

## County of Lancaster Request for ARPA Funding

**Organization:** Lancaster Conservancy

**Date:** 4/22/2022

**Submitted By:** Philip Wenger

**Authorized Signature:**



**Email Address** [REDACTED]

Please attach any supporting documentation for consideration. Submission should be in PDF Format.

**Project/Item Description**  
Lancaster County Conservancy is seeking to protect two critical water resource and recreation properties for public use: Speedwell Forge (90 acres) in Elizabeth Township and Conewago Creek (155 acres) in Mount Joy Township. These properties will protect lands directly adjacent to a County Park and a County Trail respectively as well as restore critical water resources, expand public open space, address the need for additional publicly accessible natural lands and support clean water initiatives all identified as Priority Areas to be funded.

**Estimated Cost – how cost was derived & provision of partner funds (who is providing, how much and show commitments).**

	Speedwell Forge Acquisition	Conewago Creek Acquisition
Total acquisition cost (purchase price, due diligence)	\$1,676,000	\$2,131,000
Requested (or received) from DCNR	\$838,000	\$425,000
<b>NEEDED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$838,000</b>	<b>\$1,706,000</b>
<b>Municipal Funds</b>		<b>(\$575,000)</b>
<b>Previous County Grant*</b>		<b>(\$150,000)</b>
<b>Private Funds Pledged</b>	<b>(\$250,000)</b>	<b>(\$250,000)</b>
<b>Requested ARPA funding</b>	<b>\$588,000</b>	<b>\$731,000</b>

\*County Grant Awarded in December 2021

**Which County ARPA Community-wide Benefit(s) does the project meet?**

These projects will increase natural area conservation for public use and clean and restore our waters which are the second listed eligible objectives set forth in the guidelines. Both preservation projects will support clean water initiatives and respectively they will protect natural areas adjacent to a County Parks and County Trail in two separate areas of the county, thereby expanding regional public access to an additional 240 acres.

- The Conewago Creek property is the planned location of a major joint MS4 Restoration project between Mount Joy and Londonderry Townships.
- The Speedwell Forge property includes a critical feeder stream to Speedwell Forge Lake that requires restoration work and the Conservancy is working with its partners at Fish and Boat to protect and restore this stream thereby protecting the high-water quality in the adjacent Speedwell Forge Lake.
- The Community benefits from a balance between public open space and developed lands. Economic development requires clean water and air, and employees want recreation areas close to home. Lancaster County has few remaining forested and natural lands and the demand for nature preserves and parks has grown dramatically since the start of Covid. These properties will add over 240 acres to the inventory of natural public lands at a very low cost to the County.

**Briefly explain how the project meets the County's guidelines.**

This request for funding is for 'acquisition only', a one-time investment. The Conservancy provides all the additional/ongoing operational funding to sustain these lands through a combination of private funds, an existing stewardship endowment, and public and private operational grants.

Neither of these projects duplicate existing governmental programs, projects or services, and will be completed by the end of 2022.

	<p>In addition to public funds invested we put considerable effort into stretching public dollars for public lands, with privately raised philanthropic dollars.</p> <p>When buying land at auction or from a realtor, due to funding constraints and the timing of public grants, there is an eminent threat of loss of ability to conserve the lands and thus speed is critical to the deal. The Conservancy Board had to act quickly to secure these projects, Speedwell at auction and Conewago through a realtor depending on borrowed funds to get to settlement. This request is for “last in funding” after DCNR and Municipal and Private Funds.</p>
<p><b>Why should this project be a priority and how will it help the County? Also, if this application is for more than one project, please identify each one, provide information and rank them in order of your priority.</b></p>	<p>These are singular acquisition projects that provide transformational services that benefit the tax payers of Lancaster County and promote priorities set forth in the Places 2040 plan. Both projects are adjacent to County operated lands and support the conservation and use of those lands. These projects should be a priority to Lancaster County as they provide additional publicly accessible lands adjacent to existing County lands with all the costs for care and stewardship of the lands being born by the Conservancy for the public benefit.</p> <p>In a nutshell, Lancaster County receives the credit for expanding open space, protecting natural areas and protecting waterways. Taxpayers receive all the benefits of free of charge/year-round lands for recreation, hunting and fishing with no long-term costs of stewarding lands.</p> <p>Both properties are critical, one protected land adjacent the County Conewago Recreation Trail and the other adjacent to the Speedwell County Park. If we must prioritize them:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Speedwell Forge would rank higher due to its forested state.</li> <li>2) Conewago Creek includes 60 acres of ag lands, and would be a lower priority.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Will this project require ongoing expense (maintenance, updates) or frequent replacement? Are expenses already being incurred, if so, can they be reduced through this project?</b></p>	<p>There are no ongoing expenses associated with either project, as the burden of stewarding these lands falls fully on the Conservancy as a private land trust with a public benefit. Our acquisition costs are very low, with in-house counsel, fundraising and other expenses not included in the acquisition costs. Acquisition costs do include surveys, title work and environmental assessments which are contracted out to others.</p>
<p><b>Project Timeline – start to finish, and when funding will be needed.</b></p>	<p>Due to the sellers’ timelines, these acquisitions took place at the end of 2021; therefore, both of these projects require immediate funding to support the acquisition costs that were already incurred. If awarded ARPA monies, these projects would both be considered complete by the end of 2022.</p> <p>We welcome an opportunity to honor the County for their investments and make a presentation at a County Commissioners meeting this Spring.</p>
<p><b>Are there other organizations a part of this project? If yes, please list them and their role, including funding. If not, explain why?</b></p>	<p>Yes- DCNR (see funding presented in table above), Mount Joy Township (who is actively working with us and Londonderry Township on a joint MS4 watershed restoration project on the Conewago property), PA Fish and Boat Commission (who encouraged us to protect the water resources of Speedwell Lake), and the Lancaster County Department of Parks and Recreation who have provided continued support, guidance, and encouragement. Private Funders include the Gamber Family (Dutch Gold Honey), The Clark Associates Foundation and others who fund the endowment to care for these lands.</p>

<b>ARPA Committee Comments</b>	
<b>ARPA Committee Recommendation</b>	
<b>Funding Amount Recommended</b> (if recommended for approval)	\$