

CSC Project Proposal – 2020

Submitted 12/9/2019

Project Title: Conservation Stewardship Technical Support and Capacity-building

Goal: RINHS requests a grant of \$25,000 for staff salary and other expenses essential for RINHS's stable, ongoing operations as a conservation stewardship leader in Rhode Island, particularly in the fields of biodiversity, habitat management, and invasive species.

Brief Description: An operating support grant from the CSC and membership donations are the main supports for the Natural History Survey's capacity to assist and improve conservation stewardship in Rhode Island, capacities that include:

- Technical assistance to conservation land stewardship stakeholders on a wide variety of matters provided directly by RINHS or via RINHS's connections to local and regional experts;
- Improving the reliability, comprehensiveness, and accessibility of the state's Natural Heritage program and program data;
- Increasing knowledge of invasive species and improving the effectiveness of responses to them;
- Creating and supporting communities of conservation stakeholders including the Survey's support for the CSC itself.

The Rhode Island Natural History Survey connects those knowledgeable about Rhode Island's animals, plants, and natural communities with each other and with those who can use that knowledge for research, education, and conservation. In 2018 (the most recent completed year) RINHS conducted 25 public programs attended by nearly 1,000 people, responded to over 400 inquiries for information, most of them from or on behalf of other conservation organizations, and had a total of over 3,500 total interactions with conservation organizations and interested members of the public.

In pursuit of its mission, RINHS convenes and takes prominent roles in events and projects including BioBlitz, Rhody Native, Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, RI Invasive Species Council, Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Plant Conservation Volunteer Program, RI Land & Water Summit, RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, RI Woodland Partnership, Pollinator Working Group, and others including the Conservation Stewardship Collaborative itself.

The Natural History Survey supports conservation science with information and expertise and by organizing collaborative projects and convening diverse but related parties around urgent conservation issues including climate change, invasive species, rare species, and ecological monitoring and restoration. RINHS broadens the public constituency for conservation by gathering and disseminating scientific information and practical experience from interested community members and creating learning opportunities. By increasing and broadening the engagement between scientists and managers on the one hand and concerned members of the public on the other, the Survey helps fulfill one of the priority needs identified by the CSC's strategic planning.

Deliverables: The deliverables for this year's funding include:

1. One or more meetings of RI Invasive Species Council and ongoing email communications about news and emerging issues throughout the year;
2. A session at the 2020 Land & Water Summit and support of CSC activities there and throughout the year;
3. Supervision of Natural Heritage data management (paid for under a separate grant); production of a biodiversity data management report;
4. A bioblitz event on conservation land for inventory, education, and network building purposes to include public programs for orientation and results;
5. A suite of public programs including at least 4 lectures and 4 field education or training events;
6. Participate in state and regional bodies that increase capacity for and coordination of conservation stewardship in RI including: RI Natural Heritage Database MOU, RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative, Native Plant Trust's Plant Conservation Volunteer program, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program Management Committee, Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, RI Woodland Partnership, and Pollinator Working Group.

Timetable and Benchmarks:

March	lead CSC Land & Water Summit session
March-July	YCL support as needed
Spring	2 public events; monitoring General Assembly and providing technical assistance as necessary; RIISC meeting
June	BioBlitz
Summer	Biodiversity outreach programs incl. National Pollinator Week and National Moth Week
Fall	2 public events plus Lisa Gould Plant Program
ongoing	4 public field programs; Committees and collaborations; data management

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
\$ 25,000	Conservation Stewardship Technical Support and Capacity-building

Total \$ 25,000

Payments will be made to the fiscal agent for the project:

Rhode Island Natural History Survey
David Gregg, Executive Director
PO Box 1858
Kingston, RI 02881

Project oversight will be done by: David Gregg.