

May 2, 2011

Dear Farmland/Open Space Applicant:

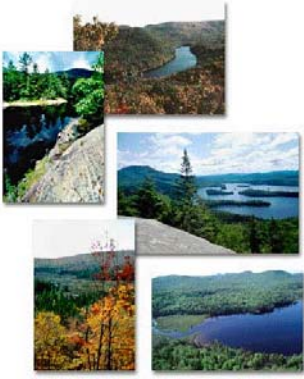
Attached is a copy of Saratoga County's Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program criteria and application forms.

The Saratoga County Planning Staff are available to answer any questions you may have on the program or its subdivision requirements at anytime during the grant process.

Please keep in mind that additional information will be required should your application for grant funds be approved. This would include the following:

- Purchase Agreement
- County Voucher
- Resolution of Legislative Board
- Appraisal
- Title Insurance
- Subordination Agreements (if applicable)
- Conservation Easement or Deed Covenant (The town village city or land trust shall hold the property for open space, recreation or park purposes in perpetuity.)
- Monitoring Plan
- Environmental Audit
- Final Budget

It is essential that prior to submission you obtain the approval of your Town, Village or City Legislative Board.



Saratoga County Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program

In 2011 the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors allocated \$500,000 to fund a matching grant program to purchase development rights or a fee interest in productive agricultural lands and open space land whose preservation is deemed to be of significant public benefit.

For Open Space acquisition projects, grants up to 50% of an eligible project's cost or \$100,000 (whichever is less) shall be made directly to Saratoga County Municipalities. Grants of up to \$100,000 may be awarded with the understanding that any request for funding in excess of \$50,000 must show special circumstances as determined by the Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee.

For Farmland Protection grants where development rights are being purchased and a conservation easement is being placed on the farm in perpetuity, there is no grant cap. The county grant can cover up to 90% of the total project cost. The remaining 10% can be a landowner donation, bargain sale or another entity contributing the match for the project. Grant applicants may not request in excess of 5% of the total appraised value of the project for the cost of appraisals, surveys, legal fees and other ancillary costs associated with the completion of the project. Landowners, Not for profit Land Trusts and municipalities are eligible applicants but must all apply first to the municipality in which the land is located and provide a resolution of support for the project in addition to the grant application. Open Space acquisition grants will be contingent on the applicant's demonstration of the commitment of matching funds from Federal, State and/or Local Funding Programs and private contributions. Private contributions may be in the form of an equity participation or "bargain sale". Intermunicipal applications for open space preservation that includes property crossing municipal boundaries, may apply for funding up to \$100,000 cap per town as long as each municipality supports the proposed project through a resolution included in the grant application. An example of an eligible project would be a land acquisition application along the Kayaderosseras Creek that crosses municipal boundaries.

Eligible Costs: Grant funds not to exceed 10% of the total approved county grant may be used towards the cost of appraisals, surveys, legal fees and other ancillary costs associated with the completion of the project.

Eligible Local Share: Local funds expended within 12 months of the submission of that application may be accepted as the required local match. Local funds utilized to purchase the Development Rights or a fee interest in land may allocate those expenditures towards the required local match for a second parcel if the applicant can demonstrate a clear linkage between the prior acquisition and the application submitted to the county.

Eligible Farmland /Open Space:

To determine eligibility for funding under the County Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program, agricultural land will be evaluated based on criteria adopted by the advisory committee (See attachment 1). Eligible open space may include sensitive environmental and natural resource such as wetlands, floodplains and stream corridors and other lands which serve a vital public interest such as watershed *protection* and wildlife habitat. Other lands by their character and location may be considered a fundamental element of a community's character worthy of preservation. Eligible open spaces may also include lands that offer a unique

recreation opportunity to a community such as a nature trail, bikeway or public access to a waterway or waterbody. The County Green Infrastructure Plan provides a comprehensive overview of unique open space resources that would be eligible for county funding and would receive a higher project ranking during review of grant applications. Lands identified in a local comprehensive plans or in an open space inventory would also be eligible.

Procedures

Applications (Attachment 3 and 3a forms) may be submitted to Saratoga County Planning 50 West High Street Ballston Spa, NY 12020 between May 2, 2011 and closes on July 29, 2011.

Following the close of the application period, applications shall be reviewed and prioritized by the County's Farmland/Open Space Preservation Advisory Committee consisting of the following members appointed by the Board of Supervisors Chairman.

Philip Barrett, Supervisor, Town of Clifton Park , Chairman
Joseph Grasso, Town of Charlton
Arthur Johnson, Supervisor, Town of Wilton
Tom L. Lewis, Saratoga County Planning Board, Chairman
Willard Peck, Supervisor, Town of Northumberland
Paul Sausville, Supervisor, Town of Malta

Upon completion of its review, the Advisory committee will vote on the applications and forward its recommendations to the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Law and Finance Committee.

Grant awards shall be made by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.

Post Award: Prior to the release of grant funds the project applicant shall submit an appraisal of the property certifying the value of the development rights to be purchased with grant funds or the value of the land to be purchased in fee. Successful applicants will also be required to submit copies of all conservation easements and/or deeds prepared in conjunction with the awarded project. An environmental audit may be required if the proposed property's environmental integrity has the possibility of being compromised through a previous use or uses in the vicinity.

Attachment 1

Saratoga County Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program

Ranking Criteria: Agricultural lands

Agricultural Soils Evaluation (0 - 20 points)

Projects will be given priority that will preserve viable agricultural land. Using the Agriculture & Markets soil group worksheet, rate the soils for agricultural productivity. Ranges of scores will be assigned a value from 1 (lowest) to 15 (highest).

Percent of Property in Cropland (0 - 5 points)

A higher value is given to property that has a high percentage of ready-to farmland as opposed to woods or lands that would require greater investment to prepare for farming.

Locational Criteria (0 - 30 points)

Considerations include:

Proximity to other easements: Concentrating limited PDR funds toward clusters of permanently protected farmland might help to maximize the long-term benefits of this substantial public investment. Instead of islands of protected parcels which may someday be surrounded by residential or commercial development, therefore limiting their productivity as farmland, focusing PDR efforts has the potential to create strong areas of agricultural activity for many years into the future. (0 - 5 points).

Proximity to other active farmland: Farmland in close proximity is much easier to farm and is more economically viable than separated parcels. It is important to focus limited PDR funds in concentrated areas of active farmland. (0 - 10 points).

Property is in an Agricultural District: Farmers may become part of an agricultural district either at its creation or during the review process that occurs every eight years. Agricultural districts provide incentives for farmers from unwanted or unwarranted interference with the business of farming. Location in an agricultural district is a strong indication of agricultural viability and intent to remain in farming as well as community support. Priority is given to property located in an agricultural district. (0 or 5 points).

Scenic, Historic or Environmental Significance: Farms which are part of a scenic vista or have historic significance are important components of a community's character and increase the attractiveness of the area to residents and tourists alike. Environmental Significant lands that serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource-containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics. Proximity to significant natural areas, public lands, parks, or preserved lands will be considered. Stewardship Of Land: The implementation of soil erosion control, sedimentation control, nutrient management and other practices demonstrating good stewardship of the tract enhances the ability of the subject farm to sustain long-term soil productivity.(0-15 points)

Other Locational Criteria

Threat of conversion to non-farm use: (0 - 20 points)

Lands that are located in areas facing significant development pressure. Farmland that is especially valuable but vulnerable due to existing development pressure (proximity to residential and commercial development), will be given special consideration. Identification of agriculture in the local

comprehensive plan and zoning regulations, and site characteristics that serve as buffers would be important considerations in these cases.

Farm Succession (0 – 5 points)

What is the likelihood that the property will continue in farming in the future? How will this project aid in farm succession.

Consistency with Municipal Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Plan, County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan and County Green Infrastructure Plan (0 - 10 points)

Intermunicipal benefits will receive added consideration.

Leverage (0 - 5 points)

An efficiency measure, expressed as acres preserved per dollar, projects will be considered for their potential to preserve as much viable agricultural land as possible using limited funds.

Attachment 1a

Saratoga County Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program

Ranking Criteria: Open Space Lands

Priority Open Space

Passive recreation facilities such as nature trails, access to waterways, waterbodies stream corridor protection (stream classes C(t) or higher), watershed protection and sensitive environmental areas ie. habitat. Public access may receive additional consideration.

Locational Criteria (0-45 points)

Considerations include:

- ◆ **Proximity to other easements:** Lands held by the public or a land trust concentrating limited PDR funds toward clusters of permanently protected farmland/open space and/or help to maximize the long-term benefits of this substantial public investment. Instead of islands of protected parcels which may someday be surrounded by residential or commercial development, therefore limiting their value as open space by focusing preservation efforts, could potentially create strong areas of agriculture/open space for many years into the future. (0 - 10 points).
- ◆ **Scenic, Historic or Environmental Significance:** Open Space lands that are part of a scenic vista or have historic significance are important components of a community's character and increase the attractiveness of the area to residents and tourists alike. Environmentally significant lands that serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource-containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics.(0-20 points)
- ◆ Proximity to Active Ag lands(0-10 points)
- ◆ Proximity to State and National Parklands(0-5 points)

Development Pressure: (0 - 20 points)

Lands that at a high risk for development that entails a high risk for the loss of potential public access and use of significant open space. Open Space that is especially valuable but vulnerable due to existing development pressure (proximity to residential and commercial development), will be given special consideration.

Consistency with Local Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Plan, Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan and/or County Green Infrastructure Plan_(0 - 20 points)

Identification of the need to preserve open space in the local comprehensive plan and zoning regulations, and site characteristics that serve as buffers would be important considerations in these cases.

Intermunicipal benefits will receive added consideration

Stewardship applications that demonstrate a record of stewardship of the land or contain a stewardship plan. Stewardship is the active management of land with the intent to preserve and enhance its natural characteristics and functionality over time. (0-5 points)

Leverage An efficiency measure, expressed as acres preserved per dollar, projects will be considered for their potential to preserve as much open space as possible using limited funds, bargain sale or other grant funds state, federal or local. (0 – 10 points)



Attachment 3
Agricultural Project Information

Applicant Information:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Landowner Information:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Project Contact:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Project Description:

Project Name _____

Street Address _____

Tax map parcel numbers(s) _____ Property Acreage ____

List any other land holdings in the immediate vicinity _____

Present use of acres broken into categories (# crops, # livestock, #woods, other)

Are there any wetlands located on property? _____ approximate wetland size _____

How many acres of prime or statewide important soils are on the property?

Is the property within an Agricultural District? _____

Does your property contain any lands identified in a local open space plan or municipal comprehensive plan that are considered to be sensitive and should be protected? Explain how your project is supported by the local plan.

Please describe the farm including years of operation, ownership, type and size of operation, any awards associated with the farm and any future plans for expansion and continuation of the farm operation. Would this project contribute to farm succession.

What is the subject property's proximity to protected farmland, and/or other lands subject to a conservation easements lands or natural resources (such as rivers, streams, national parklands, municipal parkland)? Please list the names of any of these resources.

What person, organization, or agency will be responsible for maintaining the property and monitoring an easement on the property? Please indicate involved parties expected to participate.

Please provide a budget summary for the project to include: Total project cost, total amount of county funds requested, other funds applied for or committed, and the total estimated value of development rights to be preserved.

Total Project Cost: \$

Total County Funding requested \$

Development Value(farmprojects using pdr)/acre \$

Total estimated cost of appriasals, survey and ancillary items. Please provide a breakdown of individual costs for each item. \$

Total dollar amount expected from oustide agencies:

Organization	Amount
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\$

\$

\$

\$

Attachment 3a



Open Space Acquisition Information

Applicant Information:

Name(property owner) _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Landowner Information:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Project Contact:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Project Description:

Project Name _____

Street Address/Location _____

Tax map parcel numbers(s) _____ Property Acreage ____

Is this open space resource included in the County's Green Infrastructure Plan, 2006?

Yes No

List any other land holdings in the immediate vicinity _____

Present use of the property and the public benefit _____

Describe the project's ability to be linked to an existing recreational/open space facility or land.

What land trusts/conservation groups have been contacted regarding this property and its preservation?

Explain _____

Is this open space parcel specifically mentioned in the municipality's Comprehensive or Open Space Plans? Please attach a copy of the relevant section and attach it to the application. _____

Does this property have a scenic vista or have historic significance important to the community's character? Please List _____

Does the property have lands that serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource-containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics such as wetlands, streams, woodlands, rare or endangered species habitat? _____

Please provide a budget summary for the project to include: Total project cost, total amount of county funds requested, other funds applied for or committed to the project by what entity/organization, and the total estimated value of development rights to be preserved.

Total Project Cost: \$

Total County Funding requested \$

Development Value(farmprojects using pdr)/acre \$

Total estimated cost of appriasals, survey and ancillary items. Please provide a breakdown of individual costs for each item. \$

Total dollar amount expected from outside agencies:

Organization	Amount
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$

Additional Project Information

- ✓ Please attach tax parcel map clearly showing the subject parcel of land and any other protected or significant pieces of land in close proximity to the site.
- ✓ Please attach the relevant section of the Open Space Plan/Comprehensive Plan that supports protecting open space/ag lands and any reference to the subject parcels and its uniqueness.
- ✓ A letter of support from the landowner acknowledging their property's participation in this preservation program.

Please submit **10 copies of the application and materials to:**

Jaime L. O'Neill, Planner
Saratoga County Planning Department
50 West High Street
Ballston Spa, NY 12020
518-884-4705 518-884-4780(fax)

