

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC)
Administrative Policy/Grant Guidelines

SUBJECT: Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer (Conservation Planning and PNDI Environmental Review)

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/5/09

REVISED DATE: 9/30/2015, 9/23/2016

BACKGROUND: The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) gathers and provides information on the location and status of important ecological resources in the Commonwealth. PNHP helps guide conservation work and land-use planning, ensuring the maximum conservation benefit with the minimum cost. The Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer is a tool deployed by PNHP which includes both a conservation planning and PNDI environmental review component. This tool provides greater access to conservation information, leading to better, more informed planning and reduced project impacts.

- The Conservation Planning component provides users with the ability to view multiple layers of conservation information for carrying out responsible development and stewardship of land and water resources.
- The PNDI environmental review component allows registered users to explore areas for potential impacts to rare, threatened and endangered species habitats.

Although most parts of the PA Conservation Explorer will be free of charge, a \$40 fee per PNDI receipt will be charged to certain users.

For technical assistance contact [Nathan Dewar](mailto:Nathan.Dewar@dcnr.pa.gov) at 717-214-7512 or email RA-HERITAGEGIS@state.pa.us. To apply for an exemption from payment visit: <https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov/contact-us>, click "Apply for exemption".

POLICY: In an effort to create and maintain sustainable sites and to protect the Commonwealth's natural resources of special concern, DCNR requires each C2P2 grant application submitted to the Department include a copy of the Conservation Planning Report **or** the PNDI Environmental Review Receipt following the guidelines below.

Municipal applicants are required to complete the PNDI environmental review component; with the exception of certain Planning projects including; Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plans (CRPP), County and Municipal Greenway and Open Space Network Plans, Feasibility Studies involving rehabilitation of an existing site, and Rivers Conservation Plans;

PRT equipment purchase; and certain Partnership projects that do not include on the ground impacts.

Non-profit and land trust applicants are encouraged to complete the PNDI environmental review component; however, the Conservation Planning component will be accepted in most cases. Please note: applications for development projects regardless of an applicant's status will require the PNDI environmental review.

The Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer can be accessed at the following website: www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us. The results reported on the Conservation Planning Report or the PNDI Environmental Review Receipt will help determine if the activities proposed for the project site have the potential to conflict with natural resources of special concern. These resources, which include plant and animal species, exemplary natural communities and ecosystems, and outstanding geologic features, will be protected in accordance with applicable state/federal laws and regulations.

It is important to obtain a Conservation Planning Report or PNDI Environmental Review Receipt early to avoid any complications that may cause the grantee to miss the application submission deadline. Applicants need only submit a copy of the Conservation Planning Report or the PNDI Environmental Review Receipt with the grant application. In some cases, if a PNDI Environmental Review Receipt was obtained, it will indicate a need for follow-up action and/or the need to obtain clearance letters from jurisdictional agencies. Issues do not need to be resolved at the time of application.

This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.