

Conservation Fund Grant Program Guidelines and Application Materials



Eligible Applicants:
**Local Units of Government,
Non-Profit Organizations &
Community Partners**



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Land & Water Resources Department

Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program
Guidelines and Application Materials
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Cover Photos:

Top photo – Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area – Courtesy of the Prairie Enthusiasts,
Richard Oberle, and Mike Guzy

Middle Photo –Springs near Token Creek – Courtesy of Groundswell Conservancy

Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program Guidelines

Background and Funding Sources

The Dane County Conservation Fund was established in 1990 to annually earmark monies from the Dane County Parks budget to preserve natural, recreational, and cultural resource lands in Dane County. This fund began with \$500,000 in 1990 and through 1999 averaged \$1 million annually. In April of 1999, 75% of voters county-wide approved a measure to triple the monies available for land acquisition with an additional \$30 million over 10 years. The Dane County Board of Supervisors adopted Sub. 1 to Resolution 94, 2007 – 2008 in September of 2007, which allowed for the continuation of the Conservation Fund beyond the initial 10-year time period. Allocation amounts for the Conservation Fund are determined annually through the County budget approval process.

Beginning in 2000, the County established a new competitive 50% Conservation Fund Grant Program. Recognizing the power of partnerships in leveraging County dollars and accelerating the purchase of properties, this program offers grants to non-profit organizations and local governmental units for the purchase of land or land interests identified in the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan or for lands in buffer areas immediately adjacent to park lands.

Project Eligibility

Grants made through the Conservation Fund must be used by non-profit organizations and local governmental units to buy land or interests in lands identified in the 2025 - 2030 Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan (POSP). In addition, the program may provide grants to purchase land or land interests in buffer areas immediately adjacent to properties currently owned or purchased pursuant to the POSP. The 2025 – 2030 POSP can be viewed online at: <https://www.danecountyparks.com/documents/PDFs/plans/posp/2025-2030-Dane-County-POSP.pdf>

Eligible Applicants

To apply to the Conservation Fund Grant Program, an organization should be one of the following: (these classifications may be more or less limited due to the sources of Conservation Fund money and an analysis and determination by Dane County Department of Administration).

- Towns, villages, or cities in Dane County.
- Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status
- Other governmental units in Dane County (school districts, lake districts, native American governments)

The participation of other Dane County organizations in park and open space acquisition efforts is welcomed and encouraged, including collaboration and partnerships with Dane County, or other eligible organizations where legal considerations have been met.

- Non-profit organizations that are not 501(c)(3) organizations
- Conservation groups
- Lakes and Watershed Associations
- Other private organizations

Application, Selection and Timelines

There is no application deadline. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

Prior to submitting a grant application, please contact Sharene Smith, Real Estate Coordinator, to discuss the project and if it is eligible for a grant. Following the meeting, a complete application packet and required attachments should be submitted to the Real Estate Coordinator.

Grant applications are evaluated and selected based on the project narrative. Projects are rated and ranked using the evaluation questions included on pages 16 – 21. Grant applicants will be invited to attend one or more Park Commission or County committee meetings to provide an overview of their grant application and answer any questions. If selected by the Park Commission, the project will go through the Dane County Board approval process. The approval process may take up to 3 months depending on County committee schedules.

Grant Award Amounts

Standard grant awards are generally capped at 50% of the project costs. The project costs consist of the appraised property value plus the costs of appraisal(s), title insurance, closing fees, survey, environmental inspection, attorney fees, recording fees, and relocation payments. If a DNR Stewardship grant is involved, the grant award is based on the DNR certified appraised value. For acquisitions that do not involve a DNR Stewardship grant, the grant award is based on the appraised value as reviewed and verified by staff or a Certified Review Appraiser (if deemed necessary by staff).

Grant requests for more than the standard grant amount will be considered and reviewed on a case by case basis.

Match Requirements

Standard grant awards require a minimum match by the sponsor of 25% of the project costs. Funding sources for the sponsor's match may include: state or federal grants, private donations, project partnership contributions (i.e. cities, villages, or towns), and bargain sales. Grant awards for land purchases that involve bargain sales may not exceed 50% of the purchase price or the amount of cash that the sponsor needs to purchase the property.

Grant Award Acceptance and Distribution

Non-profits and local governments must sign a County Conservation Fund grant agreement that outlines the responsibilities of the grant recipient in carrying out the project. In addition, a "Declaration of Easement" must be signed and recorded against the property that confirms the County's investment in the project and its enforcement responsibilities. In the case of conservation easements, the County must be a co-holder to the easement. Samples of grant agreements and "Declaration of Easements" are available upon request. Grants may be distributed on or after the closing date. Grant sponsors are required to complete a reimbursement request worksheet prior to distribution of funds. A sample reimbursement request worksheet is available upon request.

Reporting and Monitoring

Progress reports may be requested from grant sponsors on an annual basis to monitor the status of projects. Baseline documentation and annual monitoring is required for all conservation easements funded through the grant program. Baseline documents and monitoring reports should be submitted to the Real Estate Coordinator.

Property Signage

Grant recipients are required to include the Dane County Conservation Logo on any property signs for land purchased with assistance from the grant program. Please contact the Real Estate Coordinator to receive a digital version of the Dane County Conservation Fund Logo.

Conservation Fund Grant Program Contact

All questions and submission of grant materials should be directed to:

Sharene Smith, Real Estate Coordinator

Dane County Land & Water Resources Department

5201 Fen Oak Drive #208

Madison, WI 53718

Office: (608) 224-3761 / Cell: 608-576-4485

Email: smith.sharene@danecounty.gov

The 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan is available at:
<https://www.danecountyparks.com/documents/PDFs/plans/posp/2025-2030-Dane-County-POSP.pdf>

Application Checklist and Instructions

1. Application Form

- ✓ MUST be completed
- ✓ Signed by both parties if a partnership application

2. Resolution

- ✓ MUST include resolutions from both parties if a partnership application
- ✓ May, but not required, use sample resolution included in this packet (pg. 8)

3. Letter of 501(c)(3) Status

- ✓ ONLY if applicant is a non-profit organization

4. Project Maps

- ✓ MUST clearly show the proposed location and boundary and adjoining/surrounding lands owned by applicant, Dane County lands or other public lands
- ✓ Plat map highlighting the property, topographic map and wetland map are required, other maps are welcome

5. Property Data

- ✓ Name of property owner
- ✓ Exact location and legal description of property if available
- ✓ Physical property description, characteristics (wooded slopes, 10 acres of wetland...)
- ✓ Any known encumbrances (easements, deed restrictions...)
- ✓ Any other relevant information

6. Narrative

- ✓ Projects are evaluated based on the narrative. The narrative should include a summary as to how the property contributes toward the overall goals and priorities of the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan.
- ✓ Refer to the Evaluation Factors & Narrative Guide section on page 15 for assistance. You are welcome to follow the evaluation checklist exactly and to specifically answer each question. This part of the narrative need not be written as an actual narrative, but can follow the sections and numbering system of the evaluation questions.

7. Management Plan

- ✓ Include an indication of the ability of the applicant to oversee the long-term management and oversight of the property, experience with management and enforcement, and specify any fund that will be established for the long-term management of the property.
- ✓ Address the recreation and or conservation management goals.
- ✓ For easements, include an indication of the ability and experience of the applicant to monitor and enforce the easement, and specify whether a fund has been established for this purpose.

8. Preliminary Environmental Questionnaire

- ✓ MUST use questionnaire included in this application packet on page 11 or DNR's Environmental Hazards Assessment Form.

9. Letter of Interest from Landowner OR Offer or Option to Purchase

- ✓ Contact the Real Estate Coordinator if there are circumstances that make it difficult to obtain either a letter of interest or an offer or option to purchase.
- ✓ May, but not required, use the sample Letter of Interest included in this packet

10. Appraisal

- ✓ MUST comply with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition, and the statutory rules governing the determination of just compensation (Chapter 32, Wis. Stats.) and name Dane County as an authorized user.

Conservation Fund Grant Program Guidelines and Application are available at:

<https://parks-lwrd.countyofdane.com/Information/Grants>



GRANT APPLICATION

Important! Prior to submitting your application you MUST meet with the Real Estate Coordinator, to discuss your project. Please contact Sharene Smith at (608) 224-3761 or smith.sharene@danecounty.gov to set up a meeting. Applications will not be processed until such meeting has occurred.

Following the meeting, submit one complete application packet (including appraisal) to:
Sharene Smith, Real Estate Coordinator, 5201 FEN OAK DRIVE #208, MADISON WI 53718

Applicant (Partner #1)		
Contact Name & Title		
Address		
Phone	Fax	E-mail

☐ Check here if this is a partnership application and complete the information below.

Applicant (Partner #2)		
Contact Name & Title		
Address		
Phone	Fax	E-mail

Project Area (refer to 2025-2030 POSP for project areas)		Landowner Name	
Project Type	☐ Fee Title ☐ Easement	Project Size (acres)	Ultimate Title or Easement Holder ☐ Applicant (Partner #1) ☐ Partner #2 ☐ Other:
Project Location (Township, Range, Section)			
Parcel Identification Number(s):			

I certify that the information in this application and supporting materials is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.		
Signature (Partner #1)	Printed Name & Title	Date
Signature (Partner #2 – if applicable)	Printed Name & Title	Date

Estimated Project Costs		
	Your Costs	Example Budget
Appraised Value of land to be acquired	\$	\$ 500,000
Purchase Price	\$	\$ 495,000
Appraisal(s)	\$	\$ 3,000
Title Insurance	\$	\$ 1000
Survey	\$	\$ 1500
Environmental Inspections (will require final approval by Dane County Parks)	\$	\$ 2500
Recording Fees	\$	\$ 60
Relocation Payments	\$	\$ 0
Total Project Costs (use appraised value)	\$	\$ 508,030
Estimate of Conservation Fund Grant Award (25% of Total Project Costs)	\$	\$ 127,007.50
State or Federal Grant ☐ Pending ☐ Committed	\$	\$ 250,000
Other Match	\$	\$ 50,000
Applicant's share of project costs	\$	\$ 81,022.50
Please contact the Real Estate Coordinator with any questions regarding grant amount, sponsor match and reimbursable fees.		

Estimated Project Timeline		
Item	Check applicable boxes	Date
Appraisal	☐ Effective date of the appraisal ☐ Date by which you expect appraisal will be completed	
State or Federal Grant	☐ Date on which you received a grant contract ☐ Date by which you expect to receive a grant contract ☐ Other governmental grants not anticipated.	
Signed Option to Purchase	☐ Date option was signed ☐ Date you expect to have a signed option ☐ Project will not involve an Option	
Option to Purchase Expiration	☐ Date that the Option will expire ☐ Project will not involve an Option	
Signed Offer to Purchase	☐ Date on which you received a signed Offer ☐ Date by which you expect to submit an Offer	
Closing Date	☐ Scheduled closing date ☐ Approximate closing date	

Required Application Attachments	
☐ Application Form	☐ Project Narrative
☐ Resolution (one from each partner)	☐ Management Plan
☐ Letter of 501 (c)(3) status (if applicable)	☐ Environmental Questionnaire
☐ Maps	☐ Letter of Interest OR Option /Offer to Purchase
☐ Property Data	☐ Appraisal

RESOLUTION

Requesting a Dane County Conservation Fund Grant

RESOLVED, that the _____
(Board of Directors or other authorized governing unit)

of the _____
(Name of Organization)

headquartered at _____

HEREBY AUTHORIZES _____
(Name and Title)

to act on its behalf to submit an application for financial assistance to the County of Dane under the Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program for the acquisition of property or for other qualified conservation purposes described below; to sign documents; and to take action necessary to undertake, direct, and complete an approved Dane County Conservation Fund grant project:

(Description of grant proposal project)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the _____
(Name of Organization)

recognizes and acknowledges the long-term ownership and management responsibilities (when applicable) associated with this Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program, and will meet its obligations under the Grant and Management Contract for the project.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by

_____ at a legal meeting held
(Name of Organization)

on the _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

Authorized signature _____

Printed or typed name _____

Title _____

Date _____

**LETTER OF INTEREST
TO
SELL TITLE OR EASEMENT
FOR
PUBLIC CONSERVANCY, PARK, OR OPEN SPACE**

TO: County of Dane

FROM: _____
Please print ALL Owner(s) Full Name(s)

Owner(s) Address & Telephone No.

PROPERTY: _____
Address

LEGAL
DESCRIPTION: _____

Full legal description or attach copy of deed or title policy

SIZE OF PROPERTY: _____Acres

DATE: _____

=====

THIS LETTER OF INTEREST from the OWNER is issued to SELL TITLE [] or an EASEMENT [] with respect to the above-referenced Property. The purpose of this Letter is to encourage the County of Dane to start the public review process to allocate monies from the DANE COUNTY CONSERVATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM to assess, appraise and acquire ownership or an easement with respect to the Property by Dane County or other governmental units or private non-profit land conservation group(s). If selling title, OWNER

believes the present fair market value of the Property is \$_____ per acre for a total sale price of \$_____. If selling an easement, the OWNER believes the fair market value of the easement over the property is \$_____ per acre for a total easement price of \$_____.

Note: the values expressed by OWNER above are not binding and are not to be shared with the appraiser

OWNER grants permission for an APPRAISAL of the Property and will fully cooperate with and provide information about the Property to an appraiser and shall permit the appraiser and Dane County Parks staff reasonable access to the subject Property and any adjoining property of OWNER for the purpose of the timely completion of such appraisal and determining the suitability of the property for Park and/or open space purposes.

OWNER agrees to complete, to the best of OWNER's knowledge, and attach to this Letter a "Preliminary Environmental Questionnaire." If additional information comes to OWNER's attention after the date of this Letter, Owner agrees to promptly contact Dane County Park's staff at (608) 224-3761.

It is understood and agreed that this LETTER OF INTEREST is not intended to be and is not a contract. Rather, it is an expression of the basis on which the parties hereto would consider entering into a written contract to for purchase of a fee simple title or a conservation easement in and to the Property.

OWNER(s) _____
Print Name

Signature

Print Name

Signature

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL PROPERTY/ OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

Please type or print all responses.

1. Current Owner(s) Name: _____

2. Address of Property: _____

3. Legal Description: _____
(attach additional pages if necessary)

4. Township / Village: _____

5. Current general business / use of property:

6. Known Past Uses of property since 1900:

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY/PROPERTY CONDITION

Attach additional pages if needed for more detailed answers.

YES NO

- ☐ Are (or were) any environmental permits from any governmental agency in effect, or being sought, with respect to any activities on the property?
- ☐ Are there any past, pending, or threatened governmental or private environmental investigations, administrative proceedings, lawsuits, judgments, or liens involving this Property or the Current Owner?
- ☐ Are there any regulatory investigations, inquiries, actions or hazardous substances usage reports which may indicate environmental concerns?

YES NO

- ☐ Has Owner of this Property entered into any environmental settlement agreements, consent decrees or orders with any government or private parties? If yes, explain:

-
- ☐ Is there now on the Property, or is the Owner presently required to repair or install, pollution control or monitoring devices to comply with legal or regulatory requirements? If yes, explain:

-
- ☐ Has this Property or adjoining properties ever been used as a [1] gasoline station, [2] commercial motor repair facility, [3] printing facility, [4] dry cleaner, [5] photo developing lab, [6] junkyard or landfill, [7] waste burning or incineration, [8] waste water treatment, storage, disposal, processing or [9] recycling facility? #_____

- ☐ Has fill material, sludge or soil been brought onto the Property? If yes, explain location, type, content and origin of fill material:

-
- ☐ Are there currently or have there been any [1] mounded or hummocked areas, [2] depressed land, [3] pits, [4] artificial ponds, [5] natural ponds, streams, lakes, wetlands or lagoons, [6] discolored or stained soil or pavement, [7] noxious odors or foul smelling water, [8] abandoned containers or barrels located on or adjacent to the Property? If yes, provide details.

-
- ☐ Are there now or were there any under-ground or above-ground storage tanks or piping for products or substances other than for irrigation or potable water on the Property? If yes, provide type, size, use, installation/ removal dates, leakage, testing dates and results. Are tanks and pipes now in compliance with governmental regulations? What corrective and remedial action was taken if leakage occurred?

-
- ☐ Has the soil or ground water on the property, including but not limited to a private well or nonpublic water system, been tested for contamination? If yes, disclose

results.

YES NO

- ☐ ☐ Are there now or have there ever been any waste, pollutants, biological materials or agents, hazardous substances or chemicals, petroleum products, tires, automotive or industrial batteries or any waste materials stored or disposed of (including in drums), spilled, buried, burned or otherwise located on the Property? If yes, explain:
-

- ☐ Is asbestos or asbestos containing material present on the Property or in buildings located on the Property? If yes, describe type, location and any action to mitigate this hazard.
-

- ☐ Identify and describe any environmental testing of soil, water, emissions, PCBs [polychlorinated biphenyls], or sewerage sludge or effluent relating to the Property or buildings located on the Property?
-

- ☐ Does the Property, or adjacent properties, contain [1] railroad tracks or [2] drainage tiles? Describe:
-

- ☐ Is the Property [1] within 1000 feet of a known environmental hazard such as gas station, landfill, dump, closed factory; or [2] within two (2) miles of an environmental hazard identified by a governmental agency, or [3] within five (5) miles of a site on the Federal "Superfund" list? If yes, explain:
-

- ☐ Do you know the name of those prior parties who owned, used or occupied the Property? If yes, please list names and uses.
-

- ☐ Are there any known or suspected environmental problems with adjacent properties? If yes, please explain:
-

YES NO

- ☐ Have any pesticides (including but not limited to herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides) been used or stored on the property? If yes, explain.

-
- ☐ Are there any environmental matters not covered elsewhere in this Questionnaire, but believed important in assessing value, future costs and/ or liability? If yes, explain.

The foregoing information including comments and attachments is true and complete to the best of Owner's knowledge, information and belief. Owner understands that the County of Dane, Wisconsin, may rely on the above information in evaluating the Owner's offer to sell.

Dated: _____

Owner's

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

EVALUATION FACTORS & NARRATIVE GUIDE

The Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program evaluation questions provide a method for evaluating and guiding the selection of real estate acquisition projects presented by local governmental units and non-profit organizations for competitive matching grants.

Two separate sets of evaluation questions exist for evaluating projects. There is one for fee-title acquisitions and one for easements. The questions evaluate each project against the overall goals and priorities of the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan. In addition, they evaluate other planning and project considerations that play an important part in the viability of the proposals to result in a desirable and completed transaction.

Overall goals of the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan:

1. Provide sufficient park land and recreation facilities to meet the demand of Dane County residents without adversely affecting existing natural resources.
2. Preserve for posterity the characteristics and diversity of the natural, cultural and historical resources of Dane County.
3. Preserve large tracts of natural and agricultural rural landscapes at urban fringe areas that will provide regional resource protection and recreation benefits.
4. Provide volunteer opportunities and stewardship education to all county residents.
5. Protect lakes, rivers and streams, including shorelines, wetlands, high infiltration areas and associated vegetative buffers to maintain high water quality, manage water quantity and sustain water-related recreation throughout Dane County.
6. Provide an inclusive parks system for all Dane County residents, regardless of age, race, gender, or gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, place of residence, veteran status, physical ability, cognitive capacity, or family, marital, or economic status.

**CONSERVATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM
EVALUATION QUESTIONS– FEE TITLE ACQUISITION**

PART A - Project Eligibility (No Points Available)

1. Is property within a project area identified in the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan? ☐

Project Area:

Acres:

2. Is property outside of a project area identified in the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan, but is adjacent to County park land? ☐

Land is Adjacent to:

Acres:

PART B – Land & Water Resources, Recreation, and Planning (24 Points Available)

Land and Water Resources (10 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

1. Project area contains land or water natural resources important for plant and animal habitat? ☐
2. Project area contains lands that serve as a natural filtration of urban or rural runoff sources that will protect the water quality of lakes, streams, or wetlands? ☐
3. Will acquisition protect rare, endangered, or threatened land or water species, or natural communities? ☐
4. Project area contains soils with high infiltration rates (ground water recharge) as mapped by the Dane County Soil Survey? ☐
5. Project is on or adjacent to a water resource identified in the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP)? ☐
6. Project is on or adjacent to a lake or stream of 303(d) impaired water designated by EPA or Outstanding Water Resources (OWR) or Exceptional Water Resources (EWR) designated by WDNR? ☐
7. Will protect identified geologic or glacial features? ☐
8. Project will demonstrate sound natural resource management and stewardship through vegetation restoration/management, habitat improvement, or water quality improvement? ☐
9. Project is of archaeological or historic significance? ☐
10. Will acquisition increase the overall size and connectivity of an existing natural resource/recreation area? ☐

TOTAL _____

Recreation (9 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

1. Will offer passive nature based outdoor (i.e. hiking, bird-watching, cross country skiing, etc.) or active (i.e. disc-golf, soccer, etc.) recreational opportunities? ☐
2. Will offer water based recreational benefits and public access to Dane County lakes, streams, and rivers? ☐
3. Will offer accessible recreation opportunities (i.e. ADA accessible fishing pier, boardwalk, etc.)? ☐

4. Will be open and maintained for public use year-round? ☐
5. Will offer multiple outdoor recreational opportunities? ☐
6. Will incorporate improvements to encourage public access and recreation use? (i.e. trails, signage/kiosk, etc.) ☐
7. Will offer multi-use bicycle/pedestrian trail opportunities? ☐
8. Will meet regional public recreational needs including trails, wildlife viewing opportunities, water access opportunities, picnicking and shelters, disc golf, dog exercise, camping, or hunting and archery as identified in the 2025 - 2030 POSP? ☐
9. Will offer public environmental education or interpretive opportunities? ☐

TOTAL _____

Planning (5 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

1. Project implements County plans or programs other than the 2025 – 2030 POSP? (i.e. water quality plans, farmland preservation, soil conservation, transportation) ☐
2. Project identified in master plan or defined project area boundary other than in Dane County Parks master plan or established project area? (i.e. DNR Project Boundary/Master Plan, National Park Service, USFWS, etc.) ☐
3. Project is consistent with local or regional land use plans? ☐
4. Will conserve lands in areas deficient in park lands? ☐
5. Project provides a natural resource open space/community separation between rapidly growing municipal boundaries? ☐

TOTAL _____

PART B TOTAL _____

(Must be > 12 Points to Advance to Part C)

PART C - Project Considerations (11 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

1. Time sensitive? ☐
2. Project has political support as documented in writing (i.e. resolution by governing board)? ☐
3. An option or offer to purchase is signed? ☐
4. First time applicant or applicant has not received a Conservation Fund Grant in the past? ☐
5. Involves and fosters multiple partnerships? ☐
6. Matching funds committed for sponsor's share? (i.e. state or federal grant, private donations, partner contribution, etc.) ☐
7. Landowner contribution/donation? ☐
8. Involves a cash contribution by sponsor? ☐
9. Applicant has the ability to manage the project site or has demonstrated experience in site management? ☐
10. Applicant has available funds for site management? ☐

PART C Cont.

11. Management plan compliments the management of adjacent public recreation or natural resource management goals of project area (i.e. Dane County Park or Natural Resource Area property, state wildlife areas, state parks, etc.)? ☐

PART C TOTAL _____

PART D – Project Score and Staff Recommendation

TOTAL – PART B _____

Land & Water Resources, Recreation & Planning
(24 Points Available)

TOTAL – PART C _____

Project Considerations (11 Points Available)

GRAND TOTAL (PART B + PART C) _____

(35 Points Available)

**CONSERVATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM
EVALUATION QUESTIONS– EASEMENT ACQUISITION**

PART A - Project Eligibility (No Points Available)

1. Is property within a project area identified in the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan? ☐

Project Area:

Acres:

2. Is property outside of a project area identified in the 2025 – 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan, but is adjacent to County park land? ☐

Land is Adjacent to:

Acres:

**PART B - Land & Water Resources, Public Benefit & Connectivity, and Planning
(24 Points Available)**

Land & Water Resources (10 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

1. Project area contains land or water natural resources important for plant and animal habitat? ☐
2. Project area contains lands that serve as a natural filtration of urban or rural runoff sources that will protect the water quality of lakes, streams, or wetlands? ☐
3. Will protect rare, endangered, or threatened land or water species, or natural communities? ☐
4. Project area contains soils with high infiltration rates (ground water recharge) as mapped by the Dane County Soil Survey? ☐
5. Project is on or adjacent to a water resource identified in the 2025 - 2030 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP)? ☐
6. Project is on or adjacent to a lake or stream of 303(d) impaired water designated by EPA or Outstanding Water Resources (OWR) or Exceptional Water Resources (EWR) designated by WDNR? ☐
7. Will protect identified geologic or glacial features? ☐
8. Project will demonstrate sound natural resource management and stewardship through vegetation restoration/management, habitat improvement, or water quality improvement? ☐
9. Project is of archaeological or historic significance? ☐
10. Project will minimize plant or animal habitat fragmentation? ☐

TOTAL _____

Public Benefit and Connectivity (9 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

1. Will provide year-round public access? ☐
2. Will provide limited public access for research, natural resource management, or environmental education, or other activities? ☐
3. Project is of significant scenic value? (i.e. visible from major roads, public lands, lakes or rivers, etc.) ☐

Public Benefit and Connectivity Cont.

- 4. Will buffer existing protected land and enhance recreation or conservation value of project area or adjacent public land? (i.e. within viewshed, natural resource management, wildlife habitat, etc.) ☐
- 5. Project will enhance water-based outdoor recreation activities? (i.e. canoeing, boating, fishing, etc.) ? ☐
- 6. Compliments the goals of nearby County park lands or the project area as identified in the 2025 – 2030 POSP? ☐
- 7. Will minimize rural fragmentation? ☐
- 8. Project contains best soils (ranked I or II) for agricultural use, based on the Land Evaluation portion of the Land Evaluation Site Assessment system as developed by Dane County in consultation with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or contains best soils for agriculture based on a local agriculture preservation plan? ☐
- 9. Will increase the overall size and connectivity of an existing natural resource/recreation area? ☐

TOTAL _____

Planning (5 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

- 1. Project implements County plans or programs other than the 2025 – 2030 POSP? (i.e. water quality plans, farmland preservation, soil conservation, transportation)? ☐
- 2. Project identified in master plan or defined project area boundary other than in Dane County Parks master plan or established project area? (i.e. DNR Project Boundary/Master Plan, National Park Service, USFWS, etc.) ☐
- 3. Project is consistent with local or regional land use plans? ☐
- 4. Preserves working or non-working farm lands as a complementary component of a project area as identified in the 2025 - 2030 POSP? ☐
- 5. Project provides a natural resource open space/community separation between rapidly growing municipal boundaries? ☐

TOTAL _____

PART B TOTAL _____

(Must be > 12 Points to Advance to Part C)

PART C - Project Considerations (11 Points Available – 1 Point Each)

- 1. Time sensitive? ☐
- 2. Project has political support as documented in writing (i.e. resolution by governing board)? ☐
- 3. An option or offer to purchase is signed? ☐
- 4. First time applicant or applicant has not received a Conservation Fund Grant in the past? ☐
- 5. Involves and fosters multiple partnerships? ☐
- 6. Matching funds committed for sponsor's share? (i.e. state or federal grant, private donations, partner contribution, etc.) ☐
- 7. Landowner contribution/donation? ☐

PART C Cont.

- 8. Involves a cash contribution by sponsor? ☐
- 9. Applicant has the ability to monitor and enforce the easement or has demonstrated experience in the past? ☐
- 10. Applicant has available funds for possible costs associated to easement violations or enforcement? ☐
- 11. Management plan is consistent with the conservation values of the easement? ☐

PART C TOTAL _____

PART D – Project Score and Staff Recommendation

TOTAL – PART B _____

Land & Water Resources, Public Benefit & Connectivity, and Planning
(24 Points Available)

TOTAL – PART C _____

Project Considerations (11 Points Available)

GRAND TOTAL (PART B + PART C) _____
(35 Points Available)