

## Donation Mini-Grant Guidelines

Donation mini-grants are intended to provide up to \$25,000 to pay transaction costs associated with the donation of a permanent conservation easement or a fee simple real property interest, for the purpose of protecting surface water quality. If the donation is in fee simple, a permanent conservation easement must be recorded on the real property. The value of the conservation easement must exceed transaction costs.

Donation mini-grant applications received by CWMTF before October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year will be closed by the end of the year. Applications received after October 1<sup>st</sup> may or may not close by the end of the year subject to staff workload.

### Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be an agency of the State of North Carolina, a North Carolina local government unit, or a nonprofit corporation whose primary purpose is conservation, preservation, and restoration of North Carolina's environmental and natural resources.

### Funding

CWMTF may contribute up to \$25,000 for a donation mini-grant. The Trust Fund will reimburse grant recipient's actual costs.

### Match Requirement

The value of the conservation easement is considered match funds. The value of the easement may be determined either by an appraisal or by the tax value.

*The value of the conservation easement must exceed transaction costs.*

### Items eligible for reimbursement

- Surveys and Legal Descriptions
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments
- Legal Fees and Closing Costs
- Recording Fees
- Project Administration Cost
- Baseline Documentation Report
- Stewardship Endowment

### Appraisal

CWMTF will not pay for an appraisal for donated real property or conservation easements. If the land owner does not want a tax credit for the donation, an

appraisal is not required and the tax value of the property may be used to assign a value to the property.

#### Funds disbursement

No funds will be distributed for administration, baseline documentation report, or stewardship until the conservation easement is approved by CWMTF and is recorded.

#### Conservation Easement Requirements

A permanent conservation easement is required on all properties that are protected by local governmental units or conservation nonprofits using funds from a CWMTF donation mini-grant. The conservation easement does not have to be CWMTF's standard easement, but it must meet the requirements listed below and be approved by CWMTF.

The easement must:

- protect/benefit water quality
- be held by the State or by a qualified applicant
- grant an executory interest to the State of North Carolina if the State is not the holder of the easement
- provide a right of access and a third party right of enforcement to the State of North Carolina if the State is not the holder of the easement.

If the recipient is a State agency, there will not be a conservation easement. Instead there will be deed restrictions suitable to CWMTF intended to restrict the use of the property to conservation purposes.

#### Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by CWMTF staff for conformance with criteria. A CWMTF field representative may schedule a visit to the site. CWMTF staff will make a recommendation to the chairs of the acquisition committee; the chairs may approve or deny the request, may ask for additional information, or may ask for review by the entire acquisition committee.

Approval of donation mini-grants is subject to the approval by the CWMTF Board of Trustees and availability of funds.

## Application Process

### Deadline for Application

Applications for Donation mini-grants may be submitted at any time. However, applications must be received by CWMTF by October 1<sup>st</sup> in order to receive funds for closing within the same calendar year as the submittal of the application.

### Application Checklist

#### \_\_\_\_ Donation Mini-grant Application

-includes a budget on CWMTF budget template and a brief (1 page) description of the real property including why it is important to your organization and how it will be managed in the future, if protected

#### \_\_\_\_ Stewardship Endowment Calculation Worksheet (if you are requesting stewardship endowment funds)

\_\_\_\_ Two maps. One map should show the location of the property in context of major streams, major roads, nearby protected property, nearby municipalities, etc. The second map should show more details of property including clear property boundary, access to the property, all streams on the property, and any roads, development or existing easements on the property.

\_\_\_\_ Copy of proposed conservation easement if it is written by your organization (i.e. not CWMTF standard easement) and if it is available.

#### \_\_\_\_ Tax Parcel Card

### Mail or Email the Application to CWMTF.

If you would like to email the application please include a copy of the application, stewardship endowment calculation worksheet, maps, tax parcel card, and copy of the proposed conservation easement in an email with "Donation Mini-grant Application" in the subject line. Email to Nancy.Guthrie@ncmail.net

If you prefer to print and mail the application, mail it to 1651 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1651.

## Contract Process

If the request for funds is approved, a contract will be emailed to the contact person given in the application. Specific instructions on reviewing and signing the contract will be sent in the email accompanying the contract.

Applicants have 60 days to sign a donation mini-grant contract after receiving the first draft of the contract from CWMTF. CWMTF may withdraw award of the funds if the applicant does not sign the contract within the specified time.

Donation mini-grants will expire after one year and will not be extended.

To see a [standard Donation Mini-Grant Contract, click here.](#)

Questions?

Please contact your Field Representative or Nancy Guthrie, CWMTF Water Quality Advisor, if you have questions.