared by a firm that specializes in environmental hazards may be required in some circumstances.*
- 8. Seller's Warranty Deed**
- *A copy of the seller's warranty deed is necessary to meet statutory requirements for the program.*
- 9. Real Estate Appraisal that meets DNR standards (1 original and 2 copies)**
- *See NCO "Land Acquisition Guidelines" for information on DNR appraisal requirements.*
- 10. Accepted Option and/or Offer to Purchase**
- *Submit both the signed option and offer to purchase, if both have been executed.*
- 11. Draft Easement, if applicable**
- *See "Grant Requirements for Conservation Easements" if you are applying for a grant to acquire an easement or using an easement as part of your sponsor match. The draft easement must be prepared by or reviewed by an attorney before submittal.*
- 12. Title Commitment and Title Policy**
- *If you are requesting an escrow closing, you must submit the Title Commitment and backup materials that explain the exceptions before the closing, and the Title Policy after the closing.*
 - *If you will be requesting reimbursement after the closing, you must submit the Title Policy and backup materials before we can authorize payment.*

- 13. Draft Access Easement (for landlocked parcels only)
 - *If the property is landlocked, there must be a way to reach it. The usual mechanism is for the project sponsor or seller to provide an access easement over other land they own. If your property is landlocked, discuss this matter with your CSS early in the grant process.*
- 14. Draft Mortgage Subordination Agreement
 - *For easements only. Required when the property is encumbered with a mortgage or land contract.*
- 15. Supplemental Information for second appraisal (submit one copy as a separate packet only if your appraisal is over \$200,000)
 - Name and telephone number of landowner*
 - Describe any special rights being retained by the landowner (not necessary for easements)*
 - Describe information known about existing encumbrances on the Property, for instance MFL, CRP, etc.)*
 - Copy of current or previous year's tax bill*
- 16. Supplemental Information (needed if you are submitting other property as sponsor match)
 - Project Description (see #3 above)*
 - Property Information (see #4 above)*
 - Maps - county, plat, topo, aerial, site plan*
 - Survey, if available*
 - Environmental Hazards Assessment Form 1800-1/Phase 1 Assessment Report (see #7 above)*
 - Appraisal (1 original, 1 copy) - value of the property as of, or prior to, the date it was conveyed to the grant applicant*
 - Title Insurance Policy (include backup information for exceptions)*
 - Recorded Access Easement (if needed because property is landlocked)*
 - Draft conservation easement, if applicable (DNR must approve the easement before execution) (see #11 above)*
 - Recorded Warranty Deed or recorded conservation easement (after execution)*
 - Baseline Documentation Report signed by seller and buyer (for easements only)*
 - Recorded Mortgage Subordination (easements only; needed if property is encumbered with a mortgage or land contract)*
 - Supplemental information for the second appraisal (see #13 above)*

The Grant Payment Request Form:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Forms/8700001.pdf>

The next form is the Grant Payment Worksheet:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Forms/8700002.pdf>

GRANT PAYMENT CHECKLIST AND INSTRUCTIONS

This checklist includes documents that must be submitted before the Department can authorize payment of the grant amount. The list does not include any items listed on the Application Checklist, all of which should have been received and approved before this point.

Project sponsors have two options for receiving grant payments:

- Escrow closing – the Department provides one grant payment before or at the closing on the property and one payment after the closing.
- Reimbursement – the Department provides one grant payment after the closing.

Choose whichever option is appropriate in your situation, and follow the checklist for that option.

OPTION #1: ESCROW CLOSING

Before the Closing: A check will be issued for the Department's share of the cost of the property.

One copy of the following items must be submitted before we can authorize a check for an escrow closing:

- Grant and Management Contract (*original copy that has been signed and notarized*)
- Grant Payment Request Form 8700-001.
 - *Request a check for the Department's share of the cost of the property. Download from Forms and Publications on the Stewardship web page.*

After the Closing: A check will be issued for the Department's share of eligible transaction costs.

Submit one copy of the following items **within 60 days** after the escrow closing. The final grant payment will not be issued until we receive these documents. Failure to submit this information in a timely manner could jeopardize future grants.

- Recorded Grant and Management Contract
- Recorded Warranty Deed or recorded Conservation Easement
- Recorded Access Easement (*for landlocked parcels only*)
- Recorded Mortgage Subordination (*for easements only, if mortgage or land contract encumbers the easement property*)
- Real Estate Transfer Form
- Title Insurance Policy
- Closing Statement, signed by buyer and seller
- Grant Payment Request Form 8700-001 for eligible acquisition costs (original)
- Grant Payment Request Worksheet Form 8700-002 for eligible acquisition costs (original)
- Invoices/vouchers for eligible transaction costs
- Canceled checks or bank statements for eligible costs
- Baseline Documentation signed by buyer and seller (*for conservation easements only*)



OPTION #2: REIMBURSEMENT

To receive your grant payment, submit one copy of the following documentation after you have closed on the property:

- Grant and Management Contract (*original that has been signed and notarized*)
- Recorded Grant and Management Contract
- Recorded Warranty Deed or recorded Conservation Easement
- Recorded Access Easement (*for landlocked parcels only*)
- Mortgage Subordination (*For easements only. Required when the property is encumbered with a mortgage or land contract.*)
- Real Estate Transfer Form
- Title Insurance Policy (*include backup materials for the exceptions, if not already submitted*)
- Closing Statement, signed by buyer and seller
- Grant Payment Request Form 8700-001 for all acquisition costs (original)
- Grant Payment Request Worksheet Form 8700-002 for all acquisition costs (original)
- Invoices/vouchers for eligible costs
- Canceled checks or bank statements for eligible costs
- Baseline Documentation signed by buyer and seller (*for conservation easements only*)

Notice: This form must be completed and approved by the DNR before grant funds can be expended for land acquisition. Please complete all sections. Use additional page if necessary. Collection of this information is authorized under s. 23.0019(4), Wis. Stats., (Stewardship grants). Failure to provide this information may result in denial or repayment of grant awards. Personal information collected on this form will be used for management of DNR programs and grants. Information may be made available to requesters under Wisconsin's Open Records laws (ss. 19.31-19.39, Wis. Stats.).

1. General Information

Applicant Name	Project/Parcel Count	y
Property Owner Name	Property Street Address	
Close / Intersecting Roads		

Legal Description	¼ / ¼	¼	Section(s)	Township	Range	E/W
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2. Environmental Condition Statement of Property

Complete the checklist to the best of your knowledge through inspection of the site. Indicate if any of the following conditions currently exist on site:

Yes No

- Known spills, release of chemicals, hazardous substances or fuels
- Dumps, debris piles, stockpiles of waste, containers, barrels or drums
- Sludge
- Discolored or odorous soil
- Areas of stressed vegetation, absence of vegetation, areas previously burned
- Unusual or noxious odors
- Discolored, polluted, foul water (in standing water, wells, or wetlands)
- Is an existing well located on site? If yes, where is it located? _____
- Old pipes, electrical equipment
- Unusual or irregular depressions or mounds on surface
- Other evidence of possible contamination – If yes, described? _____

If the answer to any questions above is yes:

- Attach description or explanation and site map showing location of item(s) checked.
- The property may require a Phase 1 or further investigation/inspection. Talk to your regional grant specialist listed in the application form.

3. Land Use History

A. Current Uses of the Property:

- Industrial
 Commercial
 Agriculture
 Orchards
 Railroads and Railroad Spurs
 Landfills
 Other – Explain: _____

B. Historical Uses of the Property (for the past 20 years):

- Industrial
 Commercial
 Agriculture
 Orchards
 Railroads and Railroad Spurs
 Suspected Former Landfills
 Other – Explain: _____

C. To the best of your knowledge does the property have evidence of the following?

Yes No

- Has the site been used for the storage or warehousing of commercial or industrial materials?
- Are there areas with a history or likelihood of under ground storage tanks?
- Are there monitoring wells on site?
- Is there any history of contamination on the property?
- Is there any history of contamination on any *adjacent* properties?

If you checked any boxes in Sections 3A or 3B above, or answered yes to any question in Section 3C, the property may require a Phase 1 or further investigation/inspection. Talk to your regional grant specialist listed in the application form.



4. Site Investigation Documentation

Has a Phase I or Phase II Site Investigation been completed on the property? Yes No
If yes, attach a copy of the conclusions:

5. Certification

I hereby certify that I have inspected the property and contacted the current owner regarding environmental contamination. The information provided is a full disclosure of my findings and is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Printed Name of Preparer	Title
Signature of Preparer	Date Signed

Leave Blank – DNR Use Only

6. Search of DNR Records

A. Does the property appear on the most recent version of the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If Yes, Site Name: _____ BRRTS Activity # _____		
B. Does the property appear on the most recent version of the DNR Registry of Waste Disposal Sites in Wisconsin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If Yes, Site Name: _____		
C. Does the property appear on the most recent version of the Solid and Hazardous Waste Information Management System (SHWIMS)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If Yes, Site Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

7. Conclusions

Based on the information available in DNR's Regional files at this time, no additional investigation recommended

Further investigation needed; consult with region R&R program for recommendation.

Printed Name of DNR Reviewer	Title
Signature of DNR Reviewer	Date Signed



**RESOLUTION
REQUESTING A STEWARDSHIP GRANT**

RESOLVED, that the _____
(Board of Directors or other authorized governing unit)

of the _____
(Name of Organization)

headquartered at _____

HEREBY AUTHORIZES _____
(Name and Title)

to act on its behalf to submit an application to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for financial assistance under the Stewardship Program for the

Name of Project

to sign documents; and to take action necessary to undertake, direct, and complete an approved Stewardship project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the _____
(Name of organization)

recognizes and acknowledges the long-term ownership and management and responsibilities of the Stewardship Program, and will comply with all Stewardship laws and regulations and will meet its obligations under the Grant and Management Contract for the project.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by

_____ at a legal meeting held
(Name of organization)

on the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Authorized signature _____

Typed or printed name _____

Title _____

Date _____

