

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Project Synopsis

Project Title: Stewardship Web Portal

Goal: Develop a web site that provides links to existing information as well as CSC-developed information on conservation land stewardship practices and protocols.

Brief Description: The purpose of the project is to design a web resource that contains best available information on various aspects of conservation land stewardship. Examples of topics that would contain content include trail design and construction, invasive species identification and control, protocols to inventory the environmental and cultural resources of properties, etc. The web site would sit within the RI Land and Water Partnership web system (<http://www.landandwaterpartnership.org>) and build upon the information base that they have already established. The project would entail two phases: (1) to design and create the stewardship portal and (2) develop content for the site. Content will consist of existing materials already on the web and new information the CSC develops. We would fund the Land and Water Partnership for Phase 1 – to design, develop and maintain the web site. We will fund the Rhode Island Natural History Survey to contract a researcher who will collect and forward existing web-based content to the web master. The initial focus would be identify links to credible and informative existing web sites that provide information on conservation land stewardship. The Land and Water Partnership would host the site but acknowledge the CSC as the source of funds.

Deliverables: The deliverable for this project are:

1. A thread on the RI Land and Water web site dedicated to conservation land stewardship. The design and architecture of the site will be developed by Mr. Bruce Hooke of the Land and Water Partnership with input from the CSC. Mr. Hooke will provide the CSC web site log file use statistics for the stewardship portal twice a year.
2. Content for the Conservation Land Stewardship web portal. In this project year we will focus on finding accurate, timely, and informative existing web resources that we can link to.

Timetable and Benchmarks:

January – March 2009: develop architecture and design of portal page

March 2009: Announce the existence of stewardship portal at Land and Water Summit conference

March – December 2009: Develop and integrate content into the site

December 2009: Report on content established and use statistics

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
\$3,000	Design and host stewardship portal
\$3,000	Add content (links and process materials provided by CSC and partners (documents, images, etc.) ¹
\$6,000	TOTAL

Payments will be made to The Friends of the Moshassuck and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey:

Web Mastering Expenses, \$3,000 to:

Attn: Mr. Greg Gerritt
Friends of the Moshassuck
37 Sixth Street
Providence, RI 02906

Web Site Content Development, \$3,000 to:

Attn: Dr. David Gregg
Rhode Island Natural History Survey
Ranger Hall
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

Project oversight will be done by Peter August, University of Rhode Island.

¹ The RINHS will charge a modest 6% overhead for handling this account. This will result in a total of \$2,830 for content development.

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Proposed Project Synopsis

Project Title: Developing a Protocol for Inventorying, Monitoring, and Managing Natural Resources on Conservation Lands

Goal: Develop a statewide land management protocol that includes procedures, pointers and resources for inventorying, monitoring and managing conservation land

Brief Description: There is no uniform protocol for inventorying and monitoring the plant, animal, and ecosystem resources on the conservation land of Rhode Island. For conservation easements, the Internal Revenue Service requires that a land trust maintain 'documentation sufficient to establish the condition of the property at the time of the gift.' In addition to meeting IRS requirements, the baseline documentation report provides information useful in the ongoing stewardship of the conservation easement and design of management plans. Furthermore this approach can be a model for all land held in conservation. However, significant challenge for land managers are following these standards and obtaining the necessary natural resource expertise. The purpose of this project is to develop such a protocol, identify sources of data to support its application, and educate the conservation community of its availability and use. The ultimate goal of this protocol is to develop rigorous conservation management that is both adaptable yet translatable from property to property.

Deliverables:

1. Presentation of project at Land and Water Summit.
2. Online and print protocol for land managers.
3. Repository of inventorying, monitoring and managing resources.

Timetable and Benchmarks:

February – April 2009: Collect stakeholder stewardship information and challenges

April – June 2009: Facilitate meeting of participants, present summary data and plan

June – October 2009: Compile data and feedback and disseminate uniform protocol

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
\$ 1,000	Gather current practice information from protocol target audience
\$ 2,000	Design and host meeting of protocol practitioners, lead session at annual RI Land and Water Conservation Summit
\$ 3,000	Disseminate protocol and manage clearinghouse of information
\$ 6,000	TOTAL

Payment will be made to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island at:

Scott Ruhren
Audubon Society of Rhode Island
12 Sanderson Road
Smithfield, RI 02917-2600

Project oversight will be done by Scott Ruhren, Audubon Society of Rhode Island.

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Proposed Project Synopsis

Project Title: Updating and Maintaining Rhode Island's Conservation Lands Database

Goal: Update the database for "local and NGO conservation and park lands" and develop a system to keep current and accurate GIS data on all conservation properties in RI that are protected from future development.

Brief Description: Stewardship of our conservation lands starts with knowing where they are. At present, the best data available on lands that are protected from future development have not been updated since early in 2006. DEM, the custodian of this database, does not have the resources to reach out to land trusts and municipalities to obtain and update data on an ongoing basis; therefore, potentially thousands of acres of protected lands are not reflected in RIGIS, the central database. The purpose of this project is to work with DEM and the conservation community to: 1) update the existing database so that it accurately reflects lands conserved throughout the state – and especially within the last two years, and 2) develop a reliable and simple system where new property acquisitions will be promptly added to the statewide inventory of conservation lands.

Deliverables:

1. Updated "NGO conservation and park lands" database, including all lands that have been conserved through spring 2009.
2. A memo with recommendations to CSC and RIDEM on how to improve upon the current system to ensure that RIDEM gets updated maps and information from land trusts and communities.

Timetable and Benchmarks:

January 2009: Enter into contract with a qualified individual to carry out this project at DEM (likely working as a short-term or part-time Conservation Information Assistant)

February – April 2009: Outreach/Research to land trusts and communities to update local and NGO conservation and park lands database at RIDEM, including presentation at Land and Water Summit on March 21, 2009

Spring/Summer 2009: Complete update of the database; and present recommendations for implementation of new system or process to ensure that RIDEM receives updated data from local and NGO partners in a reliable and timely manner. (Note: If funding allows, this project may include implementation of recommendations.)

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
\$5,000 ¹	Contract with individual, reporting to RIDEM GIS staff, to work with the land trusts and cities and towns to gather information and update GIS layer, and to recommend or develop a new system for maintaining the database

Payment will be made to the Rhode Island Natural History Survey at:

Dr. David Gregg
Rhode Island Natural History Survey
URI Coastal Institute, Room 101
Kingston, RI 02881

Project oversight will be done by Janet Coit, TNC (working with David Gregg, RINHS, and Paul Jordan, RIDEM).

¹The RINHS will charge a modest 6% overhead for handling this account. This will result in a total of \$4,716 for the database update.

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Project Synopsis

Project Title: Legislative & Policy Initiatives in Support of Land Conservation and Stewardship

Goal: Ensure that the conservation community has a presence and voice in the State House and influences legislation and policy discussions to support land conservation and stewardship of protected lands in RI.

Brief Description: The Rhode Island Land Trust Council (RILTC) currently represents the conservation community on legislative matters passing through the State House that impact land conservation. This covers a variety of issues and includes bond funding and legislation to promote new acquisitions as well as legislation and policies to promote sound stewardship of protected lands and to ensure that they remain protected.

To support the vigilant and effective work of the RILTC on legislative and state policy efforts, the CSC wishes to provide a modest amount of funding toward RILTC staff and operations.

Deliverables:

1. Text of legislation introduced in 2009 and names of lead sponsors.
2. List of legislation monitored
3. Testimony submitted for legislation
4. Report on legislative outcomes 2009

Timetable and Benchmarks:

November	Identify policy priorities for 2009 legislative session,
January	Sponsors for legislation recruited
February	Legislation researched and drafted
March	Legislation introduced
Jan. – June	Monitor legislation introduced and build grass roots response to any proposed legislation detrimental to the state's land conservation efforts. Build grass roots support for viable legislation that supports land conservation efforts. Represent land trust community at Statehouse hearings as appropriate.
January	Issue check for \$14,000 to the RILTC with a clear statement that this funding should support staff and operating costs for the RILTC to continue its work in overseeing the legislative agenda for the land conservation community.

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
\$14,000	Support for Legislative Action Leadership by the Land Trust Council

Payment will be made to The Nature Conservancy at:

Mr. Rupert Friday
The Rhode Island Land Trust Council
The Nature Conservancy
159 Waterman Street
Providence, RI 02906

Project oversight will be done by Rupert Friday, The Land Trust Council

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Project Synopsis

Project Title: Invasive Species Preparedness

Goals: 1) Improve our collective, "synoptic" understanding of invasive species in Rhode Island; 2) provide accurate information about the state of invasives in Rhode Island to in-state and external stakeholders; and 3) direct those preparing for, or managing invasives to appropriate resources.

Brief Description: This project will create a part-time invasive species coordinator housed within Rhode Island Natural History Survey. The specific duties of the coordinator would be to achieve the above-stated project goals by: organizing trainings for URI Watershed Watch, Land and Water Summit, etc.; participating in meetings and activities of the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel (NEANS) and Invasive Plant Species of New England (IPANE); fielding individual inquiries; gathering best practices and helping populate the stewardship portal; keeping up on and spreading word about new issues, discoveries, management strategies; and coordinating small rapid reaction events or helping organize large events with partner institutions.

Deliverables: The deliverables for this project are:

1. Three training workshops to educate land stewards on how to identify and control invasive species.
2. Represent Rhode Island at regional invasive species forums such as NEANS and IPANE.
3. Develop information for an invasive species section for the RI CSC web portal.

Timetable and Benchmarks:

February 2009 – Hire invasive species biologist

Times TBA in 2009 – Training workshops on invasive species in RI

December 2009 -- Comprehensive portal on invasives

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
11,000	Coordinator, 1 day/week, \$30/hour wages and benefits (RINHS agrees to cover incidental/indirect costs of the position) \$2,000 minimum additional funds would be raised for the coordinator and for expenses (conference reg., etc.) from honoraria, program fees, or small grants

Payment will be made to The Rhode Island Natural History Survey:

Attn: Dr. David Gregg
Rhode Island Natural History Survey
Ranger Hall
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

Project oversight will be done by David Gregg, Rhode Island Natural History Survey