

**Ruffsdale Farm
Agricultural Lease
Request for Proposals**



Western Pennsylvania
Conservancy



water, land, life.

ANNOUNCEMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Ruffsdale Farm – AGRICULTURAL LEASE

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, with central offices located at 800 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is accepting proposals for an agricultural lease at Ruffsdale Farm, in South Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County, PA. The address is 238 Stillwagon Rd., Ruffs Dale, PA 15679.

This process is an open call for qualified farmers.

Proposals will be considered until a lease is awarded. Proposals must be sent by email to:

Andrew Zadnik
Director of Land Stewardship
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 977-9681
Fax: 412-231-1414
azadnik@paconserve.org

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, appropriate precautions will be taken during this RFP process.

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Ruffsdale Farm – AGRICULTURAL LEASE**

Proposals will be considered until a lease is awarded.

Introduction

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), a non-profit organization, requests proposals from qualified farmers to lease and manage portions of its Ruffsdale Farm. Ruffsdale Farm is located in South Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County, PA (238 Stillwagon Rd., Ruffs Dale, PA 15679).

Established in 1932, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy was Pennsylvania's first conservancy. To date, WPC has protected more than a quarter million acres of natural lands in Pennsylvania, helped to establish eleven state parks, and protected or restored more than 3,000 miles of rivers and streams. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

The Conservancy is committed to owning properties for the leasing to farmers for the production of local food for the Pittsburgh region. The production system must be Certified Naturally Grown, OR USDA Certified Organic, OR adhere to a largely equivalent set of standards approved by WPC. Marketing methods for delivery primarily into the Pittsburgh regional food supply may take such forms as: pick-your-own, community-supported agriculture (CSA), roadside stands, farmers markets, and/or direct sales to individuals, restaurants and grocery stores. The Conservancy will use a "Whole Farms" approach, whereby portions of the Conservancy properties will be leased for agriculture and portions will be restored and maintained in their natural condition, such as wetlands, woodlands or stream buffers. Residential structures will also be available for lease to the farmers.

A portion of food produced on the leased property must be supplied primarily to markets within Pittsburgh regional food supply and a portion of the products supplied within the City of Pittsburgh itself. It will help the proposal to also commit to providing food to "food deserts." The proposal should provide details about what type and amount of food will be provided to the region, the City and food deserts.

Background and Property Description

Ruffsdale Farm was acquired by WPC in April 2020 for its Farmland Access Program. The property consists of approximately 27 acres, with approximately 18 acres of agricultural fields, and approximately 7.25 acres available for approved no-till fruit, nut, or mushroom production (see below for details). Existing structures include a log cabin (built in 1827) with 2-story frame addition (circa 1893), a detached stone springhouse (no longer active), a four-car garage, a small shed, and a bank barn (1889). There also is a single-story brick structure that is proposed to be removed.

Recent Management

The agricultural fields have most recently been used for conventional row crops (corn, soybeans, wheat) and hay. The house was occupied until WPC's acquisition of the property. Prior to leasing the property, a new water well and septic system will be installed, and electrical upgrades will be completed at the house, barn, and garage.

Project Description

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is addressed to persons interested in leasing up to 18 cultivatable acres of agricultural fields located within WPC's Ruffsdale Farm. The fields are suitable for culturally intensive fruit and vegetable production, medium-sized intensive grazing operations, or integrated crop-livestock enterprises. In addition, there is an approximate 2.25-acre scrubland and approximately 5 acres of restorable spring seeps/drainage swales that are suitable for low-intensity production of diverse fruit, nuts, or mushrooms (types/varieties to be approved by WPC; referred to as "no-till restoration area" in the attached figure).

In addition to the areas described above, the following structures and related improvements are available for lease:

Main residence: Constructed in two main phases: 1827 two-story log structure with crawlspace and 1893 frame structure with basement. The entire 2,264 square foot structure includes three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Major renovations occurred in the 2000's and 2010's including electrical, plumbing, heating, windows, kitchen, bathroom, replacement of a new stone front porch and more. A new potable water well was drilled in 2020. Sewage will be processed using an updated on-lot system installed in 2020.

Barn: The 36 foot by 46 foot bank-style barn was constructed in 1889. The bottom level, with stacked stone foundation, has an open-air or run-in section on the eastern side with individual stall entry. The upper level, with painted wood siding, has separate interior tool and feed rooms. The building has a steel roof.

Garage: The 42 foot by 26 foot four-car frame garage on a concrete slab was constructed in the mid-20th century. The building has two 16' insulated overhead doors, installed in 2019. The exterior is sided with wood. The roof is steel. A lean-to is present on the rear of the structure, extending nearly the entire 46 foot length.

Springhouse: Constructed in 1888, the stone spring house has two levels, finished on the interior with plaster. Spring access is no longer present in the lower level. The structure has most recently been used for storage.

Chicken coop: A small 8x10 frame shed on skids.

WPC shall have the right to access the lease areas, so long as it does not interfere with the agricultural activities.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will accept proposals from one farmer for the entire property, or from a number of farmers for smaller sections of the property. Each farming enterprise will reflect the characteristics and capabilities of the particular farm site and the

particular knowledge, skills, and preferences of the farm lessees. Marketing methods may take such forms as: pick-your-own, community-supported agriculture (CSA), roadside stands, farmers markets, and/or direct sales to individuals, restaurants and grocery stores.

The lessee will be expected to provide all necessary tools, equipment, labor, and materials to complete the tasks defined within their proposal.

As an additional condition of the lease, the farmer shall be required to host, possibly in collaboration with WPC, at least one educational program/tour per year. The purpose of these events will be to showcase the agricultural activities and surrounding natural area.

This RFP is open to all interested parties on a competitive basis. The farmer(s) who submit(s) the proposal that is judged to be the most likely to achieve Ruffsdale Farm's best use within the context and purposes of WPC's management goals for the property – and demonstrates the capacity to successfully implement the proposal – will be awarded the opportunity to sign a lease(s) agreeable to both parties. The initial term of the lease(s) shall be 5 years, with the potential to renew for three (3) additional 5-year terms. Other timeframes will be considered.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy encourages all qualified farmers, including individual farmers or farm-cooperatives, to submit a proposal for the management of a portion of, or the entire, 27 acres. It is WPC's aim to balance sustainable agricultural productivity with environmental stewardship, while educating the public and supporting the local food system. The farmer(s) on Ruffsdale Farm will have the opportunity to create and maintain aesthetically pleasing and ecologically healthy landscapes while simultaneously strengthening the local food system and educating regional residents.

Housing

Housing, described above, is currently available on the Ruffsdale Farm property. If housing is needed by the farmer, a separate residential lease will be entered into.

Rental Rates/Fair Market Value Rent

Bids proposed at rates below the fair market value rent for the fields, structures and houses will be considered.

Proposal Development

This RFP is open to all interested parties on a competitive basis. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy encourages all interested parties to prepare a proposal. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should follow the simple format suggested below. Honest, accurate responses are essential to determining the best matches for the property. False statements are a basis for disqualifying any proposal, or for voiding a lease if discovered at a later date.

Selected proposals will be awarded a contract for a 5-year lease, with the potential to renew for three (3) additional 5-year terms. Other timeframes will be considered. Each contract must be reviewed and approved by WPC's Board of Directors before the winning lessee is permitted to begin their agricultural operations.

Each proposal must include the following:

- **Proposer Information**

Each proposal must include the full identification of the person or persons accountable for the proposal that is submitted, including any managers of the proposed farming enterprise. Please include name(s), address(es), telephone number(s), fax number(s), and/or email address(es).
Please include at least two professional references.
- **Proposed Fields/Structures**

Please describe which portions of the property, as described in Figure 2, your farming enterprise will include. Are you interested in the barn, the residential house, and/or the fields? Just certain fields? Explain the function and plan for each.
If you are not selected for your first choice, would you consider an alternative operation on the property? If so, please elaborate.
- **Proposed Farming Operation/Enterprise**

Please describe your proposed farming enterprise. Explain the proposed locations desired, the type of operation, and the amount of acres. Describe what is anticipated to be grown/produced. Describe the proposed certification program. Describe in detail what and how the products will be supplied to the regional Pittsburgh food system, with at least a portion going into the City of Pittsburgh, and, ideally, some benefitting known “food deserts.” Provide a timeline and narrative of your operation for the first two years of your farming enterprise. Also, feel free to describe what you may accomplish by year 5 as well as year ten (if you are approved for an additional five-year lease).
- **WPC Compatibility**

Describe how your farm will provide one educational programming event per year. Include the types of interaction, type and number of people targeted, and frequency of events.
- **Prior Farming Experience**

Please describe your prior farming experience. You are encouraged to provide a description of the type of farming, number of years, and farms/businesses that you’ve worked for. Additionally, please list any relevant farm, non-farm and/or business skills that may apply to your farming enterprise.
- **Proposer Resources**

Provide a description of the physical resources (such as tractors, tools, etc.) that you have available in order to successfully carry out your farming enterprise.
Describe any human resources that may be involved in your proposed operations.
- **Proposer Financial Competency and Business Plan**

Please provide a one-year (or more) budget and business plan, including annual income, farm operating expenses (include the rental of the fields, barn, and house if applicable), etc. Provide a description of your financial resources for carrying out your proposal. Describe your funding sources, amounts, and accessibility of funds. You may be asked to provide proof of these sources at a later date.

Additional Requirements

If awarded an agricultural lease on WPC's Ruffsdale Farm, the lessee shall be required to submit the following for review and approval by WPC, as appropriate, prior to beginning active farming operations:

- Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Plan
- Conservation plan
- Manure Management Plan (if applicable)
- Grazing Plan (if applicable)

Insurance Requirements

INSURANCE: Lessee shall furnish proof of coverage of Commercial General Liability Insurance. The minimum amount of coverage required is \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate.

COMPREHENSIVE AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE: Lessee shall furnish proof of Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance covering all owned, non-owned, and hired automobiles used in connection with the lease. The minimum amount of coverage required is \$1,000,000 combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage.

WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE: per Pennsylvania statutory limits.

EXCESS LIABILITY INSURANCE (UMBRELLA INSURANCE POLICY): Lessee shall furnish proof of Excess Liability Insurance. Such coverage shall be excess of the commercial general liability insurance, comprehensive automobile liability insurance, and employers liability as required. The minimum acceptable limit of coverage is \$3,000,000 per occurrence.

Before the issuance of a contract, and before commencing any Work, the Contractor shall furnish a certificate, satisfactory to Western Pennsylvania Conservancy from each insurance company showing that the above insurance is in force, stating policy numbers, dates of expiration, and limits of liability thereunder, and further providing that the insurance will not be canceled or changed until the expiration of at least thirty (30) days after written notice of such cancellation. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy must be listed as an "Additional Insured" on all policies.

Discussions and interviews may be held with farmers under final consideration prior to making a selection for award; however, proposals may be accepted without such discussions or interviews. In addition, proposers are welcome to visit the property at any time, as it remains open to the public. In the event that mutually acceptable terms cannot be reached within a reasonable period of time, WPC reserves the right to undertake negotiations with the next most advantageous farmer without undertaking a new procurement process. **SELECTION OF A CONTRACTOR OR FARMER IS IN THE SOLE DISCRETION OF WPC AND WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE THE HIGHEST PRICED PROPOSAL. WPC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT ANY PROPOSAL OR NONE AT ALL.**

Farmers responding to this RFP are encouraged to visit the property and meet with WPC staff. Site visits can be arranged by appointment. In addition, the selected farmer(s) will be required to

meet on-site with WPC staff after signing the lease for an orientation to the property and buildings.

Any inquiry desired by a proposer regarding the meaning or interpretation of the RFP should be directed to:

Andrew Zadnik
Director of Land Stewardship
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 977-9681
azadnik@paconserve.org

Access to and use of the lease areas can begin as soon as the contract is finalized by all parties.

If awarded a contract/lease, each lessee will be required to submit the items from ‘Additional Requirements’ above (Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Plan, Conservation Plan, etc.) for review and approval by WPC prior to beginning any active farming operations.

Submittal of Proposal

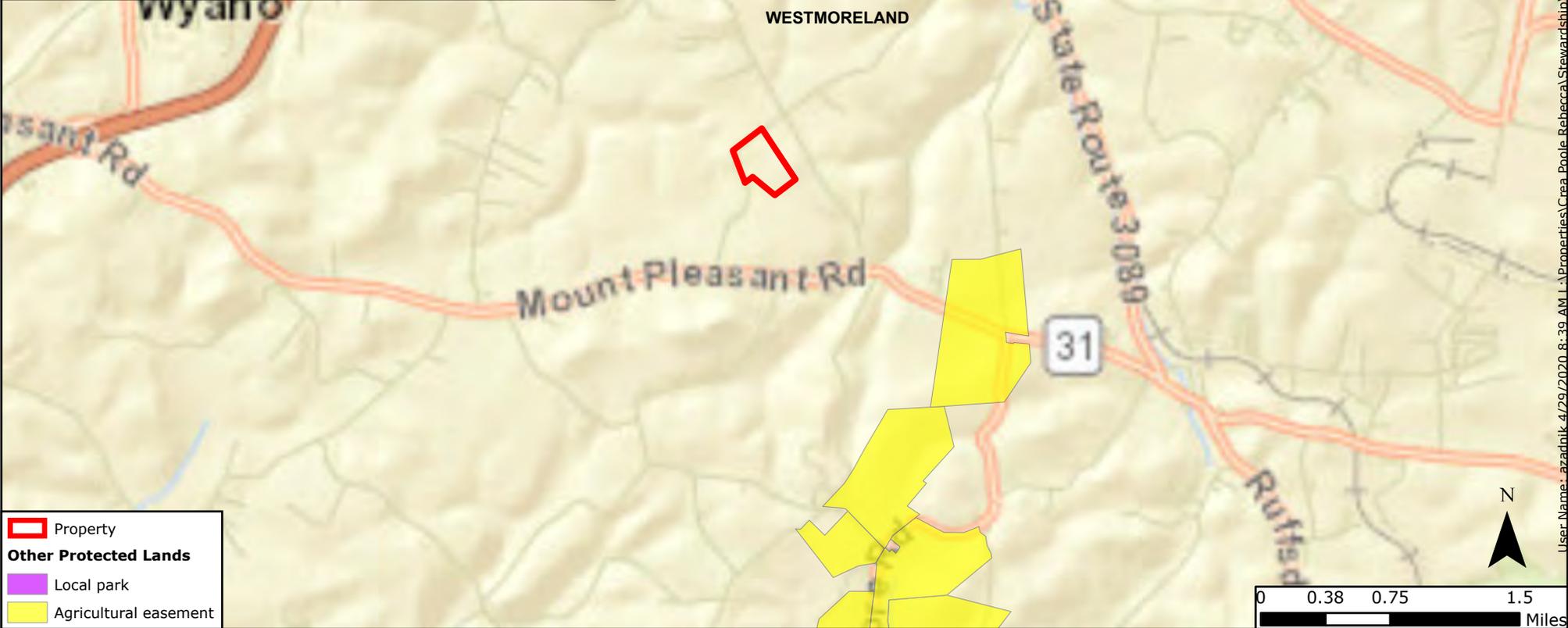
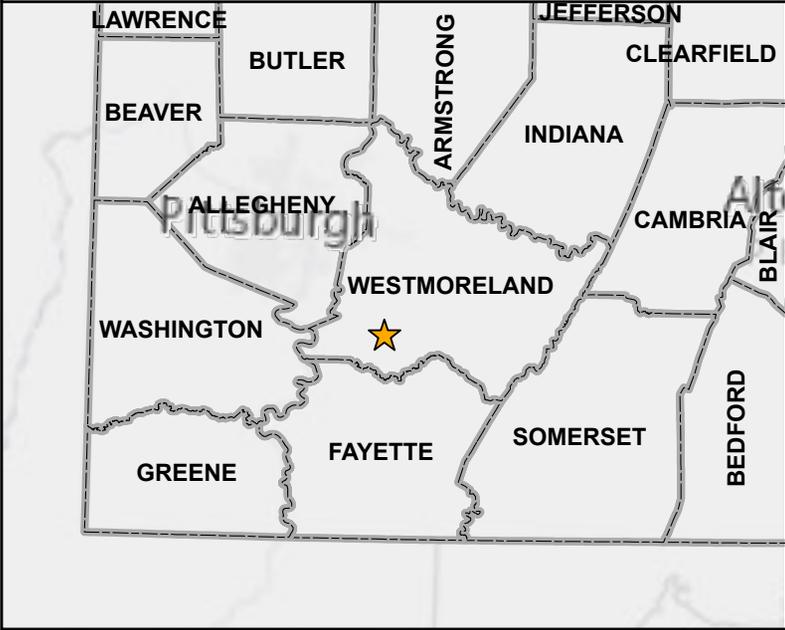
Proposals will be received until a lease is awarded. Proposals must be sent by email to:

Andrew Zadnik
Director of Land Stewardship
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
azadnik@paconserve.org

Proposals will become the property of WPC. They will not be returned.

Ruffsdale Farm

South Huntingdon Twp., Westmoreland Co.



Ruffsdale Farm

South Huntingdon Twp., Westmoreland Co.

Boundary is a graphic depiction, and should not be used in place of a survey.



- Stream
- Boundary
- No-till Restoration Area

0 250 500 1,000 Feet