The MassConn Regional Conservation Fund – Round 2

The MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership, a Regional Conservation Partnership serving 39 towns in southern-central Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut, is pleased to announce a grant program to assist with the transactional costs of donated land or donated conservation easements.

Using a $100,000 grant from the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust Donated Land and Easement Program to encourage the permanent conservation of ecologically significant land, the MassConn Regional Conservation Fund will provide funding for the following types of transactional expenses, through a competitive grant program: surveys, baseline documentation reports, appraisals, legal review (including title search/certification, closing costs) and associated attorney/legal fees.

Grants will be up to $20,000, though most will be smaller, with final grant funding allocation determined by the number of qualified applications. One project per organization per grant round will be allowed. Grant funding for accepted projects will be provided on a reimbursable basis (see Terms and Conditions).

Eligible projects / ranking criteria: Projects must be within the 39 town MassConn Service area and must be for the donation of at least 50% or more of the fee interest, or 100% of the conservation easement, being donated from private ownership to a qualified conservation organization or municipality with provisions for permanent conservation. Projects will be ranked based on the amount of acreage they contain that are within the “Conservation Focus” categories of the MassConn Mapper GIS [link to MassConn Mapper] – the top two fifths (top 40%) of priority for conservation. The MassConn steering committee will evaluate all applications based on these criteria, and others at its discretion, to award and distribute funding to as many applicants as possible.

- Application: There is a PDF version for reference, and a Word version that you can download and fill-in directly (do not modify the text of the application or the order of the questions).
- For Terms and Conditions of the MassConn Regional Conservation fund
- To access MassConn Mapper Conservation Priority maps for individual towns

Applications will be available beginning October 5th, 2018. Applications for Round 2 of the grant program are due on March 29th, 2019.

For more information, contact Ed Hood, MassConn Coordinator at ehood@opacumlt.org (please include “MassConn Regional Conservation Fund” in the subject line).
MassConn Regional Conservation Fund
Application – Round 2
Due March 29th, 2019

Applicant Name (project coordinator and organization(s)):

Contact Information (address, phone, email):

Attachment 1: Please provide documentation that applicant organization is a qualified conservation organization or municipality with authorization to pursue this conservation project (see Terms and Conditions for further information). If the applicant is not the final holder of the fee title or conservation easement, please identify the final recipient of the conservation title or easement and evidence that they are a qualified organization to do so.

Project Name and Location (State, Town and other important geographic/location information):

Attachment 2 (at least two maps): 1. Please attach a locational map that clearly shows the parcel location with town, water, roadway or other regional landmarks, and 2. A parcel map clearly showing boundaries.

Current Property Ownership Structure: (e.g. individual private landowner, family trust, LLC, etc., including legal address and contact information).

Provide a detailed description of the project.
This section should be answered on a separate page, with the heading “Detailed Project Description”.
Provide information about the parcel, its current owner(s) and their goals / needs for conservation. Describe the parcel and how much of it will be conserved, and by what methods.
How will this conservation project be structured? What are the source(s) and status of funding for the project?
What are the characteristics of this property that make it suitable for conservation?
What will be the final status of the property (i.e. public conservation land managed by a Land Trust? A private property with a permanent conservation easement held and monitored by whom, etc....).
When Is the project anticipated to close? Discuss issues that will impact the progress of the project and provide a timeline of key steps with anticipated dates.

Transaction Cost Funding Request: Please list the costs you expect to submit invoices for, and the estimated cost of each. If the estimated cost represents a discounted cost or leveraging of other funding sources, please detail that here.

Project eligibility and ranking data:

- Is the property within the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership service area?  
  ___ Yes.  ____ No. (projects outside of the MassConn service area are not eligible for his grant program).

- Acres to be conserved with this funding: Fee ______ Easement ______

- Transaction Type: 100% donation ☐ or Bargain Sale ☐ (must be <50% of fair market value; attach documentation)

- What is the total acreage to be conserved that is in the top 20% MassConn Mapper Conservation Focus Areas (please refer to MassConn Mapper)? ________
  NOTE: The Username for MassConn Mapper is massconn_1, and the password is massconn1234

- What is the total acreage to be conserved that is in the top 40% MassConn Mapper Conservation Focus Areas (this includes top 20% and top 40% acreage) (please refer to MassConn Mapper)? ________

- What is your goal for dedicated stewardship funding to be set aside to provide for monitoring and long-term protection of this property? What will be the source / means of acquiring it? See “Terms and Conditions” for more information on recommended stewardship reserve funding.

Attachment 3: Please provide a map showing your property overlain with the MassConn Mapper Conservation Priority Focus layer.
Project readiness:

- **Existing Contractual Arrangements and Completed Due Diligence:**
  - Please provide explanation and/or evidence showing that this land conservation project will progress towards a successful conclusion. (E.g. existing letter of engagement or a filed application for conservation tax credit; funding in hand to cover the capital costs not being donated by landowner; partial due diligence already completed; other evidence you feel may be compelling, such as previous projects completed with the same landowner, etc.).

Additional information:

- Is there anything else you would like the ranking committee to consider?

Funding Allocation Process:

Decisions about the MassConn Regional Conservation Fund will be made by the MassConn Steering Committee, at their discretion, following the ranking system and criteria identified in this application and in the “Terms and Conditions” document found at. Round 2 Grant awards will be determined and notified in mid-April, 2019.

The maximum grant awards will be $20,000, with as many smaller awards as possible to be made. The goal of the MassConn RCF is to distribute funds to as many projects, with reasonable regional and organizational equity, as possible. Small grants in the $2,500 to $5,000 range are encouraged (see “Terms and Conditions” for project size and ranking guidelines), and the Steering Committee reserves the right to prioritize some smaller projects that meet minimum conservation priority criteria and provide partial funding to larger projects.

All decisions by the MassConn Steering Committee regarding the Regional Conservation Fund will be final.

Contact information and deadlines:

Please send all applications to, and for further information please contact, Ed Hood, at mailto:ehood@opacuml.org, or by mail to Ed Hood, MassConn, c/o Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary, 30 Peck Rd., Monson, MA 01057.

**Round 2 applications will be accepted through end of business on March 29th, 2019.**