THE PETER AND CARMEN LUCIA BUCK FOUNDATION, INC.

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PCLB Land Capital Grant Program

Program Description

In our Outdoors program area, The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation (PCLB) seeks to increase the pace of land conservation; preserve land with significant biodiversity and climate resilience; protect water quality; connect open space; and connect people to nature. To advance these goals, PCLB has established a Land Capital Grants program that provides grants to help land trusts complete projects in the Hudson and Champlain Valleys of New York that align with these goals. Grants are intended to close funding gaps in the overall budget of active projects, resulting in the acquisition of open space and conservation easements.

Priority will be assigned to projects that protect:

- Biodiverse lands and critical habitats.
- Interconnected open space.
- Lands that exhibit climate resilience.
- High-quality water resources.
- Public access opportunities.

Eligibility

- The organization must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
- The organization must be a member in good standing of the Land Trust Alliance.
- The organization must be accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission or be on a path to accreditation within two years.
- Projects must be located within the Hudson River and Lake Champlain watersheds of New York. Projects should be located entirely or predominantly (minimum 50% of land area) within these eligible project areas. (See Appendix A for a map of eligible the project area in New York.)
- The organization may partner with local governments, tribes, or community-based organizations; all grant funds would go to the applicant.
- The minimum grant award is $100,000; the maximum is $2 million.
- Grants can be applied to:
    - Fee acquisition of land and conservation easements.
    - Transaction costs, limited to appraisals, title binders, environmental assessments, surveys, legal fees, recording fees, transfer fees, and property taxes to year end.
- Staff costs, stewardship endowments, and overhead are not eligible.
- Grants cannot be used to repay loans.
- All projects must result in the permanent protection of land through acquisition by the land trust, pass-through to a partner entity with a mission to permanently protect land (e.g., a state agency or a tribe), or a permanent conservation easement.
- The organization must have adequate plans for monitoring and (if applicable) public access.
- Grants will be awarded in May 2025. Projects must close within one (1) year of receiving a grant award. Extensions will be considered only under limited and extenuating circumstances.

Process

- Interested organizations should contact PCLB (see below) to arrange a meeting to review potential projects.
- Select organizations will be asked to submit the deliverables listed below, which will be used to rank projects.
- Submissions are limited to one project per organization; exceptions may be available depending on project quality and the availability of funding.
- A limited number of projects will then be invited in January 2025 to formally apply to PCLB for needed project funds.
- Grants will be awarded in May 2025 based on the availability of program funding. Funding is not guaranteed for any project.

Deliverables

Interested organizations may be asked to provide the following information following an initial project review:

- A brief overview of the project describing its physical attributes, relation to the land trust's mission and how it advances its strategic conservation plan, contractual status, scheduled or anticipated closing date, and any known issues that could impede its completion.
- A context map at a scale of 1:24,000 showing the project's location. A site-specific project map displaying ecologically important areas, areas of terrestrial resilience, streams and surface water bodies, and wetlands. The map(s) may be on a topographic or photographic base, depending on which is of more utility in understanding the nature of the project (GIS shape files, if available).
- Project budget, with an itemized listing of project costs, sources of funding, status of funding sources, and the project's unfunded need.
- Description of proposed public access.
- Project Scoring Form (Appendix B).
- Other documents, including appraisals, environmental assessments, title commitments, and purchase agreements.

Program Contact

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Appendix A – Map of Eligible Project Area

Appendix B – Project Scoring Methodology

Organization:

Project Name:

Location (state, county, municipality, address):

Total Acreage to be Conserved:

Data-Driven Measures	Best (5 points)	Good (4 points)	Fair (3 points)	Marginal (2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Biodiversity and habitat % of project area with recognized biodiversity[1]	75-100% of site	50-75% of site	25-50% of site	25% of site	None
Connectivity Distance to other conserved lands[2]	>50% of site is adjacent to conserved lands	<50% adjacent to conserved lands	Less than one mile from conserved lands	1-3 miles from conserved lands	>3 miles from conserved lands
Climate resilience Site resilience score[3]	>2 standard deviations (SD) above the mean	1-2 SD above the mean	0.5-1 SD above the mean	0.5 SD above-0.5 SD below the mean	<0.5 SD below the mean
Water resources Contribution to local water quality	Includes or is adjacent to a Class A, AA, A-S, or AA-S water body	Includes or is adjacent to a Class B water body	Includes or is adjacent to a Class C water body	Nonadjacent but contributes to water bodies of Class C or higher	Does not contribute to water bodies of Class C or higher
Public Access Presence and type of public access[4]	Proposed access will include parking with 10 or more spaces, restrooms, signage, sustainable trails, and universal access features.[4]	Proposed access will include parking with 10 or more spaces, toilet, signage, and sustainable trails; no universal access features.	Proposed access will include basic/informal parking with 10 or fewer spaces, some amount of signage, and basic trails.	Access will be allowed, but potentially limited; no proposed amenities.	Public access will be prohibited (posted) or otherwise not available.

Reflecting these elements' descending order of importance, scores should be weighted as follows, to achieve a total possible weighted score of 100:

- **Biodiversity and habitat** score x 6 = 30 total possible points. Weighted Score: _____
- **Connectivity** score x 5 = 25 total possible points. Weighted Score: _____
- **Climate resilience** score x 4 = 20 total possible points. Weighted Score: _____
- **Water resources** score x 3 = 15 total possible points. Weighted Score: _____
- **Public access** score x 2 = 10 total possible points. Weighted Score: _____

Total Weighted Score: _____

[1] Per the Nature Conservancy's "Recognized Biodiversity" data set, accessible on its Resilient Land Mapping Tool. The Nature Conservancy integrates "Recognized Biodiversity Value" with its geophysical assessment of climate resilience (see below.) Recognized Biodiversity Value is compiled from the Conservancy's synthesis of its own ecoregional assessments with state wildlife action plans and habitat and biodiversity data from the Natural Heritage Network.

[2] For this purpose, we propose utilizing Gap 1 and 2 status lands as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey's National Gap Analysis Program (GAP) and mapped in the Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US). This data is incorporated in the Resilient Land Mapping Tool. The State of New York also maintains a Protected Areas Database with downloadable GIS data. We will accept analysis from either source (TNC or NY).

[3] Per the Nature Conservancy's Connected and Resilient Networks methodology, which assesses a site's potential to facilitate the persistence of biodiversity over time despite changing climatic conditions. A resilient site is "an area of land where high microclimatic diversity and low levels of human modification provide species with connected, diverse climatic conditions they will need to persist and adapt to changing regional climates." Sites are classified by geophysical setting and scored relative to other sites with similar geophysical settings within the same ecoregion. Scores are expressed in terms of a site's statistical distance from the mean value. A site with a score one standard deviation above the mean value, for example, has higher resilience than 89 percent of sites in the same geophysical setting within the ecoregion.

[4] "Universal access features" are designed to be usable by the broadest possible range of visitors, including those with mobility limitations. This typically includes parking, accessible toilets, and barrier-free infrastructure such as hard-surface, low-grade trails usable by wheelchairs. The Alliance draws on the work of its Advisory Council on Inclusive Health and Disabilities, which in 2021 issued a report entitled "Open to All: A Disability Inclusion Guide for Land Trusts." Included in this guide is the 7 Principles of Universal Design, first developed by multiple authors at North Carolina State University College of Design. These include concepts of:

1. Equitable use.
2. Flexibility to accommodate a wide range of individuals.
3. Simplicity and intuitive use.
4. Perceptible and effective communication.
5. Tolerance for error in use.
6. Low physical effort.
7. Appropriate size and space for use.