



CHESHIRE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Conservation Opportunity Fund 2024 Request for Proposals

I. Introduction & Summary

The mission of the Conservation Opportunity Fund is to provide funding for owners or stewards of small tracts of land who are interested in improving the wildlife habitat on their property. This program is an annual opportunity to support environmental stewardship and the ecological integrity of Cheshire County, NH.

The Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD) requests proposals from landowners or land stewards of small tracts, less than 25 acres total, who seek funding to make a meaningful long-term impact on wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Follow application guidelines
- Answer all questions with detail and use the application form directly
- Have a detailed plan for site preparation, education, long-term maintenance and sustainability
- Demonstrate landowner inputs of time and resources
- Are informed by the ecology of our region
- Provide opportunities to partner with the CCCD to offer community education

The following will not be funded:

- Landowner/land manager time
- Research and feasibility studies
- Efforts that will not lead to improved wildlife habitat

II. Eligible Applicants & Projects

A. Eligible Applicants

Landowners and land stewards with site security (e.g. long-term lease) in Cheshire County, NH with tracts of land 25 acres or less. This can include individuals, businesses, farmers, and/or forestland owners.

Funding is not eligible for projects that have already been installed or are in progress. Successful grantees from past years must wait 2 years before applying again (Example: If you received a grant in 2021 you can apply again in 2024).

B. Eligible Projects

The following project types are eligible:

- Installation of native pollinator habitat
- Installation of rain gardens

- Creation/maintenance of early successional habitat
- Creation of vegetated buffers on surface waters (e.g. lakes, streams, etc)
- Conversion of lawns and/or fields to native plant gardens
- If you have a project idea that is not listed here, please call the CCCD office to inquire about eligibility, phone: 603-756-9282.

C. Description of Project Types

- Pollinator Habitat – Areas planted with native vegetation that provide nectar and pollen sources as well as offering a low-disturbance area for nesting and egg-laying.
- Rain Gardens – Depressed areas of a landscape that collect rainwater from a roof, driveway, or street and allows water to soak into the ground. They are planted with native perennials and shrubs and are important for managing stormwater runoff and improving water quality.
- Early Successional Habitat – Old fields, shrublands, and young forests are often referred to as early succession habitat. These are increasingly uncommon in the NH landscape and are important for a diversity of wildlife.
- Vegetated Buffers – Along surface waters buffers are planted with native trees, shrubs, and perennials to reduce erosion and improve water quality.

III. Program Funding and Project Duration

A. Funding Availability

Awards no greater than \$1,500 will be considered. Program administrators reserve the right to offer funding to selected projects at an amount less or more than what is requested in the application budget.

Grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. At project completion, the grantee will submit a request for reimbursement along with the final report. This will be accompanied by copies of all invoices/receipts that are expected to be reimbursed. Grantees will also be asked to submit a record of the time and funds they spent on completing the project that was not covered by the grant. Reimbursements will only be made for eligible expenses and will not exceed the grant award.

B. Project Timeframe: Grant Award Funding Decisions and Allocations

PROCESS	APPROXIMATE TIME FRAME
1. RFP is available.	November 1
2. Optional Zoom Informational Session	Wednesday, December 6 th at 6:00PM, Register Here!
3. Proposals are due.	February 1

4. Proposal review process. Applicants may be contacted for additional information to clarify the project.	February 1-February 28
5. All Applicants are notified of funding decision.	March 15
6. Project ends and report and photos are due.	December 31

Project must be completed and the final report submitted by December 31, 2024.

IV. Application Submittal Procedure

The proposal can be submitted digitally or by hard copy in the mail. Digital copies are preferred. Applications must be emailed or postmarked by the due date. **Proposal Due Date: February 1, 2024**

A. Proposals Mailed to:

Conservation Opportunity Fund
Cheshire County Conservation District
11 Industrial Park Dr
Walpole NH 03608

B. **Or emailed to:** Amanda@cheshireconservation.org

V. Grant Funding and Information Required for Funded Applications

A. **Successful Applicants – Grantees - will be required to submit the following additional information before they can begin their project.**

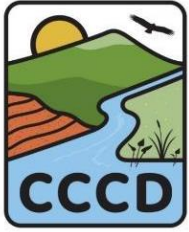
1. Form W-9
2. Proof of liability insurance on the project site
3. Signed contract (provided by Cheshire County Conservation District)
4. Project plans in advance of installation for review and approval by the Conservation District.

B. **Successful Applicants are required to have a site visit with the Conservation District before a project can be started and any funds can be expended. This is to provide guidance and any needed technical assistance to ensure the success of the project.**

VI. Project Reporting

- A. Payment for the project will be made on a reimbursement basis upon the submission of a final report.
- B. Grantees are required to submit a final project report in a digital format. A template will be provided. The final project report shall document the completion of project tasks and the results attained, include documentation of all expenses, and share a testimonial on the benefits the Conservation Opportunity fund provided.
- C. Grantees are required to write a short blog post on their experience/results for the CCCD website and submit a photograph of the work done with the Conservation Opportunity Grant dollars. We are happy to help you write the blog if needed.

VII. For Further Information & Resources



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For further information, and to discuss project proposals contact:
Matt Smetana at 603-756-9282 or matt@cheshireconservation.org

Please see www.cheshireconservation.org/cof for additional project planning resources. We encourage you to check in with us if you have any questions about creating a strong project and application.

The Conservation Opportunity Fund is a grant program that is privately funded and administered by the Cheshire County Conservation District.

Project partners reserve the right to modify this and other application materials in future grant rounds, based on experience gained from administering the program, changes in funding, and/or legal requirements.

The Cheshire County Conservation District's mission is to promote the conservation and responsible use of our natural and agricultural resources for the people of Cheshire County by providing technical, financial, and educational assistance. Our goal is to encourage the stewardship of healthy soils, productive ecologically sound farms, diverse wildlife, productive sustainable forests, healthy watersheds, and clean water to ensure those resources are available for future generations.