



Fall 2025 Appalachian Landscapes Project Capital Grant Package

The Open Space Institute (OSI) is pleased to offer a Fall 2025 grant opportunity to advance permanent land protection across the Appalachians. The Appalachian Landscapes Project (ALP) is made possible with support from The Great Island Foundation, Lookout Foundation, Lyndhurst Foundation, and Anonymous Foundations, as well as other foundations and individuals.

Grant Summary

Goals

This grant opportunity is designed to support conservation projects that protect biodiversity, enhance resilience and landscape connectivity, support the ability of forests to absorb and store carbon, and foster strong benefits for local communities.

Geography

Projects should advance conservation within the ALP service area as defined by OSI. To check whether your project falls within the ALP boundary, use this [Screening Tool](#). If your project lies partially within the boundary, we encourage you to reach out to OSI staff before applying to confirm eligibility.

Timing Considerations

Applications will be accepted through December 5, 2025. Awards are anticipated to be announced in February 2026. Projects seeking funding should be able to close within 18 months of grant award notification.

Eligible Entities

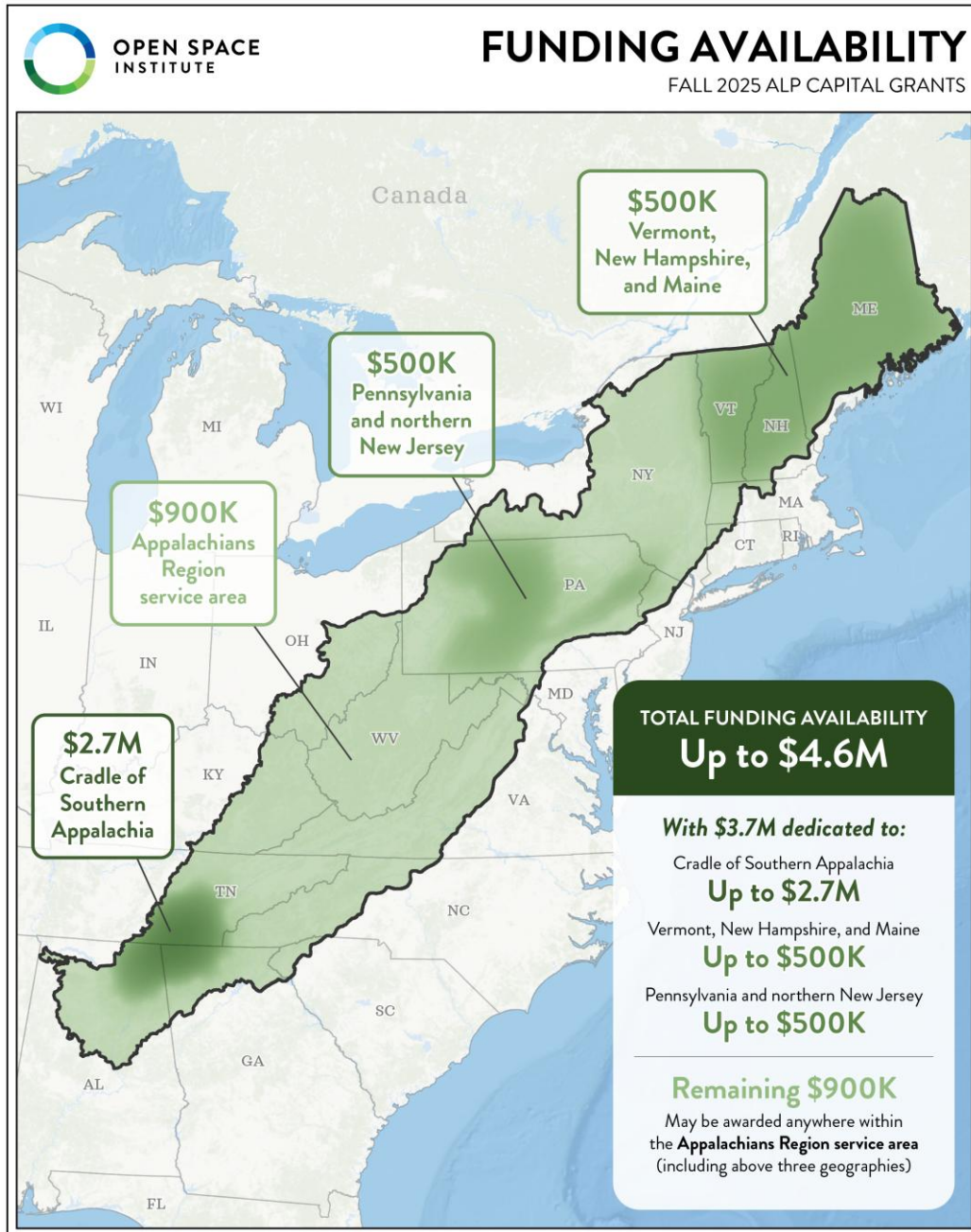
The ALP invites applications from land trusts, nonprofit organizations, Tribal governments, and municipalities committed to advancing permanent land conservation in the Appalachian region.

Fund Availability

Up to \$4.6M is available in the fall 2025 grant round for projects within the ALP service area, with \$3.7M of the total dedicated to the following geographies:

- Up to \$2.7M is available for projects in the Cradle of Southern Appalachia (portions of Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama).
- Up to \$500K is available for projects in portions of Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey.
- Up to \$500K is available for projects in portions of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

The remaining \$900K may be awarded anywhere within the Appalachian service region.



Grant Award Size

There is not a minimum or maximum grant award size, but awards are anticipated to average \$200K in the central and northern Appalachian regions. Larger awards are anticipated in the Cradle of Southern Appalachia.

Use of Funds

Capital grants must be used to permanently protect land through fee acquisition or conservation easements. In exceptional cases, grants may be applied to recover transactional costs such as appraisals, surveys, title, and environmental assessments.

Grant awards are not intended to be reimbursements. OSI's preference is to wire funds directly to the grantee's attorney's escrow account for the closing.

Grant funds cannot be used for stewardship endowments, staff time, land management or restoration, or building construction or maintenance.

Match Requirements

OSI gives preference to projects with a 4:1 or greater match but will consider projects that bring a lower match if 1) the applicant demonstrates other funding is not available, and 2) the project has outstanding attributes. Please reach out to the appropriate OSI field staff prior to applying if you feel your project falls into this category.

The following qualify as matching funds:

- Public funds (federal, state, and local) and private funds (individuals, foundations, corporations).
- The value, full or partial, of a donated conservation easement or bargain sale (as substantiated by an appraisal).
- The value of eligible match properties (see below, and as substantiated by an appraisal).
- Out of pocket transaction and diligence costs, including appraisals, surveys, environmental assessments, title exams and insurance, forest management/stewardship plans, recording fees, transfer and real estate taxes, property carrying costs and fees for outside counsel.

The following do not qualify as matching funds:

- Land restoration and management
- Stewardship endowments
- Staff time, travel, or office expenses
- Building construction and maintenance

Match Property Eligibility

Property proposed as Match must 1) be adjacent or proximate to the subject property, 2) meet the Fund's criteria and legal document review, 3) be part of a

larger plan that includes conservation of the match and subject properties, and 4) close prior to the closing of the subject property but not more than two years before date of application.

Project Quality Criteria and Evaluation

OSI intends to fund a diverse set of projects that are responsive to local conservation needs. We will prioritize and fund exemplary projects across a range of project criteria, including projects that may not excel in all evaluation categories. We will utilize Scoring Guidance (see [below](#)), but there is neither a minimum score nor strict adherence to funding based on the scores when making grant decisions.

Project Quality Criteria	Maximum Points (of 100 Total)
Contribution to Functional Ecological Network	35
Community Conservation	25
Forest Carbon	8
Threat, Opportunity, and Stewardship	22
Overall Project Quality	10

Functional Ecological Network

OSI's new Functional Ecological Network is a data resource and a vision for stabilizing and supporting biodiversity across the Appalachians through:

- 1) increased protection of resilient lands with underrepresented geology and elevation profiles in the protected land portfolio,
- 2) expanded corridors of protected and resilient forests and climate corridors, and
- 3) increased protection of watersheds supporting freshwater resilience.

The Functional Ecological Network organizes and amplifies the important work of the Center for Resilient Climate Science at The Nature Conservancy and is viewable in OSI's [Appalachian Landscapes Mapping Resource Center](#). A detailed explanation of the Functional Ecological Network is available on the [Explore](#) tab.

Community Conservation

OSI seeks to promote land protection projects that center community voices and have specific and documented community benefits. Please review OSI's new Community Benefits Guidance (see [below](#)) for more information.

Forest Carbon

OSI aims to help maintain or increase the Appalachian region's critical forest carbon stores through protecting high-carbon forests and ensuring climate-smart, long-term stewardship. OSI partnered with Clark University to model forest carbon storage for

2050. This mapping resource is viewable in the [Interactive Map](#) tab of the Appalachian Landscapes Mapping Resource Center.

All the data referenced in the Scoring Guidance are housed within the Appalachian Landscapes Mapping Resource Center and can be viewed in the [ALP Grants](#) tab. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the *ALP Grants* tab to visualize the data for planning purposes. Applicants will be asked to submit a shapefile during the application submission process. **OSI staff will use the shapefile to conduct the spatial analyses described in the Scoring Guidance.**

OSI will also consider additional aspects addressed in the application, including project logistics (structure, readiness, feasibility, budget) and likelihood of success. Scored and non-scored aspects will inform grant-making decisions. Staff funding recommendations will be reviewed by an external Advisory Committee consisting of regional conservation experts.

Diligence Expectations for Funded Projects

Nonprofit applicants selected for funding will subsequently be required to submit organizational documents, including articles of incorporation, bylaws, certificate of good standing, IRS tax-exempt status determination letter, proof of adoption of Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices, and a Board resolution approving the proposed acquisition and acceptance of the grant.

All projects selected for funding will be required to submit diligence and transaction documentation prior to the release of grant funding. This includes an appraisal summary demonstrating subject and match property fair market value (dated within one year of closing), a title commitment, executed purchase contract, a boundary survey, and the draft deed or conservation easement. A draft stewardship plan and baseline documentation report must be provided for conservation easement projects. An environmental site assessment must be submitted for fee acquisition projects. All documentation must be reviewed and approved by OSI's legal department prior to the release of funds.

Applicants selected for funding will receive a diligence closing checklist to review and discuss with OSI staff. If you have any questions or anticipate any issues with the expectations described above, please reach out to OSI staff to discuss.

Stewardship Expectations

Funded projects must be stewarded to maintain or increase ecosystem resilience. High-carbon forests protected with this funding will be expected to maintain or increase forest carbon stores over time. Please review Stewardship and Conservation Easement Guidance (see [below](#)) prior to submitting an application.

Staff Contacts

Applicants are encouraged to contact OSI field staff for their region.

Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio

Joel Houser (jhouser@osiny.org)

413-364-5980

Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland

Bill Rawlyk (brawlyk@osiny.org)

908-642-4747

Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut

Sarah Wells (swells@osiny.org)

413-475-4101

General Inquiries

Yasemin Unal-Rodriguez (yunal-rodriguez@osi.org)

646-578-0268

Scoring Guidance

OSI seeks to support the permanent protection of natural lands that contribute to climate resilience for people and wildlife. Our intent is to fund a range of projects that are responsive to local conservation needs. We plan to prioritize and fund exemplary projects across a range of project criteria, including projects that may not excel in all evaluation categories.

We will use the below scoring for the **Subject Property** as an evaluation aid, but there is neither a minimum score that must be achieved nor strict adherence to funding based on the scores when making grant decisions. OSI will also consider additional aspects addressed in the application, including project logistics (structure, readiness, budget) and likelihood of success. Scored and non-scored aspects will inform grant-making decisions.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to field staff prior to submitting an application.

CONTRIBUTION TO FUNCTIONAL ECOLOGICAL NETWORK				Max Points	Evaluation Notes
Percent of property mapped <i>Above Average Resilience</i> by The Nature Conservancy (TNC):				35	OSI will calculate using shapefile submitted by applicant.
25 to 50%	51 to 75%	>76%			
5	7	12			
Percent of property comprised of <i>Underrepresented Settings</i> with <i>Above Average Resilience</i> :					
5 to 25%	26 to 49%	>50%			
2	3	5			
Property includes areas that fall within TNC's Freshwater Resilient Connected Network "Protect Strategy" that are also <i>Above Average Resilience</i> :					
No	Yes				
0	3				
0-10 points will be awarded based on condition of habitat and property (e.g. health of the natural system, severity of invasive species impacts, documented occurrences of State or Federal Threatened and Endangered Species, local connectedness as measured by TNC, and alignment with local, statewide, regional, or national biodiversity and/or climate plans).					
Project is part of an active plan to create or enhance a natural core or corridor of conserved land:					OSI will calculate using shapefile submitted by applicant.
No		0	If applicable, applicant will upload a map. OSI will evaluate Flow using map provided by applicant.		
Yes		2			
Yes, <u>and</u> plan area maps as above average for Flow (TNC)		3			
Yes, <u>and</u> plan area maps as above average for Flow <u>and</u> plan is being implemented beyond this project		5			

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION				Max Points	Evaluation Notes
0-10 points will be awarded based on quality of community involvement (pre- and post-acquisition).				25	OSI will evaluate based on narrative responses and any supporting documentation (including letters of support or participation in developing the application). Please see Community Benefits Guidance for more information and examples.
0-10 points will be awarded based on specificity and impact of intended community benefits and intended community beneficiaries.					
Project engages historically disadvantaged or other community facing disproportionate negative impacts of climate change or land use:					
No 0	Yes 5				

FOREST CARBON				Max Points	Evaluation Notes
Standard Deviations from Appalachians-wide average for 2050 carbon storage and sequestration potential (330 mt CO ₂ e per acre):				8	OSI will calculate using shapefile submitted by applicant.
0.5 to 1 SD below (255-304)	0.5 below to 0.5 SD above (305-355)	0.5 to 1 SD above (356-405)	>1 SD above (>406)		
0	3	5	8		

THREAT, OPPORTUNITY & STEWARDSHIP					Max Points	Evaluation Notes
0-5 points will be awarded based on development potential and current market trends.					22	OSI will evaluate based on narrative responses.
0-5 points will be awarded based on urgency of opportunity (e.g. vulnerability of conditions currently enabling the conservation opportunity to exist, such as deed holder circumstances, time-limited funding availability, local or regional policy changes, etc.).						
Project has strong and specific potential to catalyze additional land conservation (e.g. funding, policy, capacity building):						
No	Yes					
0	2					
0-10 points will be awarded based on long-term strategy and capacity to steward the values being protected by the project.						

OVERALL PROJECT QUALITY				Max Points	Evaluation Notes
1-10 points will be awarded based on project quality (e.g. project acreage, strength of impacts, alignment with granting goals).				10	OSI will use its discretion.

Community Benefits Guidance

Conservation offers benefits that have not historically benefited communities equally. Alongside biodiversity goals, the Appalachian Landscapes Project Capital grant seeks to promote land protection projects that center community voices and have specific and documented community benefits.

Project Scoring

For up to 25 of a possible 100 project points, applications will be scored on the degree to which a) the project includes public input or a framework for obtaining public input, b) the specificity and impact of community benefits resulting from the project, and c) the degree to which the project benefits populations considered historically disadvantaged or bearing disproportionate impacts from climate change and/or extreme weather.

The following Community Benefit Categories are provided as guidance, to be incorporated into the application as relevant and useful. Applicants are not required to utilize the categories described below.

Potential Specific Community Benefit Categories:

1. **Community Resilience:** Projects that strengthen the community's ability to adapt to and recover from challenges such as protecting wetlands and/or critical forests at headwaters that help mitigate downstream flooding.
2. **Economic Development:** Projects that demonstrate opportunities to strengthen local economies through conservation-related activities such as recreational projects.
3. **Historic/Cultural Preservation:** Projects that protect heritage sites and traditions important to communities including Indigenous land return and/or stewardship.
4. **Community Empowerment:** Enhancing community involvement, agency, and decision-making power by supporting ownership or stewardship of properties by local municipalities or nontraditional conservation organizations.
5. **Environmental Education/Awareness:** Projects that promote environmental stewardship and knowledge through nature parks.
6. **Health and Well-Being:** Projects that support physical, mental, and social health through conservation, either by addressing environmental justice or other issues.
7. **Community/Recreational Access:** Projects that increase public accessibility to natural or conserved areas, particularly in areas lacking access.

Note: Benefits may overlap across multiple themes.

Examples of Community Benefits:

- **A project with strong community input and specific community benefits:** A 600-acre forested property bounds a town that suffers frequent minor floods. Through a resident-led process, protection of the property was identified as a top priority to

safeguard against future flood hazard. The town will own the property and intends to develop hiking and biking trails on the property to provide access to nature and the outdoors with the goal of increasing public health and economic opportunities.

- **A project with community input and specific community benefits:** A 500-acre Community Forest project that encompasses a micro-watershed where nearby residents source drinking water from a spring on the property. Residents have publicly voiced concerns about potential impacts to their water when the property was listed as an industrial timberland investment opportunity.
- **A project with general community benefit:** A 200-acre conservation easement on forestland near a densely populated suburb. Although there will not be public access, protection of the forest is likely to help the nearby community by mitigating urban heat islands.
- **A project without public input or known community benefit:** A 4,200-acre fee acquisition by the state Department of Natural Resources is protecting almost all of the known habitat of a species. The project has significant natural resource benefits, but local residents are concerned that they will lose access to hunting grounds they are accustomed to accessing. There is no desire by the state to manage hunting on the property because of management constraints.

Stewardship and Conservation Easement Guidance

Overview

The ongoing stewardship of projects funded through the Appalachian Landscapes Project Capital grant must be consistent with *maintaining or increasing resilience to climate change*. Projects must meet the standards outlined below. Projects can meet these standards through a conservation easement (CE) and/or long-term stewardship plan. OSI recognizes there are multiple ways to design a conservation project to meet these goals and does not require specific CE or stewardship plan terms or language. OSI staff are available to discuss and review CE and stewardship plan language and share sample provisions.

Please note:

- *Prior to submitting a grant proposal, applicants should review the following standards.*
- *Grant proposals should describe how their project will meet these standards and goals.*
- *OSI staff will review and approve the final conservation easement and stewardship plan or goals prior to distribution of grant funds.*
- *OSI is agnostic about carbon offsets, provided standards described herein are met.*

Standards for Deed Holders and CE Holders

By accepting a grant, Deed and CE holders are expected to support the protection of ecosystem resilience, and/or other closely related conservation values, as may be described in the grant proposal.

Deed holders intended to manage the protected land should have a track record in land stewardship and sufficient resources to manage the land for these values. **All future deed holders, including governmental entities, are expected to manage land in alignment with these standards.**

CE holders should have a track record in CE monitoring and enforcement, and sufficient funds and staff to monitor and enforce the CE.

Stewardship Standards

Every project should meet the stewardship standards detailed below:

- Have as primary purposes maintaining or increasing ecosystem resilience to climate change.
- Prohibit logging and road building on steep slopes (generally greater than 15 degrees) and in high altitude forests.
- Maintaining or enhancing native forests with diverse structure and composition, protecting forest soils and mature stands, and minimizing forest fragmentation.
- Prohibit surface mining, except for limited removal of gravel or sand to be used on the protected property and prohibit (surface and subsurface) hydrocarbon and

mineral extraction to the maximum extent possible. *If your project has known outstanding mineral rights through severance or leases that you cannot extinguish, contact OSI prior to submitting an application to discuss the project's eligibility.*

- Address ecosystem resilience by:
 - Defining “climate resilience” with language similar to the following: “the ability of an area to adjust and adapt to climate change while maintaining biological diversity and ecological function.”
 - Prohibiting development and forest conversion to tree plantations or agriculture.
 - Identifying and minimizing impacts to sensitive or under-protected geology or habitat types such as floodplains, stream buffers, wetlands and limestone areas.
 - Restricting to the maximum extent possible intensive recreational uses (ATV use or RV camping, for example) that can destroy micro-climates, impede wildlife habitat or movement, and alter site hydrology.

Stewardship Recommendations

All projects are strongly encouraged to meet the stewardship standards detailed below:

- Give priority to maintenance of forests exhibiting old growth characteristics and to protection of “hub” or “mother” trees.
- Recognize the need to accommodate adaptation to shifts in species composition.
- Seek coordination with and input on stewardship from organizations and communities that have long-term connections and knowledge of the land or project area.
- Address ecosystem resilience by:
 - Enhancing connectivity through activities such as road closures (where appropriate), reforestation, removal of invasive species, and minimization of activities that may inhibit wildlife movement (such as building roads, dams, stream crossings or other terrestrial or aquatic structures).
- Address forest ecosystem carbon by:
 - Defining forest ecosystem carbon to include above and below ground carbon stocks, including soil carbon.
 - Prescribing actions that will maintain or increase above and below ground carbon storage.
 - Addressing the risk of forest carbon loss from invasive species, insects, disease, wildfire, and other disturbances.

Conservation Easement Standards

In addition, CEs should meet the following standards:

- Recitals section should describe the property's value, if applicable, for:
 - carbon storage and sequestration,
 - aquatic and/or terrestrial biological resources and ecological communities,
 - sustaining climate resilience, including the presence of any unique geology types

- and the role of microclimates, and
 - local and regional connectivity for wildlife.
- Restrictions and Reserved Rights sections should establish enforceable and clear standards for permanent protection of the land's ecosystem resilience characteristics and forest ecosystem carbon, as applicable.
- Forestry must be governed by a management plan that:
 - specifies how forest management will be conducted to meet the CE's purposes and these Stewardship and CE Standards,
 - is long-term in nature (ex: covering a period of ten years),
 - is regularly updated, and
 - is approved by the CE holder.
- Include effective and practical monitoring and enforcement provisions.
- Include a process for regular, productive communication between the easement holder and deed holder and forest manager.
- Reference a Baseline Documentation Report that includes, along with the standard sections, a description of the project's forest carbon attributes, ecology and climate resilience characteristics.

Application Form

The following is provided for reference only. All applications must be filled out and submitted on Foundant.

Organizational Information

Type of Organization*

Choices

Land Trust
Other Non-Profit
Tribal Government
Municipality/State Gov't

Organization's Founding Date and Mission Statement*

Please tell us when your organization was founded and how land protection contributes to its mission statement.

Suggested Character Limit: 750

Tax Exemption*

Is your entity tax-exempt?

Choices

Yes
No

Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices - for Land Trusts Only

Adoption of these standards is an eligibility requirement for land trusts.

Please describe whether your organization has adopted LTA standards and practices.

Suggested Character Limit: 200

Land Experience—for non-land trust applicants only:

Please describe how your organization/entity is prepared to handle a land transaction and, if applicable, experience with land ownership and stewardship.

Suggested Character Limit: 500

Project Name*

Project name must be short and reflect the project's natural features, such as "Blue Mountain."

Please do not use the current deed holder names.

Suggested Character Limit: 100

Project Overview

Project Summary*

Provide a concise overview of the project that addresses the following:

1. Acquisition partners and roles.
2. Proposed transaction structure and timing.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. 1/2 page single-spaced)

Catalyst Grant Connection

If applicable, please describe how this proposal is connected to a previously funded Land and Climate Catalyst Planning Grant or other OSI-funded planning grant.

Suggested Character Limit: 500

Geographic Area*

Please select the state in which the majority of the Subject Property is located.

Project Location*

Provide names of town(s), county(ies), and state(s) your project is located within.

Suggested Character Limit: 150

Total Project Acreage*

Any acreage anticipated to be excluded from protection (through subdivision, the use of envelopes or exclusions, or any other means) should not be included in the acreage subtotals in this section.

Enter the total acreage of all Subject and Match Properties combined. If there are no Match Properties, this number is the same as Subject Property Acreage.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Subject Property: Total Acreage*

Subject Property includes properties for which you are requesting an OSI grant.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Subject Property: Acreage to be Acquired in Fee*

If there are no acres in fee, enter zero.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Subject Property: Acreage to be Placed Under Conservation Easement*

If there are no acres in conservation easement, enter zero.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Match Property: Total Acreage*

If there are no Match Properties, enter zero.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Match Property: Acreage to be Acquired in Fee*

If there are no acres in fee or no Match Properties, enter zero.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Match Property: Acreage to be Placed Under Conservation Easement*

If there are no acres in conservation easement or no Match Properties, enter zero.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Contribution to Functional Ecological Network

The Subject Property's contribution to the Functional Ecological Network (as defined in the Scoring Guidance) will be calculated by OSI using the shapefile uploaded with the application. The data is viewable for planning purposes on the ALP Grants tab of OSI's Appalachian Landscapes Mapping Resource Center.

Biodiversity Data Reflection

If the resources mapped within the Functional Ecological Network do not appear to represent your knowledge of the property fully, please provide any additional biodiversity information you'd like OSI to consider.

Suggested Character Limit: 500

Property Condition*

Please provide a concise overview of the condition of the Subject Property that addresses the following:

1. Topography and landforms (e.g. ridges, outcrops, cliffs, caves, and water features such as rivers, lakes, streams, and vernal pools).
2. Dominant vegetation types and description of their health and any known stressors, including the presence and impact of invasive plants or insects.
3. Documented occurrences of listed threatened or endangered species.
4. Past and current land management activities and uses and other relevant human impacts, including the presence and intended future use of any structures.

Suggested Character Limit: 3,500 characters (approx. 1 page single-spaced)

Property Context*

Please provide concise context for protection of the Subject Property that addresses the following:

1. Surrounding land cover and uses that affect the ecological health of the property.
2. Nearby protected lands and the property's contribution to the protected landscape.
3. Alignment with organizational, local, state, regional, or national biodiversity or climate plans or priorities.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Landscape Conservation

Applicants will have the option to upload a map under the "Supporting Project Materials" section of this application. Shapefile-level specificity is not required to address this question.

Is protection of the Subject Property part of an active plan or vision to create or enhance a forest core or corridor of conserved land? If yes, please briefly describe the plan (including overall goal, collaborators, timeframe, progress made to date) and attach a map showing the extent of the core or corridor.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Community Conservation

The Appalachian Landscapes Project seeks to protect lands that directly benefit the people and communities of the Appalachians. If you have documents or letters of support from the community for your project, please upload them below. These are not required.

Community Involvement

If applicable, please describe:

1. How you define community in the context of this project, and
2. how the community has been (or is intended to be) involved in the project, including a description of the specific community-level collaborators involved (e.g. individuals, groups, or organizations), and
3. the level of decision-making and input community-level collaborators have had in developing the conservation project or envisioning its long-term use.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Community Benefit

If applicable, please describe:

1. who benefits,
2. what community need(s) will be addressed and how they were identified, and
3. any long-term strategy to ensure that intended community benefits are realized and experienced by intended beneficiaries.
4. If applicable, describe whether and how the project engages a historically disadvantaged or other community facing disproportionate negative impacts of climate change.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Forest Carbon*

Forest Carbon information will be calculated by OSI using the shapefile provided with the application.

Changes in Forest Cover*

Please describe any known or expected changes in forest cover between 2020 (the last year that OSI's regional carbon data was collected) and when the Subject Property will be protected. Changes could include past harvesting, planned timber harvest and/or fire, insect, or disease damage.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Threat, Opportunity & Stewardship*

Development Potential and Threat*

Please describe the factors affecting the development potential of the Subject Property, including zoning or physical limitations of the site, local development pressure based on recent market trends, including the most likely land use/cover changes (if any) if the land were to be sold and not conserved (e.g. conversion to residential development, etc.), and whether the property has been the subject of recent offers or inquiries from prospective buyers.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Mineral Rights*

Please describe whether any mineral rights are fully attached to the property or are severed or subject to a lease. If any mineral rights are known to be outstanding, please provide details about the nature of ownership and date of severed mineral rights, likelihood and method of mineral extraction, any potential for re-attachment, and other risks posed to the project and surrounding properties. If the status of mineral rights is not known, please be advised that any funding will be conditioned, in part, on their status and associated risks.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Urgency*

Please describe any factors affecting this conservation opportunity, such as deed holder circumstances, funding availability, local or regional policy changes, or other time-limited factors.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Catalytic Potential

Is the protection of the Subject Property likely to catalyze additional land protection? If yes, please describe how and why.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Stewardship*

Please describe:

1. The long-term stewardship strategy and primary management goals for the Subject Property, including any plans to address known risks to forest health.
2. If forest management will be part of the stewardship strategy, how climate considerations are intended to be factored into management activities.
3. How long-term management is intended to remain aligned with the Stewardship and Conservation Easement Guidance for this grant, particularly if the applicant is not intended to be the long-term fee or easement holder for the Subject Property.
4. If multiple parties are likely to be involved in managing or stewarding the property, please describe:
 - a. Who will be responsible for stewardship and management activities and how their goals and experience are consistent with the goals of the grant, and
 - b. current stewardship capacity of responsible party(ies) and any factors expected to affect that capacity over time.

Suggested Character Limit: 5,000 (approx. 1.5 pages single-spaced)

Conservation Easement*

If a conservation easement will be used, please summarize the proposed purposes and anticipated reserved rights and restrictions.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Transaction Details

Transaction Status and Timing*

Please describe the status of the transaction for the Subject Property:

1. Status of negotiations and level of deed holder commitment to the transaction, including whether a purchase and sale agreement is in place.

2. Status and timing for completion of all due diligence items (e.g., appraisal, survey, title, environmental assessment, mortgage subordination for easement where applicable, etc.) and any relevant factors affecting successful completion.
3. Likelihood of securing all necessary funding commitments.
4. Any other actions required prior to closing, such as subdivision approval, building demolition, hazardous waste remediation, securing permits, or dam safety protection.
5. Likelihood of closing within 18 months if awarded funding. Please describe any known factors that might keep the project from closing in that timeframe.

Suggested Character Limit: 1,500 (approx. ½ page single-spaced)

Match*

If a grant is awarded, Match Property(ies) are subject to the same diligence standards as Subject Property(ies), including appraisal requirements.

Does this submission include Property(ies) to be used as Match?

Choices

Yes

No

Match Justification*

Match Property must close prior to the closing of the Subject Property but not more than two years before date of application.

If applicable, please provide a justification for including the parcel(s) as match:

1. Transaction structure (including deed holders, partners and respective roles) and timing.
2. Natural resource values.
3. Alignment with stewardship expectations.

Suggested Character Limit: 3,500 (approx. 1 page single-spaced)

Financial Information

Project Financials *

Download the Budget Summary Form. Once complete, upload below.

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Budget Narrative*

Referring to your Budget Summary Form, address each of the following:

1. Amount and sources of funds secured;
2. Plans for raising outstanding funds; and
3. Proposed use of OSI grant funds.

Suggested Character Limit: 3,500 (approx. 1 page single-spaced)

Total Grant Amount Requested*

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Total Eligible Project Cost*

Note: Please use the same number included in the budget form ("subtotal eligible project costs").

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Total Estimated Land Value of Subject Property*

Enter estimated Fair Market Value of Subject Property(ies) to be acquired in fee and/or conservation easement.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Total Estimated Land Value of Match Property*

Enter estimated Fair Market Value of Match Property(ies) to be acquired in fee and/or conservation easement.

If there are no match properties, enter zero.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Total Fair Market Value of Properties*

Enter the combined fair market value of all Subject and Match Properties.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Estimated Funding Sources - Federal*

Enter the total amount of expected and/or secured Federal Funding. If none, enter zero. Please use the same number entered in "Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)" table of Budget Summary Form.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Estimated Funding Sources - State*

Enter the total amount of expected and/or secured State Funding. If none, enter zero. Please use the same number entered in "Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)" table of Budget Summary Form.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Estimated Funding Sources – Local/Municipal Government*

Enter the total amount of expected and/or secured Local Funding. If none, enter zero. Please use the same number entered in "Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)" table of Budget Summary Form.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Estimated Funding Sources - Foundation*

Enter the total amount of expected and/or secured Foundation Funding. If none, enter zero. Please use the same number entered in "Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)" table of Budget Summary Form.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Estimated Funding Sources – Private (Aggregated Individual Gifts, excluding any bargain sale from deed holder)*

Enter the total amount of expected and/or secured Private Funding. If none, enter zero. Please use the same number entered in "Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)" table of Budget Summary Form.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Estimated Funding Sources – Deed holder Bargain Sale (Difference between fair market value and purchase price)*

Enter the total amount of expected and/or secured Deed Holder Bargain Sale. If none, enter zero. Please use the same number entered in “Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)” table of Budget Summary Form.

Suggested Character Limit: 20

Supporting Project Materials

Upload the following documents. Total proposal file size is limited to 40 MB. Keep file size to the size required for each upload. If more file space is required, please contact Yasemin Unal-Rodriguez (yunal-rodriquez@osiny.org).

Please reach out to OSI field staff if you need assistance with any of the supporting materials requested below, including shapefiles and maps.

Project Map*

Upload a map with an aerial photo as a base that shows where the project is located relative to other protected land. Include the Subject Property and Match Property (if applicable) and best available data of protected lands.

File Size Limit: 7 MB

Landscape Conservation Map

If this project is part of a landscape conservation plan (see question under *Contribution to Functional Ecological Network* above), upload a map showing the extent of the core or corridor area, best available data of protected lands, and any other feature(s) relevant to the landscape vision. The project area can be shown generally; property-level detail for all proposed parcels within the vision are not required. If you need assistance generating this map, please contact OSI field staff.

File Size Limit: 7 MB

Photo 1*

Upload two to three original, full-resolution digital photos of the project. Label photos with project name noting if it is Subject or Match Property.

File Size Limit: 10 MB

Photo 2*

File Size Limit: 10 MB

Photo 3

File Size Limit: 10 MB

Shapefiles*

Provide shapefiles for all project parcels in a compressed .zip folder. Subject and Match Properties should be separate. Note which parcels are Subject and which are Match. Name the folder with land trust and project name. For example: "(Your Land Trust) Burnt Mountain.zip". If land within the Subject Property is anticipated to be excluded from protection, applicant must provide shapefile(s) for excluded area(s) or submit a shapefile for the Subject Property that does

not include that acreage.

File Size Limit: 5 MB

Letters of Support

Letters of support related to the *Community Benefit* section of this application are welcome but not required. If necessary, please email letters to Yasemin Unal-Rodriguez (yunal-rodriguez@osiny.org) if the file size limit is not sufficient. General letters of support that do not pertain to the Community Benefits section are not necessary and will not be considered when evaluating projects.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

Budget Summary Form

The following form is provided for reference only. The Budget Summary Form is downloaded and uploaded for submission on Foundant.

 OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE		Appalachian Landscapes Project: Capital Grant Project Budget Summary Form	
Applicant:			
Project Name:			
Instructions:			
This template addresses <u>eligible</u> costs and funding sources in Part 1. <u>Ineligible</u> costs and funding sources are covered in Part 2 to enable applicants to reflect the full funding picture. Totals are automatically calculated in Part 3 and should be equal for each category.			
"Project" includes all subject and match properties.			
Add extra rows if needed.			
Part 1: ELIGIBLE COSTS & FUNDING SOURCES			
Eligible Project Costs		<i>If multiple properties are involved, please describe in separate rows and indicate whether it is a subject or match property. Please note that if awarded funding, land and easement values must be substantiated by appraisal.</i>	
Category	Amount	Notes	
Estimated land and/or conservation easement value			
Transaction costs (title work, appraisal, survey, stewardship plan, environmental assessment, etc.)			
Subtotal Eligible Project Costs:	\$0		
Estimated Sources of Funds (for eligible costs)			
Source	In-hand/Pledged	Anticipated	Total
Federal Government Grants			\$0
State Government Grants			\$0
County Government Grants			\$0
Municipal Grants			\$0
Individual Private Donations			\$0
Corporate Sponsorships			\$0
Foundation Grants			\$0
Deed Holder/Landowner Bargain Sale			\$0
Other			\$0
<i>OSI grant request</i>			\$0
Subtotal Estimated Funding for Eligible Costs:	\$0	\$0	\$0

Part 2: REMAINDER <u>INELIGIBLE</u> COSTS & FUNDING SOURCES			
<u>Ineligible</u> Project Costs (not eligible for OSI funding or to be considered as match)			
Category	Amount	Notes	
Personnel			
Travel			
Materials & Supplies			
Equipment			
Stewardship Endowment			
Land Management			
Other			
Subtotal Ineligible Project Costs:	\$0		
<u>Estimated Sources of Funds</u> (<u>not eligible</u> to be considered as match)			
Source	In-hand/Pledged	Anticipated	Total
Federal Government Grants			\$0
State Government Grants			\$0
County Government Grants			\$0
Municipal Grants			\$0
Individual Private Donations			\$0
Corporate Sponsorships			\$0
Foundation Grants			\$0
Other			\$0
Subtotal Estimated Funding for <u>Ineligible</u> Costs:	\$0	\$0	\$0

Part 3: TOTALS	
<i>Subtotal Eligible Project Costs:</i>	\$0
<i>Subtotal Estimated Funding for Eligible Costs:</i>	\$0
<i>Subtotal Ineligible Project Costs:</i>	\$0
<i>Subtotal Estimated Funding for Ineligible Costs:</i>	\$0
Total Costs	\$0
Total Estimated Funding Sources	\$0
<i>Totals should match.</i>	

Frequently Asked Questions

Application Process

Can an organization submit grant proposals for more than one project?

Yes. Applicants can apply for more than one project; however, grant resources are limited so applicants should submit only strong projects that will score well.

My project will not close within OSI's 18-month timeframe. Should I still apply?

We prefer to fund projects that are highly likely to close within 18 months of OSI's grant award notification. Projects likely to close on a slightly longer timeline and with a compelling reason to seek OSI funding may be considered. Please reach out to OSI field staff to discuss. Otherwise, we recommend waiting to apply. OSI anticipates offering future rounds of this funding.

When will I learn if my project has been funded?

OSI staff aim to inform Fall 2025 applicants if their project has been approved in February 2026.

Science and Data

What data should I use to evaluate my project?

Applicants are encouraged to use the [ALP Grants](#) tab within OSI's Appalachian Landscapes Mapping Resource Center to view the data that will inform grant-making decisions. These resources are intended to help applicants plan proposals and understand OSI's evaluation process. Applicants are also encouraged to review the Scoring Guidance (see [above](#)) and talk to OSI field staff about specific projects. When applying for funding, applicants will be required to submit a shapefile. OSI staff will upload the shapefile and handle all of the calculations referenced in the Scoring Guidance.

Project Eligibility

Is eligibility limited to the three zones shown on the map?

No. We have funding dedicated to each of these three zones, but applications from anywhere within the Appalachian Region service area are eligible. Please use the *ALP Grants* tab of the Appalachian Landscapes Mapping Resource Center to visualize your geographic eligibility.

If my project is not identified by the Functional Ecological Network, can I still apply?

Yes, but it may be unlikely to be selected for funding unless other attributes are outstanding. Please review the Scoring Guidance and reach out to OSI staff to discuss eligibility.

Is farmland eligible?

Not usually. In most cases land that is converted out of natural land cover would not meet

the goals of the grant. If most of the property is forested with a small portion managed for agriculture, or if there is a feasible restoration plan to natural habitat, please contact the OSI field staff for your region.

Are projects with active mining, severed or leased mineral rights eligible for funding?

Sometimes. Mineral extraction such as mining, quarrying, and drilling for oil and gas can damage the natural resources and climate values this grant program is seeking to protect. OSI prefers to support projects that protect all natural resources on a property including those on the surface and subsurface. OSI will review projects on a case-by-case basis to evaluate the risks to conservation values associated with mineral extraction. If your proposed project has severed mineral rights that you are unable to extinguish, please contact OSI field staff for your region to discuss project eligibility.

Project Structure & Funding

Is there a minimum or maximum grant size?

No. There is no minimum or maximum grant size, but awards are anticipated to average \$200K in the central and northern Appalachian regions. Larger awards are anticipated in the Cradle of Southern Appalachia of northeast Alabama, northwest Georgia, and southeast Tennessee.

Can a property or conservation easement acquired with OSI funds be transferred to a government entity?

Yes. The property must be permanently protected and managed by an entity whose mission is consistent with the goals of the grant program and with the resources and expertise to manage the land appropriately.

Can a property conserved by another land trust or government agency count as match?

Probably. The match property must meet the Fund criteria, stewardship requirements, due diligence standards and match requirements and the applicant must demonstrate that the match property is part of the same coordinated, conservation effort as the subject property. Grantees will need full access to due diligence documents for Match properties to be considered.

Can OSI grant funds be used for associated acquisition costs?

OSI gives strong preference to funding land protection directly. In cases where funding out-of-pocket acquisition costs, such as appraisals or title work, is critical to project success, we will consider that request.

What is the match requirement and does OSI ever waive it?

OSI gives preference to projects with a 4:1 or greater match but will consider projects that bring a lower match if 1) the applicant demonstrates other funding is not available, and 2)

the project has outstanding attributes: significant contribution to the Functional Ecological Network, high forest carbon stocking and sequestration potential, and/or community benefit attributes. For details, please see the match information on the website.

When will OSI disburse funds for approved projects?

OSI strongly prefers to wire funds to the project closing after reviewing and approving required organizational documents and project due diligence (as will be outlined in a checklist provided to awardees). In rare cases, OSI will reimburse grantees after closing with prior approval. OSI will only fund projects at the time of final conservation action, for instance when the property is acquired by a governmental agency, land trust, Tribal government, or encumbered with a conservation easement. If you have questions about funding timing, please reach out to the appropriate OSI field staff.

Stewardship and Management Expectations

Is active forest management allowed?

In general, yes. In many cases, forests can be actively managed and still meet the purposes of the Fund. However, the *primary purpose* of any forest management plan or activities must be maintenance of habitat for native species, and high carbon forests will be expected to maintain or enhance their carbon storage. OSI staff will review forest management plan language and conservation easement language (if applicable) to provide guidance. Please refer to OSI's Stewardship and Conservation Easement Guidance (see [above](#)).

What is the Fund's Stewardship Plan requirement?

All projects must meet the stewardship standards detailed in the Stewardship and Conservation Easement Guidance. Projects can meet these goals either through a CE and/or a stewardship plan that address how the land's use and stewardship will benefit climate resilience. While our preference is to be able to review your stewardship plan prior to closing, the grantee can develop the stewardship plan post-closing with OSI's prior consent. In some cases, where there is a strong CE for example, a stewardship plan may not be necessary.

Does the grant either require or prohibit enrollment in a carbon offset project?

No. OSI grantees (and landowners with whom they are working) may choose to enroll land in a carbon offset project, while also permanently protecting the property. While OSI allows grantees to enroll projects in the carbon market, all projects must meet the Stewardship and Conservation Easement Guidance at the time of grant disbursement. If your proposed project includes a carbon offset project, please reach out to the OSI staff for your region.