



Land Conservation Networking Mini Grant Request for Proposals

October 2022

Conservation in Massachusetts is often fueled by the energy, persistence, and care of local community members. The Massachusetts Open Space Network (OSN) was created to build and support a network of these community conservation leaders who are interested in sharing resources and learning from one another. The annual Open Space Conference (massopenspace.org) and Open Space Handbook (available on masswoods.org/osc) were developed by and for this network. In recognition that many land conservation projects require partnerships among community leaders and other conservation partners, we are piloting a mini grant program focused on creating intentional opportunities for networking and relationship-building.

This pilot grant program has been modeled on an “Open Space Networking Lunch” held in Acton in 2018. Twenty-four people from municipal boards, land trusts, and other conservation groups across ten local communities gathered on a Saturday to discuss regionally relevant topics, share successes and challenges, and brainstorm new ways to support each other’s work. The Networking Lunch gave people a dedicated time and space to expand their network of resources beyond town and organizational borders.

The ideal proposal will bring together people from a shared geography to build or strengthen relationships in service of community conservation. Proposals can focus on a single community (e.g., a town-based all-volunteer land trust could host a picnic for town board members active within that town) or multiple communities (e.g., an open space committee could host a breakfast for open space committee members in bordering towns). The scale and size of the proposed networking should be meaningful to the applicant and intended participants.

Proposals for remote/online gatherings will also be considered, but applicants are encouraged to think carefully about how the relationship-building element will be meaningfully integrated.

Eligible Organizations and People:

The following organizations and people from anywhere in Massachusetts are eligible for this grant.

- Municipal boards (e.g., open space committee, conservation commission), including if acting in an informal capacity
- Land trusts (with preference given to all-volunteer land trusts)
- Conservation organizations (e.g., watershed associations)
- Regional Conservation Partnerships
- Keystone Cooperators
- Other community leaders and conservationists

Funding:

Organizing outreach and facilitating social connections is time intensive. Applicants are therefore encouraged to include the cost of staff time in the proposal to ensure there is an appropriate amount of time dedicated to organizing the networking event.

- \$700 maximum
- No match is required
- This is a reimbursement grant program
- **Eligible costs** include staff and volunteer time, outreach expenses (stamps, paper, design and printing costs for event invitations, etc.) and event expenses (venue rentals, speaker stipends, food and beverages, etc.)

Anticipated Project Start Date:

- ASAP

Project End Date:

- All activities must be completed no later than April 15th, 2023
- The reimbursement request (including copies of receipts) and a brief final report describing the goals and impacts of the networking must be submitted no later than April 30th, 2023

Proposal Requirements (1-page limit):

- Description of the shared geography and proposed invitees/networking partners
- Description of the networking event/s, including a basic draft agenda
- Basic budget

Please submit your proposal to Sarah Wells at wells@mountgrace.org.

Submission Deadline:

- Rolling basis. Proposals will be reviewed when they are submitted until the funding is spent.

For Further Information:

Sarah Wells – wells@mountgrace.org 978-541-1773

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