



CANOE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT FUND

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Purpose:

Since 1932, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) has served as a pillar of excellence through the implementation of diverse conservation projects that have aided in the enhancement and protection of Pennsylvania's natural resources for future generations. WPC has completed these projects in land protection, stewardship and wildlife habitat improvement through the assistance of many contributing partners.

WPC also looks to enhance opportunities for Pennsylvania's citizens and visitors through improvements created by the Canoe Access Development Fund (CADF). The CADF aids in the identification, stabilization and rustic development of waterway access sites in Western Pennsylvania. The Canoe Access Development Fund is a beneficial resource for local organizations to help ensure that the public has access to waterways. CADF also aids in the expansion of watershed partnerships across Western Pennsylvania and provides increased awareness of the work of watershed associations and organizations. WPC assists with this effort by not only providing funding, but also technical assistance for design, permitting, construction, outreach and long-term sustainability.

Improvements to canoe access sites help expand the number of locations for canoe and kayak enthusiasts to enjoy and explore Western Pennsylvania's waterways that meander throughout private, public and state forests. River enthusiasts also have an opportunity to expand their enjoyment and knowledge of Pennsylvania's diverse terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna.

Canoe Access Development Grants:

The CADF operates by making grants to municipalities, recreation/parks associations and non-profit organizations to improve or develop stream access sites for canoeing or kayaking. Current funding supports grants on streams with minimal motorboat traffic, with preference for whitewater streams. Grants for 2026 will provide up to 5,000 for low-profile improvements and a subsequent \$1,000 for maintenance over the next decade. Proposals **for the Fall 2026 grant program are due by November 13, 2026.**



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Eligible Applicants:

1. Local organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in Pennsylvania are eligible. Organizations **without** 501(c)(3) nonprofit status must identify a qualified nonprofit association to administer the grant's finances, if awarded.
2. Preference will be given to *existing sites* or to waterways where previously developed conservation plans, assessments, or water trail programs *indicate the need* for improved stream recreation access. Indications of need may also come from current active development of the above.
3. A proposed *new access site* **should** be located along a stream or river described in Canoeing Guide to Western Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia (located online at <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~shaw/CG.html>) or similar text, or be recognized in the region as a paddling waterway. Provide this information in the "Project Description." Preference will be given to Class II and Class III streams.
4. A *previously existing access site* seeking improvement(s) **should** be on a waterway identified in Canoeing Guide Western Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia (located online at <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~shaw/CG.html>) or similar text, or be recognized in the region as a paddling waterway. Provide this information in the "Project Description."
5. The landowner must be in agreement to allow canoe and kayak access to site for a minimum of 10 years (*Landowner information must be included in order for the application to be eligible for review. Data box is located in the last portion of the application on page 8*).
6. While a cash or non-cash match is *not* required, *preference will be given to applications that show local commitment*. Non-cash, in-kind contributions are acceptable and may include volunteer time, donated services, or other donated items, such as heavy equipment, which are directly related to the development of the applicant's project.
7. Eligible streams must be rated as Class III or below, be substantially free of power boat traffic, and be canoeable often enough to justify the investment. Proposed access sites should significantly augment existing or planned access capability.

The expectations of these site improvements are for public groups and private landowners to work cooperatively. Their efforts will provide water enthusiasts safe and accessible points of access, canoe and kayak staging areas, and parking areas for their vehicles.



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Required Materials in Your Application Package:

The applicant is required to include **all** of the following information. Failure to include **all** requested information will result in the application being **ineligible**. Please be sure to include all attachments listed below and to use the “Application Format & Checklist.”

1. A completed application (located on pages 6-8)
2. 2-5 photos of each site
3. A topographic map of each location (including property lines, if known)

An individual applicant may submit for *multiple* access sites. However, each site must have an *individual* application package and meet the all of the previously listed requirements on page 2.

Selection Process

- Applications are due postmarked by November 13, 2026
- Site reviews will be conducted by WPC’s Watershed Conservation staff
- An applicant’s site will be given *preference* if they are able to provide matching funds, supply volunteers, or supply heavy equipment for the project construction
- Applicants will be notified of selection by December 14, 2026

Eligible Use of Funds:

CADF will contribute up to \$5,000 per site for the construction and enhancement of access locations. The funding maybe used for the following expenses:

- Parking area(s) for a few vehicles
- Creating stabilized access areas and paths to the waterway
- Purchase of conservation land easement and/or riverside access (where appropriate)
- Paying for a portion of a larger land tract for access (where appropriate)
- Upgrading an existing access location (through the above listed methods)

Applications will be reviewed on an individual basis and grants shall be awarded in a fiscally responsibly way to good stewards of conservation. If your site is selected you will be contacted by WPC to begin the design and constructing planning of the project.

The **organization** applying to the CADF must be committed to maintaining the access site for 10 years after the project is completed. The **landowner** of the property also must agree to allow access and maintenance to occur for 10 years. Projects previously funded by CADF are eligible for an additional \$1,000 for a post-project maintenance for up to 10 years. Maintenance may include but is not limited to the following;

- Purchase of simple tools
- Litter pick-up at parking area
- The addition of gravel or wood chips to access areas and paths to the waterway



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- Keeping areas clear and accessible through the removal of weeds, shrubs, and fallen trees

Should any *major natural damage* occur to the selected access site the applicant may contact WPC for additional funding for repairs during the 10-year maintenance period.

Grant Recipient Responsibilities:

If your site is selected, your organization is required to:

- Submit documentation of bids and expenditures to Western Pennsylvania Conservancy for project review prior to construction.
- Complete the access site improvement within 12 months from the project start date.
- Complete any post construction follow-up maintenance to the canoe access site (as directed).
- Recognize the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's sponsorship in your organization's newsletter or similar publication, if any.
- Recognize the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in all news and social media and publicity materials distributed by your organization as you promote your project.
- Prominently display the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's name on any project-related reports, handouts, signage, and websites.
- Recognize the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in at least one press release to local print media about the project. You are encouraged to solicit local print media to write a story about the project.

Applying for the Canoe Access Development Grant Program

To apply for the Canoe Access Development Fund, please do the following:

1. **Prior** to submitting your application, you are **required** to contact Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Kelly Horrell at 724-471-7202 x5100 to discuss your proposal.
2. Follow all guidelines provided in this document while preparing and submitting your application.
3. Submit one (1) complete copy of your grant application with all attachments and supporting documentation to:

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
C/O Ms. Kelly Horrell
Canoe Access Development Fund
1067 Philadelphia St, Suite 101
Indiana, PA 15701



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Application Format & Checklist

Check Box	Item No.	Item	Description
	1	Executive Summary	Provide background about the organization, projects, goals, and objectives.
	2	Project Description	Provides a detailed narrative of project, site description, usage, and photos/ maps.
	3	Budget Narrative	Description of matches: cash or in-kind.
	4	Project Timeline	Desired construction schedule.
	5	IRS 501(c)(3) Determination*	A copy of the organization's IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter or that of its pass-through agent.
	6	Letters of Commitment from the Organization & the Private Landowner <i>Mandatory</i>	Letters from the organization and the private landowner showing support and commitment for the proposed project.
	7	PNDI & Permit Information	Access improvement projects require a PNDI review and usually some form of permit activity authorization.
	8	Other Information <i>Optional</i>	Any literature or narrative describing the project.

* A pass-through agent with 501(c)(3) status must administer funds for those organizations without.



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Application Documentation

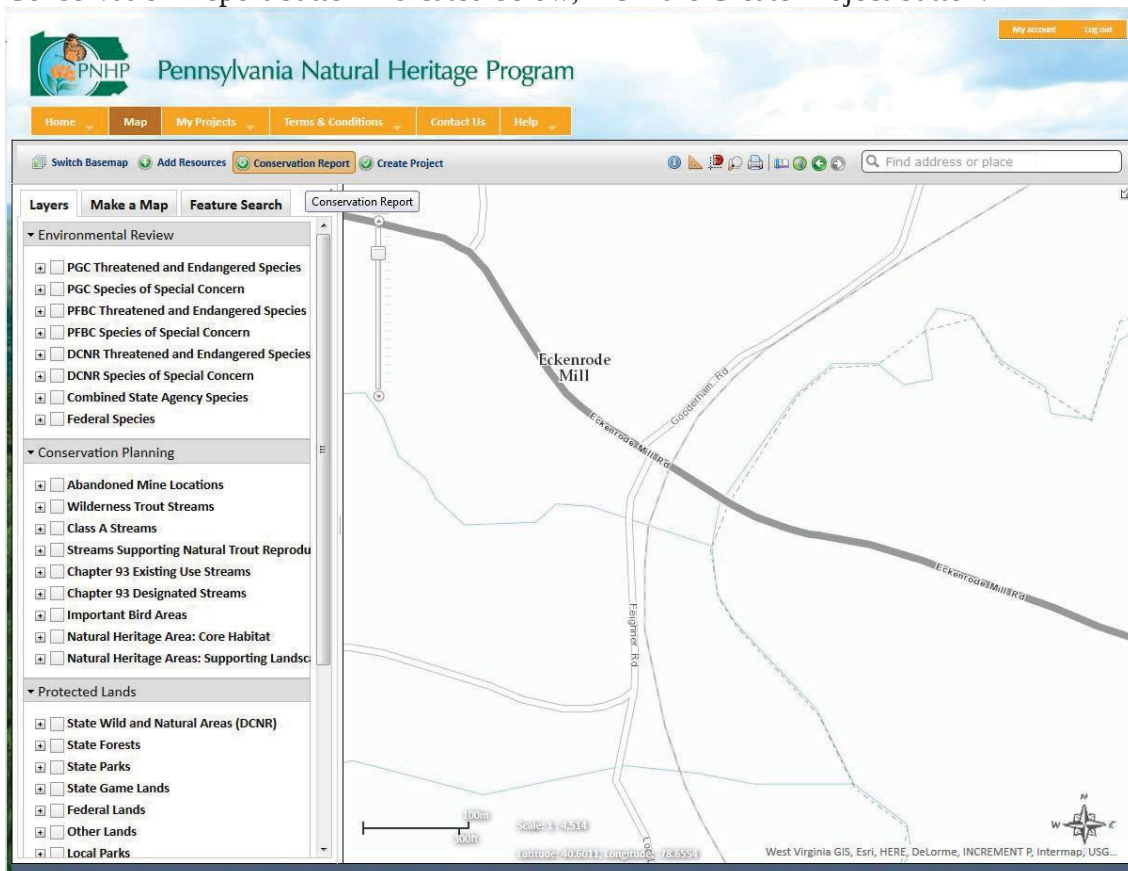
Please provide the following:

1. Executive Summary — A statement of the organization's mission, goals, achievements, and current projects. (One page maximum.)
2. Project Description — An explanation of the proposed project. In your account, please answer the following questions: (Three pages maximum.)
 - a. Why are you seeking funding through the Canoe Access Development Fund (CADF)?
 - b. Why is the site eligible?
 - c. What improvements will be made?
 - d. How will this grant help your organization attain its goals and objectives?
 - e. What current partners do you have for this project? What additional partners do you hope to bring on board?
 - f. With what long-term plan will this grant assist your organization?
3. Budget Narrative — What matches can be provided by the organization? Please be specific in your match description; volunteers, heavy equipment, or monetary components. Provide a table of budget items, costs and funding sources.
4. Project Timeline — What is your proposed project start date? (12 month maximum)
5. IRS 501(c)(3) Determination — Copy of your organization's IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt determination letter. (In the case of those organizations without non-profit status, include a copy of your pass-through organization's tax-exempt determination letter. See *Eligible Applicants*, page 2.)
6. Letters of Support (*Mandatory*) — Letters of commitment showing support from the organization and the private landowner for the construction, completion, and 10 year maintenance of the project access site. (1 page maximum, each)
7. PNDI & Permitting Pre-Screen – It is recommended that the applicant contact their local County Conservation District for assistance in preparing the following documents.



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A PNDI conservation report is required for any activity associated with the Canoe Access Development Fund. This process can be completed using the Conservation Explorer tool located at <https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov>. Please note: you will want to use the Conservation Report button indicated below, NOT the Create Project button.



In addition, a GP-2 Small Docks & Boat Launching Ramps permit from the PA Department of Environmental Protection and/or permission from the Army Corps of Engineers may be required to complete your project. While obtaining the permit does not need to be completed in order to submit a grant proposal, we request that applicant contact the appropriate agency and provide information on required permits with the proposal.

8. Other Information (*Optional*) — Any other literature or narrative that describes your organization or its project that you believe is relevant and important.



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GRANT APPLICATION

DATE:	ACCESS SITE NAME: STREAM NAME:	
ORGANIZATION NAME:		
NAME OF THE TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION TO WHICH FUNDS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED, IF DIFFERENT FROM THE ORGANIZATION ABOVE (PASS-THROUGH AGENT):		
ORGANIZATION OR PASS-THROUGH AGENT'S FEDERAL EMPLOYEE ID NUMBER OR TAX ID NUMBER:		
PROJECT LOCATION: WATERSHED: COUNTY: LOCAL DESCRIPTION:		
PROVIDE A ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:		
ANTICIPATED START DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: (MAXIMUM OF 12 MONTHS)	FUNDING AMOUNT REQUESTED: MATCHING FUNDS PROVIDED:	
GPS LOCATION IN DECIMAL DEGREES:		
AVAILABILITY OF VOLUNTEERS:		



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AVAILABILITY OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND OTHER TOOLS:

IS THERE CURRENTLY A CANOE ACCESS SITE? FREQUENCY THAT THE SITE IS USED?:

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ALL GRANT-RELATED CORRESPONDENCE

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME AND TITLE:

ADDRESS:

DAYTIME PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

FAX NUMBER:

E-MAIL:

SITE LANDOWNER INFORMATION

CONTACT NAME AND TITLE:

ADDRESS:

DAYTIME PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

**AGREES TO 10 YEARS OF WATERWAY ACCESS
(YES/ NO):**

E-MAIL: