

2025-2027 Lawn Conversion and Riparian Buffer Mini-Grant Program for Conservation Districts

POST-PLANTING ESTABLISHMENT GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: June 30, 2027

Pennsylvania's conservation districts are encouraged to apply for up to \$5,000 to conduct post-planting establishment activities on lawn conversion and riparian buffer projects that were planted within the last 5 years. Projects may include previously DCNR funded and non-DCNR funded sites. This grant is first come first served. The grant round will stay open until funds are used up or June 30, 2027, whichever comes first.

Eligible Expenses (not limited to):

- Contractor fees or other labor costs
- Replacement of tree shelters & nets
- Removal of invasive species
- Upkeep of weed mats, stone mulch, herbicide applications to reduce the amount of competing vegetation
- Seed, carrier (rice hulls or clay kitty litter), and weed-free straw
- Equipment rental
- Permanent signs

Signs: Projects installed on public land require a financial assistance acknowledgement sign. Projects installed on private property do not require a sign. However, a sign is still encouraged to assist with long term asset stewardship. If a sign is installed, it should include the following funding citation:

"Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Environmental Stewardship fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation."

Purchasing large pieces of equipment, such as chain saws, augers, tractors, etc. is not an eligible expense

Landowner Agreements:

Please NOTE: All post-planting establishment projects must include a signed landowner agreement. Ideally this agreement will be the DCNR standard landowner agreement with a 25-year time commitment to the project. Alternate agreements may be considered on a case-by-case basis upon consultation with program staff. Please contact Shannon Wehinger at PACD with questions swehinger@pacd.org.

The DCNR Template Landowner agreements are required prior to using any mini-grant funds. Template agreements will be provided by PACD.

Budget

A written budget estimating the cost of project materials, labor, and other post planting establishment activities related to the site. The budget should include all cash and non-cash costs to be considered for grant funding.

Modifications:

Modifications to the project budget or project must be approved in writing by PACD to maintain funding eligibility. Submit requests for changes, indicating the reason for the change to Shannon Wehinger, PACD Director of Communications & Education at swehinger@pacd.org.

Procuring Labor and Materials:

Grantees are reminded that labor and materials for all lawn conversion and buffer projects included in the grant agreement scope of work must be procured openly and competitively. Written estimates/quotes are acceptable.

Match: A 50:50 match is required for this grant.

We encourage conservation districts to contact volunteer groups like the PSU Master Watershed Stewards and CBF. Follow this link to find your MWS county coordinator <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/watershed-stewards/counties>

Payments:

The conservation district will receive 45% of grant funding upon approval of the application and receipt of all signed landowner agreements and signed planting & maintenance plans; 45% will be paid to the conservation district after submitting the mid-term report to PACD; and the final 10% after submitting the final report to PACD.

Refund:

Unused grant funds, cancelled grant projects, or funds used for ineligible expenses must be refunded to PACD within 60 days of the project end date.

Mid-Term Report:

A mid-term report is required at the estimated half-way point of your project. A report template will be provided by PACD.

Final Report:

A final report must be submitted within 60 days of the project end date. The final report must be submitted electronically. A report template will be provided by PACD.

Post-Planting Establishment Plan

A written post-planting establishment plan is required and must be submitted prior to using any of the mini-grant funding. Post-planting establishment is typically conducted from years 1-5 after planting to ensure the buffers survival for at least 25 years. Target survival rate is 70%. The plan shall also include who will perform the activities and what is expected of the landowner. A post-planting establishment plan template document will be provided by PACD.

Contact

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