



Land Conservation Networking Mini Grant Request for Proposals

September 2023

Funding for this project is being provided by the MA DCR Service Forestry Program through the Working Forests Initiative, implemented in part by UMass Amherst and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (fiscally sponsored by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust).

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 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, 2024
- The reimbursement request must be submitted no later than April 30th, 2024.
 - A reimbursement request template is attached.
- A brief final report must be submitted by May 15th, 2024.
 - A grant report template is attached.

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
- Timeline
- 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

ATTACHMENT A: TEMPLATE GRANT REPORT

Grant Program: (Neighborhood Outreach Project OR Land Conservation Networking)

Grant Recipient Name:

Name of Project:

Town:

Amount Awarded:

Date of Submittal of this Report:

GRANT REPORT

Funding for this grant program is provided by the MA DCR Service Forestry Program through the Working Forests Initiative, implemented in part by UMass Amherst and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (fiscally sponsored by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust).

Please submit to Sarah Wells at wells@mountgrace.org by the date listed in your award letter.

Brief Summary of Outreach Activities: *(Please briefly describe how the grant award was used, including any deviations from the original proposal. Outreach is adaptable, and we are interested to hear about your candid experience.)*

Brief Summary of Impacts: *(Please briefly describe whether/how the outreach activities reached your intended audience, and what the immediate and longer-term impacts may be for your geography of interest. Please include any insights about relationship-building.)*

Key Lessons Learned: *(Please briefly describe any key lessons learned, particularly if they might be useful to future grant recipients. This information may also be used to inform future landowner outreach and/or programming offered through the Massachusetts Open Space Network.)*

Landowner/Participant Feedback and/or Anecdotes: *(Please share what you know about how your intended audience received the programming, particularly if they 1) expressed enthusiasm, 2) shared constructive feedback, and/or 3) indicated they would be taking additional conservation, stewardship, and/or networking steps outside of the outreach activity.)*

Suggestions to Improve the Grant Program:

Photos *(If possible, please copy and paste 1-3 good photos below or send separately)*

ATTACHMENT B: TEMPLATE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Grant Program: (Neighborhood Outreach Project OR Land Conservation Networking)

Grant Recipient Name:

Name of Project:

Town:

Date of Submittal of this Request:

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Funding for this grant program is provided by the MA DCR Service Forestry Program through the Working Forests Initiative, implemented in part by UMass Amherst and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (fiscally sponsored by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust).

Please submit to Sarah Wells at wells@mountgrace.org by the date listed in your award letter.

Amount Awarded:

Amount Requested for Reimbursement:

Amount Remaining: (if not \$0, please explain whether and when you plan to submit additional reimbursement request(s))

Reimbursement(s) should be payable to*:

Name of Entity/Individual:

Address:

Amount (if more than one entity receiving reimbursement):

**Note: Reimbursements can be split between multiple entities and individuals. Please provide the name, address, and amount for each entity proposed to receive reimbursement.*

Table of Expenses (please list total amounts applied to each category; your total grant award can be spent across these eligible categories and does not have to exactly match the budget submitted with the proposal)

Staff Time	\$
Volunteer Time	\$
Outreach expenses (stamps, paper, design, printing, etc.)	\$
Event expenses (venue rentals, speaker stipends, food and non-alcoholic beverages, etc.)	\$
Total	\$

Brief Narrative Summary of Expenses (please describe any deviations from budget submitted with application):

Grantee must substantiate request using Documentation Guide below.

Documentation Guide: *(Note: If you have an alternative method of documenting proof of payment, please submit with a brief description. The grant administrators have discretion in determining which methods will be accepted. Please contact Sarah Wells (wells@mountgrace.org) prior to submitting request if you have questions.)*

Staff Time	<p><u>Requirement:</u> Document the time spent on the grant.</p> <p><u>Guide:</u> Grantees do not need to demonstrate that the staff member was paid through submitting pay stubs. A list of the name of staff member(s) with list of dates and hours allocated to this grant and hourly rate is sufficient. This grant uses a default of \$50/hour for staff time unless otherwise specified/substantiated by grantee.</p>
Volunteer Time	<p><u>Requirement:</u> Document the time spent on the grant.</p> <p><u>Guide:</u> A list of the name of volunteer(s) with list of dates and hours allocated to this grant is sufficient. This grant uses the national Value of Volunteer Time accepted by the IRS (\$31.80 as of April 2023)</p>
Outreach <u>and</u> Event expenses	<p><u>Requirement:</u> Document the cost of the item and the amount paid.</p> <p><u>Guide:</u> Providing invoices (if available) with receipts, OR a statement signed by Treasurer attesting to funds spent (for municipal and non-profit grantees) is sufficient.</p>