

Sugar Hill Conservation Commission
Selection Criteria and Checklists for Conservation Funds Distribution
Ver. 1 April 20, 2005

PURPOSE

For the distribution of Conservation Funds, the Sugar Hill Conservation Commission has adopted the following selection criteria and checklists. Sugar Hill residents may request a grant from the SHCC Conservation Fund for projects to which these criteria and checklists apply by contacting the Sugar Hill selectmen with your written proposal. It will be reviewed by the SHCC, which meets monthly. The SHCC will contact applicants for additional information as needed.

PURPOSE CHECKLIST

To qualify for a donation from the Sugar Hill Conservation Fund, a land/water conservation project property must meet all of the following criteria:

- The property is located in the town of Sugar Hill. If the property is located partially in another town, the Sugar Hill Conservation commission will consider a donation proportionate to the amount of land in Sugar Hill.
- The property meets at least one of the following purposes:
 - o Protects the town's rural character and natural resources
 - o Provides outdoor recreation
 - o Permanent protection for the parcel is assured
- The property meets one or more goals identified in the Sugar Hill Master Plan and encourages careful stewardship of land and water resources
- The owner of the property is willing to participate in the transaction

PUBLIC BENEFIT CHECKLIST

To qualify for a donation, a property must meet one or more of the following criteria:

Drinking Water Resources

Contains aquifer recharge areas, wellhead areas, surface waters, watersheds or other lands necessary for the protection of drinking water supplies and water resources.

Water Resources

Contains rivers, riparian corridors, salt marsh, estuary, floodplains, prime wetlands, or other water bodies.

Linkages and Buffers

Buffers, expands, or adds to other conservation value (e.g., wildlife corridors, recreational trail linkages) to existing conservation land.

Outdoor Recreation

Is suitable for one or more recreational activities and enjoying nature.

Public Access

Property may be made available for public access.

Provides public access to waterways for fishing, swimming or low impact boating.

Scenic Views

Protects spots from which to observe scenic views.

Provides scenic views that can be seen from public locations.

Wildlife Habitat

Contains significant wildlife habitat, rare plants or animals, or exlempary natural plant communities.

Working Landscape (Rural Character)

Is actively and well managed for agriculture.

Is actively and well managed for forestry.

Has soils with important agricultural value (regardless of present use).

Large Blocks of Land

Contributes to the formation or expansion of large blocks of protected land (which may be owned by single or multiple land owners).

Other

Provides other significant public conservation benefit in the best interest of the town.

OTHER CRITERIA

In addition to having resource values with public benefit, these additional criteria may affect the town's interest in a given property and its priority for acquisition:

Donation Opportunities

The landowner is interested in donation, bargain sale, or other scenario that leverages town funds.

Funding Leverage

The project has high probability for additional funding from sources other than the town Conservation Fund.

Potential for Conversion

The property has potential for immediate change out of open space.

FEASIBILITY CHECKLIST

Properties must also meet the following feasibility criteria:

- The property is large enough to be significant for its purpose.
- The property contains no hazardous waste or other contaminants, or clean up of any such materials can be accomplished at a reasonable cost.
- The property is not infested with undesirable and/or invasive species that could interfere with the primary reason for protecting the property.
- There are no unusual or difficult management considerations associated with this property
- Adjacent properties are not being, and are not likely to be, developed in a manner that would significantly diminish the conservation or public values of the property.
- The landowner does not insist on provisions that would seriously diminish the property's primary conservation or public values or the easement holder's ability to enforce an easement and/or manage the land.
- There are no ethical or image problems associated with the project.
- If the property is part of a development proposal, the overall project must have a beneficial impact on conservation resources.
- Clear title to the property can be acquired in a timely fashion.
- This project is otherwise in the best interest of the town.

These criteria are subject to change. Please check with the Sugar Hill Conservation Commission for the most current version of the criteria.