

## BUREAU OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

<b>Title:</b> Ownership and Control		
<b>Issued by:</b> Bureau of Recreation and Conservation	<b>Effective Date:</b> 10/5/09 <b>Scheduled Review:</b> Annual	<b>Document Number:</b> 2300-020
<b>Reviewed:</b> 12/14/23	<b>Revised:</b> 11/29/11, 12/13/18, 9/7/22	
<b>Approved By:</b> Tom Ford, Bureau Director	<b>Program Area:</b> All	

### AUTHORITY

Act 18 of 1995, Section 306, Community Recreation and Heritage Conservation. The Department shall have the power to administer Federal and State programs for grants and loans to local governments, municipal authorities and nonprofit organizations for community and regional projects involving the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation and development of public park, recreation and conservation areas, facilities and programs.

### SCOPE

Provides directive for administration of the Community Conservation Partnerships Grant Program

### PURPOSE

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation provides funding to grantees to acquire property, develop plans for sites/properties and to develop properties. Applicants/grantees must own or control property in order to receive grant funding from the Department for development and certain types of planning projects. The purpose of ensuring ownership and control is to protect DCNR's investments and ensure the grantee can maintain and keep facilities open to the public. In most cases, grantees will need to provide proof of ownership and control at the time of application to be considered Ready-to-Go for funding. If awarded a grant, the grantee will be required to certify ownership or control of the property or facility and will be required to maintain ownership or control of the property/facility for which a grant is awarded.

### POLICY

#### A. Control of Property Deed Restrictions and Public Use

1. For all development projects, master site development plans, and certain types of other planning projects, the applicant must own or control the property that will be developed, rehabilitated or planned, at the time of application. Successful grantees will be required to provide a Certification of Title.
2. Property that is not owned in fee simple must be controlled through a permanent easement or long-term lease agreement, at the time of application. The term of agreements must be a minimum of 25 years. Copies of these agreement must be submitted with the grant application.
3. Community & Watershed Forestry projects such as riparian forest buffer installations and lawn conversions may be completed on land that is not owned or controlled by the grantee if a landowner agreement is provided. The term of the agreement must be a minimum of 25 years. Grantees should use the template landowner agreement provided by DCNR or submit their preferred alternate agreement to DCNR for approval prior to execution.
4. In certain rare circumstances, the Department may consider, at its sole discretion, agreements of shorter duration.

5. For projects with multiple municipal entities owning the project area and cooperating on a single grant project, cooperative agreements or intergovernmental agreements may be accepted. Letters of commitment from each municipal entity should be included as part of the grant application. Existing agreements will be reviewed by the DCNR project manager.
6. For projects on state or federal lands, DCNR may accept other types of agreements/instruments. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
7. All property acquired in fee or through easements and/or land donations provided by grantees as match, funded with DCNR grant assistance require a non-conversion clause be included in the deed, easement or declaration of covenants restricting the use and transfer of the property.
8. For a fee simple interest in real property acquired, or donated as a match the declaration of taking or deed will include the following restriction:

- *[This provision revised 11/15/2010.]* This property, or interest in property, was either acquired with or donated as a match for funds provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ("Department") The source of the funds is *[name of grant program and authorizing legislation\*]* ("Act"). This property, or any portion of it, may not be converted to purposes other than those authorized under the Act for property acquired with Department funds. No change of use and no transfer of ownership, control, or interest in this property may occur, and no encumbrance may be placed on this property, without the written consent of the Department or its successor. The restriction in this paragraph applies to both the surface and subsurface of the property. This restriction has the effect of a covenant running in perpetuity with the land and is binding upon the owner(s) of the property and upon all subsequent owners, successors, and assigns. This restriction is enforceable by the Department and its successors.

9. For an easement acquired, or donated as a match the instrument of conveyance will include the following restriction:

- a. *[This provision revised 11/15/2010.]* This conservation easement was either acquired with, or donated as a match for, funds provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ("Department") under the *[name of grant program and authorizing legislation\*]* ("Act"). This easement is a conservation servitude over the property in perpetuity and as such is binding on all current and subsequent easement holders and their personal representatives, successors and assigns. The Department and its successors have the following rights with respect to this easement: a) the right to compel transfer of Holder's rights and duties under this easement to another Qualified Organization should Holder fail to uphold and enforce in perpetuity the restrictions applicable to the State Program Area or to other portions of the Property to the extent that Holder's failure to enforce the easement materially adversely affects the State Program Area; b) a right of prior approval of any amendment of this easement to determine whether the amendment permits uses of the State Program Area not permitted under the State Program or permits uses of other portions of the Property in a manner that would materially adversely affect the State Program Area; c) a right of prior approval of any transfer of Holder's rights and duties under this easement with respect to the State Program Area; and d) the right to exercise the Holder's rights and

duties under this easement if Holder fails to uphold and enforce the provisions applicable to the State Program Area or to other portions of the Property to the extent that Holder's failure to enforce the easement materially adversely affects the State Program Area.

10. Facilities and property funded by DCNR must be accessible to the public for uses consistent with the purposes for which the land was acquired and/or developed. For example, if the property is acquired for use as a public park, it must be accessible to the general public for park use. Likewise, if a property is acquired or developed as a trail it must be open to the public for trail use.
11. For projects such as stream bank improvements, etc., that are not intended to be open to the general public, an agreement is required between the grantee and the landowner giving the grantee access to construct and maintain the improvements unless other provisions satisfactory to DCNR are made which satisfy these construction and maintenance requirements.

#### **DISCLAIMER**

The policies and procedures outlined in this guidance document are intended to supplement existing requirements. The policies and procedures herein are not an adjudication or a regulation. There is no intent on the part of DCNR to give the rules in these policies that weight or deference. This document establishes the framework within which DCNR will exercise its administrative discretion in the future.

#### **PAGE LENGTH**

3 pages

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Immediately. This policy is to be reviewed and updated every year.

#### **EXPIRATION**

This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.

Tom Ford, Bureau Director

12/14/2023

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Name/Title of Bureau or Office Director

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Date