

CHARLOTTE CONSERVATION FUND GUIDELINES

Revised September 27, 2010

PURPOSE. The purpose of the Charlotte Conservation Fund, established by Australian ballot in 1996, is to assist in achieving maximum protection of valued town natural and agricultural resources as identified and prioritized in the Charlotte Town Plan. It is envisioned that Conservation Fund dollars will be combined with other public and private funds to protect significant resources as outlined below.

RESOURCES. The Selectboard shall consider the following resources to be particularly significant:

- Agricultural soils, especially when being actively farmed or when enabling the passing of farms from one generation to the next.
- State or locally significant wildlife habitat.
- Wildlife corridors that connect significant habitat.
- State or locally significant natural areas.
- Scenic vistas.
- Recreational and cultural resources or amenities which may be protected or acquired as part of the protection of the significant resources listed above, provided that such resources or amenities shall not diminish the protection of those significant resources.

CRITERIA. Criteria for evaluating the appropriateness of projects for funding will be developed to guide the selection process. Criteria will include but not be limited to the following:

- Linkage with other conserved parcels
- Leverage of other funding sources or conservation projects.
- Achievement of multiple resource protection to the extent possible and appropriate for the site and its protection objectives.
- Consistency with the Charlotte Town Plan and appropriateness of the project for its location, relative to Town Plan goals and objectives.

USES. Conservation Fund monies may be used for

- acquisition of rights to land,
- fee simple ownership,
- reasonable project closing costs associated with the aforementioned, such as appraisals, fees for attorneys, processing, administrative, stewardship and title insurance , and
- options to purchase if the option goes toward the purchase price.

EXCLUSIONS. Preproject and general conservation planning are not fundable through this fund.

ACCOUNT. The Conservation Fund shall be held in an account separate from the

General Fund.

APPLICATION PROCESS.

Applications for Conservation Fund monies shall be made to the Selectboard on forms as provided. Application may be made on an as needed basis. Applicants shall submit information on the project for which funding is requested to the Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee, Trails Committee and Charlotte Land Trust for their review and recommendations based on the above listed criteria. Other Town committees may be consulted in the application process, as appropriate to the project and location. These comments shall be submitted, in writing and/or in person by representatives of the respective groups, to the Selectboard to assist the Selectboard in assessing a project's suitability for Conservation Fund monies. In instances where a funding request must be acted on quickly a quorum or authorized representative of each reviewing group may be asked to attend the Selectboard hearing at which a request is considered and provide their comments directly at that time. Prior to the disbursement of approved funds the applicant will submit a conservation plan map of the project to the Selectboard that shows the project area and any exclusion and/or easement areas.

SELECTBOARD NOTIFICATION.

The Selectboard shall be notified of a project application at such time that the applicant submits information on the project to the reviewing groups.

At least annually the Charlotte Land Trust shall present to the Selectboard information on conservation trends, priorities and strategies for meeting the conservation goals of the organization and furtherance of the goals of the Charlotte Town Plan.

CONFIDENTIALITY.

Landowner and project partner confidentiality needs are acknowledged to be a consideration in meeting the requirements for notice and review of project applications.