

The Wild East Action Fund

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), on behalf of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP), is accepting proposals for land protection and organizational capacity building grants intended to support conservation work within the Wild East landscape, of which the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) is the backbone and heart. The Wild East Action Fund will provide funding to qualified organizations working to advance conservation of the natural, ecological, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational and community values of the A.T. and its surrounding lands.

The Action Fund Grants Program is administered by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Financial support is provided by The Volgenau Foundation.

About the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership

The ATLP works to conserve and connect the wild, scenic and cultural wonders of the Appalachian Trail and its surrounding landscape. The ATLP is a coalition of federal, state and local government agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, and academic institutions. More information is available at www.at-landscape.org.

About the Wild East Action Fund

The Wild East Action Fund supports the following goals:

- Accelerating the pace and scale of A.T. landscape conservation
- Enhancing capacity for strategic and targeted conservation activities throughout the A.T. landscape
- Strengthen collaboration among partners across the A.T. landscape
- Building community support and engagement in sustaining the A.T. landscape over time, elevating awareness of the A.T. landscape and the value and urgency regarding its protection

The Action Fund Grants Program offers two potential funding opportunities: capital grants for land protection projects and grants for organizational capacity building.

Land protection projects

Capital grants for land protection will be awarded to projects that:

- Contribute to the permanent protection and stewardship of the exceptional values of the A.T. landscape, including (but not limited to) the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational and community values
- Attract additional revenue sources to leverage the Action Fund Grants

Funding may be used to acquire permanent conservation easements and/or fee land interests. Funding may also be used to cover transactional costs, including cost of appraisals, surveys, titles, environmental assessments and legal costs. Grant funds may not be used for organizational overhead and/or administration.

Preference will be given to projects that have been identified as a high priority in a local and/or regional conservation plan or to projects located within [climate-resilient lands](#).

Organizational capacity building

Grants for capacity building will be awarded to projects that will:

- Build capacity to implement new or existing strategic conservation plans
- Develop local or regional strategic conservation plans within the A.T. landscape
- Build capacity to sustain and steward the resources that define the A.T. landscape
- Increase public awareness of the resources that define the A.T. landscape

Preference will be given to projects that incorporate measurable outcomes that will assess the organization's success in achieving its objectives and deliverables; in addition, preference will be given to projects that also develop systems or practices that build organizational capacity and effectiveness and are likely to be sustained beyond the grant period.

Project Evaluation

Projects for either funding opportunity should be concrete, defined and should have clear objectives, outcomes and deliverables. Competitive projects demonstrate broad community benefit, have a high likelihood of success and can be accomplished within the slated grant period. Projects with matching funding that is firmly secured will rank higher than projects with undetermined or unlikely funding.

Land protection projects will specifically be evaluated for:

- The threat and/or conservation opportunity presented

- The extent of significant natural habitat, cultural and/or historic sites, connections to existing conserved lands and/or community lands important to the A.T. landscape
- The likelihood of the project increasing the pace of land conservation in the organization's service area
- The emphasis on the A.T. landscape as a corridor of connectivity
- The ability of the project to catalyze other projects that will advance protection within A. T. Landscape Focus Areas
- Evidence of a sound stewardship plan and funding

Preference will be given to collaborative and multi-value projects between public and private sector entities or projects that connect existing conservation lands.

Organizational capacity building projects will be evaluated for:

- Sufficient organizational capacity and a commitment to complete the proposed activities
- Sound training and professional development opportunities for new and/or expanded staff
- The ability to match and leverage other funding sources

Projects should enable partnership, collaboration or community initiatives involving other conservation partners within the A.T. landscape that catalyzes local or regional open space protection; builds community support for and involvement in land conservation; advances an innovative model for collaboration, outreach, constituency-building, and/or community engagement; and advances climate smart initiatives, including efforts to integrate resilience (such as The Nature Conservancy [resiliency data](#)) and climate change science into conservation planning.

Organization Eligibility

Organizations with a [mission](#) that aligns with that of the A.T. Landscape Partnership are eligible for the Wild East Action Fund. Organizations should broadly serve the needs of a geographic area within the A.T. landscape. Qualified conservation organizations, including 501(C)3 nonprofits and public agencies, are eligible for both funding opportunities within the Wild East Action Fund.

Award Information

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy expects to grant up to \$500,000 to **qualified land protection projects** in the first year. There is no minimum limit on land protection project grant size. Projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

For **organizational capacity building grants**, it is anticipated that single-year grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 will be awarded. Multi-year grants not exceeding three years may be considered. Up to \$100,000 is available for qualified projects.

Both funding opportunities require a cash or in-kind match. Matches will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may depend on the circumstances of the organization. Matches should be secure, well explained and verifiable.

Application Process

To apply, please use [the application template](#) to provide the following:

- Project narrative not to exceed two pages that provides a project overview, goals and outcomes, and partner organizations and/or agencies
- Project budget that details allowable expenses, total project costs, sources of match and requested grant amount
- Location and project maps
- A letter of nonprofit status from the IRS, if appropriate

For more information or to submit a Letter of Interest, contact:

Anne Baker, Landscape Partnership Manager
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
304.535.6331 ext. 114
abaker@appalachiantrail.org

Proposals must be submitted by Monday, October 28. A small committee representing the A.T. Landscape Partnership will review and approve proposals.



A.T. Landscape Partnership Wild East Action Fund Application

For project guidelines, please see the Wild East Action Fund criteria.

How to apply: Email your completed form as an attachment to abaker@appalachiantrail.org. In addition to the below information, please include a detailed project proposal, applicable maps and any other relevant materials.

Applicant Information

Organization name:	
Organization website:	
Organization mailing address:	
Contact person:	
Contact phone:	
Contact email:	

Project Information

Project title:	
Project location:	
Please indicate the funding opportunity you are applying for (land protection, organizational capacity building, or both):	
Amount requested:	
Brief overview of project proposal:	



Project timeline (expected start and end date):	
Approximate number of volunteers and/or staff to be involved:	

Budget

Please complete the following financial statement for the grant application. Indicate the dollar amount of each item for which grant funds are being requested and the dollar amount of all items being used as a match. Volunteer labor can be valued at [\\$25.43 per hour](#).

Item	Amount Requested
Salary	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Travel	
Training	
Professional contracts	
Other	
Total amount:	

Match Source	Amount	Secured or Pending
Cash		
Materials		
Paid labor		
Volunteer labor (\$25.43 per hour)		
Other		
Total match:		

Total project value:	
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Attachments

In addition to the above information, please provide a detailed project narrative not to exceed 2 pages that includes a project overview, goals and outcomes, and partner organizations and/or



agencies. As described in the application guidelines, this narrative should also include how your organization is working to advance conservation of the unique values of the Wild East landscape, of which the A.T. is the backbone and heart.

If you are applying for a capital grant for land protection, you may also include information on how your project will contribute to the permanent protection and stewardship of the values of the A.T. and the Wild East.

Other relevant materials include:

- Maps of organizational focus areas or of land acquisition projects
- A list of partners involved in the proposed project