

BUREAU OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

Title: Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer (PNDI Environmental Review)		
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Approved By: Tom Ford, Bureau Director		Program Area: 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 Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) gathers and provides information on the location and status of important ecological resources in the Commonwealth. PNHP helps guide conservation work and land-use planning, ensuring the maximum conservation benefit with the minimum cost. The Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer is a tool deployed by PNHP which includes both a Conservation Planning and Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Environmental Review component. This tool provides greater access to conservation information, leading to more informed project planning and reduced project impacts.

- A. The Conservation Planning component provides users with the ability to view multiple layers of conservation information for carrying out responsible development and stewardship of land and water resources.
- B. The PNDI Environmental Review component allows registered users to explore areas for potential impacts to rare, threatened, and endangered species habitats.

Certain users will be charged a \$40 fee per PNDI Receipt. If a grant is awarded, this fee will be eligible for 50% reimbursement via the grant. Applicants should include the fee amount in the grant application budget.

If you have any questions regarding the Government Exemption from Fees for PNDI Receipts, visit <https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov/content/exemption-guidance> or contact RA-HeritageReview@pa.gov.

For technical assistance, contact RA-HERITAGEGIS@pa.gov.

POLICY

- A. In an effort to create and maintain sustainable sites and to protect the Commonwealth's natural resources of special concern, DCNR requires applicants to submit a copy of the PNDI Environmental Review Receipt with the grant application following the guidelines below.
- B. All applicants are required to complete the PNDI Environmental Review component. Exceptions include the following project types: Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plans (CRPP);

County and Municipal Greenway and Open Space Network Plans; Feasibility Studies involving rehabilitation of an existing site; Rivers Conservation Plans; PA Recreational Trails Program (PRT) equipment purchase; and certain Partnership projects that do not include on the ground impacts.

- C. The Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer can be accessed at the following website: www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us. The results reported on the PNDI Environmental Review Receipt will help determine if the activities proposed for the project site have the potential to conflict with natural resources of special concern. These resources, which include plant and animal species, exemplary natural communities and ecosystems, and outstanding geologic features, will be protected in accordance with applicable state/federal laws and regulations.
- D. Applicants must submit a signed and dated Final PNDI Environmental Review Receipt (not a draft) with the grant application. In some cases, if a PNDI Environmental Review Receipt was obtained, it will indicate a need for follow-up action and/or the need to obtain clearance letters from jurisdictional agencies. Issues do not need to be resolved at the time of application. It is important to obtain a Final PNDI Environmental Review Receipt early in the application process to avoid any complications that may cause the applicant to miss the application submission deadline.

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

2 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

Name/Title of Bureau or Office Director

Date