

# CPL Grant Program, application system evolution and proposed changes

## **FY2010 application system:**

- Short online entry form-
  - Contact info, amount requested, summary, map.
- Upload Word form with project information-
  - Asked applicants to address all criteria required.
  - Detailed site information required.
- Upload Word form with budget information.
- All information submitted on forms had to be manually typed into grant agreements and tracking database.
- Not all applications provided enough information to be scored on required criteria.
- Many applications were submitted incomplete or were not eligible for this program.
- Online form needed to be filled out in entirety, documents uploaded, map created all in one sitting- no saving feature.

## **Changes completed for Round 1, FY2011:**

- Entire application system online. Upload of external documents only-
  - Review and Approval, letters of support, partner letters of commitment, etc.
  - All data entered online can be downloaded directly into CPL database and can be access for other uses (including grants tracking, annual reporting, financial systems).
- Uses a login and password-
  - Applicant can create many applications under one login.
  - Allows applicant to save and come back to complete as many times as necessary.
- Could not continue through application without completing each section with required information-
  - Meant to cut down on incomplete or ineligible applications.
- Upgraded mapping server to allow for many users at once without locking up.

## **Changes completed for Round 2, FY2011:**

- Added Contact page to application system-
  - Allowed applicants to save application shortly after creating it with little data entry.
- Every tab can be “seen”, including submission page, before applicant has completed all required entries-
  - Allows applicant to see what is coming in the application and gather needed information to complete.
- Improved character counter for all text entries.

## **Changes proposed for FY2012:**

- Shortened application for grants under \$25,000-
  - Do not need to address specific scoring criteria.
  - Brings application system “mock-up” to 1.5 pages.
- Printing capability-
  - Allow applicants to print all pages of application anytime, during entry or after submission.
- Allow saving “as you go”-
  - Do not need to complete each section before being allowed to save. Can come back and finish or move on to next section at any time.

**Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program**  
Application system outline, over \$25,000 grant requests

<b><u>Project Name and Contact</u></b>	
Project Name:	Project Manager:
Organization Name:	Title:
Organization Type:	Phone:
Mailing Address:	Email:

<b><u>Project Summary</u></b>	
<u>Location</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Primary County:	Primary Activity:
Project Site Name:	Total Project Sites:
Primary Land Ownership:	Total Project Acres:
Secondary Ownership:	Primary Habitat Type:
	Secondary Habitat Type:

<b><u>Funding</u></b>	
Total Grant Amount Requested:	Additional Funding:
Total Match Amount Pledged:	Total Project Cost:

Summary: (Provide a clear, concise summary of what your proposal is about. Specifically provide information on any and all habitat benefits of the project, and how the budget is cost effective. Indicate if site is adjacent to protected land and if there are multiple benefits resulting from the project.) [300 words]

Problem Statement: (Describe the specific need or problem that is being addressed, why it is important, how it was identified, and what is affected by it. Include any facts or statistics that support it, and a pre-project description of the site(s).) [400 words]

Project Objectives: (Explain the expected results and benefits of the project. List specific, measurable results that you expect to accomplish.) [500 words]

Methods: (Describe in detail the activities that will take place in order to achieve the desired results and WHY you have chosen them. Include methods, materials, and who will do the work.) [500 words]

Project Timeline: (Timeframe/ Goal)

<b><u>Project Information</u></b> Answer the following questions in 200 words or less. Descriptions/ Definitions are available within the Criteria and Scoring Table, Page 17 CPL Program Manual or by clicking here.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe the local support for this project.</li><li>2. Describe the degree of collaboration for this project.</li><li>3. Describe any urgency associated with this project.</li><li>4. Discuss if there are multiple benefits resulting from your project, identifying those species, habitats, etc.</li><li>5. Discuss the habitat benefits resulting from your project.</li><li>6. Describe how your project is consistent with sound conservation science.</li><li>7. Indicate if your project is adjacent to protected lands, describing those lands (ownership, public access, etc.)</li><li>8. Discuss if there is full funding secured for this project and the sources of funding.</li></ol>

**Project Information, Continued**

9. Discuss if CPL Grant funds will supplement or supplant existing funding. Discuss how these CPL funds will impact your organization's current budget.
10. Describe public access at project site for hunting and fishing, identifying all open seasons.
11. Describe the sustainability of your project.
12. Discuss use of native vegetation (if applicable).
13. Discuss your budget and why it is cost effective.
14. Describe your organization's ability to successfully complete this work, including experience in the area of interest and ability to successfully implement the proposed project. Include descriptions of your most recent grant experience and if the expected outcomes were achieved.
15. Discuss how your project supports landscape level plans. Use additional sources for information if needed or available.
16. Discuss how your project supports species plans. Use additional sources for information if needed or available.
17. Discuss how your project conforms to the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan.
18. Discuss how your project conforms to the State Wildlife Action Plan (if applicable).

**Project Budget**

Budget Item	Grant amount	Match amount	Cash/ in-kind?	Details
Personnel				
Contracts				
Fee Acquisition with PILT				
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT				
Easement Acquisition				
Easement Stewardship				
Travel (in-state)				
Professional Services				
DNR Land Acquisition Cost				
Equipment/ Tools/ Supplies				
Additional Budget Items				

**Site Information**

**Land Manager**

Name:

Phone:

Organization:

Email:

Title:

**Site Information**

Land Ownership:

Activity:

Site Name:

Habitat:

Acres:

**Review and Approval**

Natural Heritage elements were found within project site (Y/N)

Discuss interaction and avoidance measures you will take to protect these elements.

Upload Project Review and Approval form(s)

**Additional Information (optional)**

Discuss any additional information about your project here that you feel is important and would like to be included for review. [100 words, upload up to 3 documents]

**Application Submission**

- I certify that I have read the Conservation Partners Legacy Grants Program Request for Proposal, Program Manual and other program documents, and have discussed this project with the appropriate public land manager, or private landowner and easement holder.
- I certify I am authorized to apply for and manage these grant and match funds, and the project work by the organization or agency listed below. I certify this organization to have the financial capability to compete this project and that it will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- I certify that all of the information contained in the application is correct as of the time of the submission. If anything should change, I will contact CPL Grant Staff immediately to make corrections.
- I certify that if funded I will give consideration to and make timely written contact to Minnesota Conservation Corps or its successor for consideration of possible use of their services to contract for restoration and enhancement services. I will provide CPL staff a copy of that written contact within 10 days after the execution of my grant, should I be awarded.
- I certify that I am aware at least one Project Review and Approval form is required for every application and I must submit all completed forms by uploading them into this application. I have attached one form as necessary for each different Land Manager within my project.

Signature:

Title:

Organization:

Date:

**SUBMIT**

A survey was sent to 131 Conservation Partner Legacy (CPL) grant applicants from the FY09 and the FY10 application cycle. They were asked a series of questions on how the online application process performed and if they were able to find appropriate answers. The response rate was 44% (57 respondents). DNR Office of Management and Budget provided the following review of the results.

#### – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

##### Grant Application Findings

- 1) Technical difficulties with website
  - Respondents were required to fill in sections in order (couldn't skip around) and had to complete an entire section before saving.
  - Respondents were unable to print the application.
  - Creating the digital maps and uploading photos was difficult.
  - Space provided for answering questions was not adequate.
- 2) Redundancy of information
- 3) Complexity of information required (State-wide plans, Match Requirements)
- 4) Did not re-apply due to 1) change in priority, 2) application cycle 3) belief of nonfundable project.
- 5) Suggestions to improve application cycle included 1) technical computer improvements, 2) make it easier/shorter/simpler, 3) decrease redundancy, 4) clarify exactly what information you are looking for, 5) simplify the criteria requiring adherence to various plans.

##### OMBS Grant Application Recommendations

- Simplify and remove redundancy wherever possible.
- Consider reverting back to the 2009 applicant process where reviewers ensured applicants meet these criteria *OR* develop a set of measures based on the plans applicants are required to adhere.
- Consider minimizing links to other sites from the program manual and website.

##### Technical Recommendations

The online application process was a major source of frustration to applicants. Decreasing technical issues can improve the application process dramatically.

- The online application should allow for applicants to save their work throughout the process, and skip around as they have appropriate information (and not have to do it all in order).
- Text boxes should include word counts and either automatically stop typing after 1000 words or warn them that they are over 1000 words and only the first 1000 words will be saved.
- Allow applicants to print the application.
- Revise map system so it is easier to use.

##### Notable Findings on CPL Staff

92% in 2009 and 96% in 2010 of those who contacted staff were able to get the answer they needed. For the most part, applicants were very pleased with staffs availability and ability to answer questions.

**Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program**  
Application system mock-up, \$25,000 and under grant requests

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Organization Name:	Title:
Organization Type:	Phone:
Mailing Address:	Email:

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Fee Acquisition w/o PILT			
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Travel (in-state)			
Professional Services			
DNR Land Acquisition Cost			
Equipment/ Tools/ Supplies			
Additional Budget Items			

**Site Information**

Land Manager

Name:

Phone:

Organization:

Email:

Title:

**Site Information**

Land Ownership:

Activity:

Site Name:

Habitat:

Acres:

Open to Public Hunting: (yes-all, yes-some, no)

Open to public fishing: (yes-all, yes-some, no)

**Review and Approval**

Natural Heritage elements were found within project site (Y/N)

Discuss interaction and avoidance measures you will take to protect these elements.

Upload Project Review and Approval form(s)

**Additional Information (optional)**

Discuss any additional information about your project here that you feel is important and would like to be included for review. [100 words, upload up to 3 documents]

**Application Submission**

Online certification that information and documents submitted are accurate and applicant has the authority to apply for and manage this grant should it be awarded to the organization.

Signature:

Organization:

Title:

Date: