

PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVATION CORPS
Project Proposal (January 2009)

IMPORTANT

Proposal must be typewritten, using no smaller than a 10-point typeface.
Answers must be confined to the space provided.

CENTRE REGIONAL RECREATION AUTHORITY (CRRA), State College, PA 16801

Applying Agency

1. Project description. List the work to be accomplished, in the order in which it is to be done. Be as specific and comprehensive as possible. Tell us exactly where each phase of the project will occur, and how long each is expected to take (more space on next page).

The intent of this project will be to continue the improvements to the facilities at:

- (A.) Millbrook Marsh Nature Center*
- (B.) Specified municipal parks, pools and*
- (C.) The lands (& trails) of the Mt. Nittany Conservancy.*

The tasks will restore or improve the quality of the resource, provide direct public benefits, and include varied and substantial job skills and educational opportunities. During this 8th year of the PCC partnership, it is proposed that the projects continue to include a focus on the municipal park areas - as a result of continued requests from the 5 municipalities and the progress-to-date at the nature center and the park sites - with a 4th year emphasis on the park-like lands of nearby Mt. Nittany.

NOTE: *When necessary, a 12-passenger van from CRPR can be made available for use by the PCC crew.*

The project numbers below are consistent across this document.

		Duration (man-hours)
A. At Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, 614 Puddintown Road, College Twp.:		
<i>This site will continue to serve as the PCC Crew Headquarters & Office.</i>		
1.	Continue Trail and boardwalk enhancements including benches, signs, surfacing and side extensions.	800 mh
2.	Landscaping, plantings for the parking area, and site improvements for new education building.	500 mh
3.	Habitat restorations, invasive plant removals, elm removals and replanting	600 mh
4.	Barn siding and bridge pressure washing and staining	<u>600 mh</u>
Nature Center Subtotal		2,500 mh
B. At other municipal park sites and pools within 8 miles of the nature center:		
5.	Playground safety improvements and installations Tudek, Holmes Foster, Country Place, Oakwood, Overlook Heights, Sunset, Autumnwood, Fasick, East Fairmount, and Dalevue.	2,000 mh
6.	Renovate amphitheater at Orchard Park	400 mh
7.	Refurbish sledding slope warming area at Slab Cabin Park	100 mh
8.	Install Soft Fall rubber tiles at Central Parklet climbing wall	100 mh
9.	“CRPR Remembrance Tree” planting and maintenance and Memorial Bench installations.	120 mh
10.	Athletic field renovations at Circleville, High Point, Radio Park, Spring Creek, Fairbrook, Fasick, Green Hollow, Houserville, and Suburban parks.	400 mh
11.	Continue habitat restorations and invasive removals at Walnut Springs, Thompson Woods Preserve and Stan Yoder Preserve.	100 mh
12.	Remove diseased elms and plant replacements at Nittany View, Blue Spring, Spring Creek and Slab Cabin parks.	200 mh
13.	Continue clearing central brush area at Fogleman Fields then landscape and install seating.	150 mh
14.	Trail building, sign installation and parking lot improvements at Thompson Woods Preserve and Walnut Springs.	300 mh
15.	Continue Park Forest Pool “Park in a Park” development (trails, pavilions, landscaping)	<u>400 mh</u>
Parks Subtotal		4,270 mh
C. At Mt. Nittany Conservancy lands (1 mile from the nature center) :		
16.	Build vista and trail seating	200 mh
17.	Make and install directional signage.	100 mh
18.	Erosion control and trail work especially on Blue Blazed Trail	200 mh
19.	Hazardous tree removal.	<u>100 mh</u>
Mt. Nittany Conservancy Subtotal		600 mh

1. Project description (continued)

D. Inclement Weather Projects (at the nature center & at the Parks Shop):

20. Renovate (insulate, paint, repair doors and windows, and add new light fixtures) 4 rooms at Tudek Park block building for indoor, heated work space.	400 mh
21. At nature center, continue to construct, install furnishings, utilities and accessories in wetlab.	400 mh
22. Build exhibits, make interpretive displays and directional signage.	100 mh
23. Continue to construct and install habitat boxes for various parks	<u>50 mh</u>

Inclement Weather Projects Subtotal 950 mh

GRAND TOTAL = 8,320 man-hours

It is proposed that the partnership between CRRA and The Mt. Nittany Conservancy be continued for 2009-2010. (see attached letter and Mt. Nittany Brochure / Map). This volunteer group, certified as a 501(c)3 organization, owns or manages 825 acres on Mt. Nittany (in College and Harris Townships). These volunteers have struggled to maintain or improve the miles of trails on the mountain, while the popular mountain trails host over 40,000 hiking visitors per year. In many ways, Mt. Nittany functions like a municipal or state park area to residents and tourists, and it needs more conservation enhancements.

2. Inclement weather work. Identify *specific* projects that will be undertaken in times of inclement weather (work should be sufficient to occupy a full crew for at least three weeks).

Using the heated facilities available in the nature center Service Building. The PCC crew may also utilize at no charge the PC Learning Lab (with 4 PCs) in the Centre Region Senior Center for computer training during inclement weather, and the meeting room facilities at the Centre Region COG Building.

20. Renovate (insulate, paint, repair doors and windows, and add new light fixtures) 4 rooms at Tudek Park block building for indoor, heated work space.	400 mh
21. At nature center, continue to construct, install furnishings, utilities and accessories in wetlab.	400 mh
22. Build exhibits, make interpretive displays and directional signage.	100 mh
23. Continue to construct and install habitat boxes for various parks	<u>50 mh</u>

Inclement Weather Projects Subtotal 950 mh

3. Will this project take place on public land? Yes G No.

- The 2 community swimming pools are owned by Centre Regional Recreation Authority.
- The Centre Regional Recreation Authority has a renewable, 35 year lease from Penn State Univ. for the 62-acre nature center. The lease began in January 1997 and was updated in 2007 to restate the 35 year lease period to begin in 2007 with additional options to renew at the end of the lease.
- The Authority also holds 10-year leases on 5 ballfield areas at 3 elementary schools.
- All the municipal parks are owned by the respective, participating municipalities: (6) The Centre Region COG, State College Borough, or the Townships of College, Ferguson, Harris, and Patton.
- Mt. Nittany Conservancy Inc. and Lion's Paw Alumni Association Inc. own the lands on Mt. Nittany, and both are incorporated, non-profit, 501(c)3 entities. Their lands are open for public access and enjoyment. (In 2006, Mr. Woodhead was elected as the President of the Mt. Nittany Conservancy and served until September 2008. He served as Vice-President from 2004-2006)

4. Have all necessary local, state and federal permits, approvals and clearances been obtained?

Yes G No G Not applicable.

5. If the project involves construction work, have all necessary plans and blueprints been developed?

Yes G No G Not applicable.

- 6. Project selection criteria.** Explain in detail how the proposed project meets the following requirements. (See PCC Grant Manual Page 7 for definitions and point values.)

A. Educational opportunities and on-the-job training value:

The various projects planned as part of this proposal will involve the following skills & trades:

- Project planning and scheduling; planning and implementing durable projects for public areas
- Following the sketches, plans, blueprints, and verbal directions for the various projects
- Working with and around the public (park visitors & hikers, nature center program and construction volunteers)
- Planning local publicity and special events regarding projects completed by the PCC
- Demolition (with hand tools and with power equipment)
- Masonry (working with stone, block and concrete).
- Carpentry, rough & finish (involving renovation and new construction, indoor & outdoor applications)
- Plumbing work (for interior and landscape drainage and water supply)
- Electrical work (including working on-site with a local electrical contractor)
- Exterior siding & trim replacement
- Interior wall finishing: painting, drywall installations & finishing, paneling, molding installation, etc.
- Painting & staining the new projects
- Landscape Contracting Skills: laying paths & trails, excavating, grading, plant removals, plant selection, planting, mulching, tree care, sports turf management.
- Wildlife habitat enhancements and stream improvement
- Managing facilities in wetlands and in woodlands trails and boardwalks, plant materials, interpretive signs, etc.
- Learning what is special about wetlands & woodlands, and helping to construct those facilities which will allow the public to experience that environment without damaging the resource.
- We expect that the PCC Crew will work with knowledgeable volunteers and staff from the Central PA Conservation District, Certified Pesticides Applicators, Certified Playground Safety Inspectors, Nature Center volunteers, and Mt. Nittany Conservancy volunteers. Also, the Director of Community Education for the State College Area School District is an appointed member of the Centre Regional Recreation Authority.
- Centre Region Parks & Recreation also operates the Centre Region Senior Center in downtown State College. The senior center maintains a “**PC Learning Lab**” with 4 PCs linked to the Internet. **This resource is available to PCC crew-members for some basic training on computer uses and job searches using the Internet.** Now that the PA Job Service is Internet-based, staff from the PA. Job Service could also offer a PCC workshop on job-searching skills at the Senior Center PC Learning Lab.

NOTE: The meeting rooms at the COG building and at the nature center are available (without charge) for regional PCC meetings, if necessary. 7-day advance notice to CRPR is requested.

B. Environmental and natural resource benefits:

These projects are designed to restore and improve the quality of the environment and natural resources in Centre Region municipal parks. Centre Region Parks & Recreation currently maintains 51 municipal sites (783 acres) and provides year-round programs on behalf of 5 participating municipalities. The agency serves as the official Parks & Recreation agency for each of those five municipalities. One of the prime objectives for CRPR is to promote and maintain the value of the environment to residents while encouraging public uses of the parks.

In 1997, the Centre Regional Recreation Authority approved the following mission for the 62-acre regional nature center: “**The mission of Millbrook Marsh Nature Center is to educate and inspire people about the natural world, and to instill a passion for the environment through science, history, culture and art.**” Therefore, Millbrook Marsh Nature Center exists not only to provide environmental and natural resource benefits, but also to interpret those values to the 75,000 residents of the Centre Region. Since opening in early 1997, the center has grown by developing facilities and programs related to that mission, including volunteer projects to restore park and nature center facilities. The PCC has played a large part in that success by constructing facilities that enhance the nature center. The center hosted **9,706 Program Visits during 2008, see attached 2008 report**, (for programs, events, activities, and camps). This represents a continued increase from prior years. While it is not possible to count the visitors that come to enjoy the parks (without registering for a program), our sense is that park visits are increasing at the nature center and at the other municipal parks - and the PCC projects over the years have contributed to that increase.

The partnering initiatives have been very popular . . . since 1997 every municipal dollar expended for the nature center has generated over \$5 in outside resources (funds and labor). This same philosophy which promotes partnerships carries over to the operation of all municipal park areas. The cooperative nature of this project application with Mt. Nittany Conservancy again demonstrates the success of community partnerships. Their proposed PCC projects focus on environment restoration and facility improvements for hikers.

6. Project selection criteria (continued)

C. Opportunities for public use:

This project proposes improvements to a number of public facilities in the region, including municipal parks, the nearby lands of Mt. Nittany Conservancy, and Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. The grounds of the nature center (62-acres) and of Mt. Nittany are open as a “park” to the public year-round; programs at the nature center are generally offered from Apr-Oct (since there is no heat in barn). During 2008, the nature center hosted 9,706 visits for organized programs and many more (estimated) visits to simply enjoy the boardwalk and the other facilities there. Likewise, it is estimated that Mt. Nittany hosts 40,000 hikers per year. The Nature Center programs include weekly kid’s programs, Two 2-week youth fly-fishing camps, two canoeing camps, a week-long Wetlands Day Camp, visits from university, school, and day-care classes, and rentals for meetings by many non-profit and municipal groups. Just as the current PCC projects have increased both program options and visitation, the proposed projects will also increase the potential of each site to host programs and visitors.

Many improvements have already been funded by the 5 participating municipalities, such as structural restoration, a new barn roof, interior lighting, emergency exits, and a fire sprinkler system, and core improvements for a new Wetlab in the barn basement. 7 years of PCC efforts have already produced benefits for the center (the marsh boardwalk & trail system, the renovation of the office building, etc.), many municipal parks, and at the Centre County Historical Society. The master site plan for the nature center calls for several new buildings at the nature center. It is anticipated that in Spring 2009, construction will begin on the Spring Creek Education Building. Over \$1M dollars have been raised through local support of the Nature Center Capital Campaign (and during 2004 a \$1.5 appropriation was also approved by the legislature for those improvements - when matched with local funds). The PCC projects have provided and are still providing the basis for future improvements and expanded community support at the center.

The location of the nature center and of Mt. Nittany, so close to the Penn State main campus, downtown State College, and the Central PA Convention & Visitor’s Bureau has proven to be valuable to the community. With their proximity to developed housing and commercial areas, the sites can also show the impacts of this development and how it can be mitigated, as well as the important value of each site to the community.

D. Future public value:

These projects, as a whole, will improve how the facilities will serve residents of the region. Specifically, they will:

1. Enhance environmental aspects at each park and on Mt. Nittany.
Each site represents an area where visitors can interact with various aspects of the environment; these projects are intended to enhance that relationship. Educational experiences will be enhanced (including school groups).
2. Increase visitors to each site and program.
Not only will the parks attract more visitors, but the agency will also be able to conduct recreational and educational programs while protecting the park environments. This has clearly been demonstrated as a result of the boardwalk construction by the PCC and the increased program visits each year.
3. Provide long-term improvements to facilities at each site (through construction of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities). These projects have been identified by each of the 5 municipalities as important, and this proposal will provide the resources to accomplish those projects and/or make those improvements.
4. Demonstrate the value of public and private contributions (and partnerships) made to community facilities. For example, the Nature Center has raised \$5 in outside resources for each \$1 of municipal funding. The increased use of these facilities shows donors that their contributions are important.
5. Provide more opportunities for future volunteer projects in the parks and at Mt. Nittany. Much like a snowball rolling downhill, prior PCC projects have actually enhanced opportunities for new projects by community volunteers. For example, the completion of the boardwalk system has improved access for removals of invasive plant species in the wetlands by volunteers.
6. Demonstrate to PCC members the range of skills that are valuable and available to improving / restoring community assets. For example, the many groups involved in the nature center will be able to share their expertise, and each corp-member will see the many craftsman skills that are needed in municipal park projects.
7. Allow PCC members the opportunity to evaluate various construction methods and options to maximize the life span of the various projects while recognizing available resources. The improvements must also be planned with multiple-uses in mind.
8. Through publicity of the PCC / CRPR partnership & projects, encourage community members to visit & use the completed projects. The publicity will help the PCC, the Mt. Nittany Conservancy, and the municipal park facilities. It will also promote additional private donations to those facilities.

NOTE: a complete overview of Centre Region Parks & Recreation is available at www.crpr.org

6. Project selection criteria (continued)

E. Estimated additional revenue to be generated for the Commonwealth or its political subdivisions:

Amount: **An additional \$20,000 annually** =

\$15,000 per year in private donations (cash and services) to CRRA "Gifts-For-Parks" program.

\$ 5,000 in nature center program fees and facility rental fees to Centre Regional Recreation Authority.

\$20,000 (+ \$5,000 annually in tourism-related benefits to the local economy).

These funds will supplement the annual contributions (municipal tax funds) from the 5 participating municipalities; the added revenue will enable additional facility improvements and expanded program visits (and staffing) at the nature center.

Explanation: Please note these facts:

- Municipal contributions in 2004 - 2007 to the nature center were \$20,000 per year and \$25,000 in 2008, with a projected contribution of \$54,680 for 2009.
- Total pledged contributions to the nature center capital campaign since 2005 totaled \$1,039,655. Cash donations for operations in 2008 totaled \$20,099.25 - not counting volunteer services.
- Program revenue for the nature center in 2008 totaled \$36,125 (up from \$27,646 for 2007, \$20,124 for 2006, \$23,238 for 2005, \$17,644 in 2004 and \$12,855 in 2003).
- Program visits to the nature center increased to 9,706 in 2008, compared to 8,622 in '07, 6,964 in '06, 6,851 in '05, 5,573 in '04 and 4,571 in '03.

The proposed projects will continue to increase the usability and value (educational and recreational) of the 62-acre nature center, the nearby Mt. Nittany hiking trails, and the municipal park areas. The PCC projects will provide the facility improvements that are needed for more effective uses while protecting the environmental resources of the parks and the nature center. With the close proximity of the Central PA Convention & Visitors Center (1 mile away), the nature center and Mt. Nittany will also provide a valuable tourism asset for the region. In addition, the recently-opened, 4-story "Hilton Garden Inn" overlooks the marsh. The owners have stated that they wish to promote to their guests the facilities of the nature center and the marsh. Finally, the proximity to the Penn State campus and local schools will also allow the nature center facilities to provide more-effective "in-the-field" learning opportunities for many classes and research projects.

F. Statement of need: Overall, these projects will provide needed, valuable, and appreciated assistance to municipal parks, the lands of Mt. Nittany Conservancy, and a regional nature center that has "gotten off the ground" through community-partnership efforts. The nature center has been a shining example of "community partnerships" since it was opened in early-1997, starting only with an old "Penn State Farm #12" that included a unique 50-acre wetland. These projects will also provide labor resources for needed improvements in municipal parks. If approved, this proposal will extend those partnerships from a local level to the state level, which would be a credit to both the municipalities and the Commonwealth.

The following list summarizes the need for these projects:

- The authority & municipalities (and the Mt. Nittany Conservancy are unable to afford the labor and material costs associated with these projects - especially for the environmental improvement projects. The prior PCC projects have demonstrated the value of the tasks to the community (via visits and revenue).
- The municipal parks are heavily used, and the parks need these improvements. The projects will help them handle additional visitors and new programs. Residents have stated that they wish to be able to visit parks that are close-to-home (i.e., municipal parks). We wish to provide better facilities to encourage these visits, as well as demonstrate proper conservation of the resource.
- Tourism plays a large role in the local economy, and municipal parks are often used as part of those activities - as recognized by the annual grants of 2003-2007 to the nature center by the Central PA Convention and Visitors Bureau. With the proper programs and facilities, the nature center and Mt. Nittany can play a much larger role in promoting tourism.
- While so much of the local economy is geared towards college-education for youth, the PCC program will continue to show that all skills are needed in a community, and these projects will build those skills. Not everyone can attend college. It is expected that additional municipalities in the area will shortly be hiring park maintenance personnel to maintain their park facilities.

It is well known that municipalities are struggling with providing increased municipal services to residents, and conservation projects are not at the top of their priority list. The PCC projects would encourage additional private donations and continued municipal support for the parks, the nature center, and the historical society. The facilities are in need of repair and improvement in order to better fulfill the missions of the nature center, the parks, and Mt. Nittany.

7. Development costs

Itemize the construction materials and contracted services needed for the proposed project. Show *only* those materials and services that are to be purchased with PCC funds. (See PCC Grant Manual page 3 for definitions and limitations.)

<u>Phase of project</u>	<u>Type of materials/services</u>	<u>Cost</u>
At Centre Regional Rec. Authority (CRRA) Nature Center, Pools & Municipal Parks		
1. Trail and boardwalk enhancements including benches, signs, surfacing and side extensions	Lumber, hardware	\$1,200
2. Landscaping and site improvements for new education building.	Plant materials, landscape fabric	1,500
3. Habitat restorations, invasive plant removals, elm removals and replanting	Native plant materials, protective Fencing/wrapping	750
4. Barn siding and bridge pressure washing and staining	Lift rental, stain and applicators	2,500
5. Playground safety improvements and installations	Certified safety surfacing, timbers Pins, concrete and fencing	3,000
6. Renovate amphitheater at Orchard Park	6x6 ties, rebar and gravel	2,800
7. Refurbish sledding slope warming area at Slab Cabin Park	Paint, concrete	100
8. Install Soft Fall rubber tiles at Central Parklet climbing wall	Limestone sand and glue	50
9. "CRPR Remembrance Tree" planting and maintenance and Memorial Bench installations.	Tree stakes, guy wire, concrete	150
10. Athletic field renovations	Lumber, concrete, hardware fencing	500
11. Continue habitat restorations and invasive removals	Native plant materials	250
12. Remove dead and diseased elms and plant replacements	Native trees	300
13. Clearing central brush area at Fogleman Fields then landscape and install seating..		0
14. Trail building, sign installation and parking lot improvements	Sign materials, fencing, geotextile gravel	500
15. Continue Park Forest Pool "Park in a Park" development	Gravel, plant materials, geotextile	3,000
CRRA Subtotal		\$16,600.
At Mt. Nittany Conservancy lands (1 mile from the nature center) :		
16. Build vista and trail seating	Lumber, concrete, lhardware	500
17. Make and install directional signage.	Sign materials, lumber, concrete	250
18. Erosion control and trail work especially on Blue Blazed Trail		0
19. Hazardous tree removal		0
MNC Subtotal		\$ 750.
Inclement Weather Work (c/o CRRA sites)		
20. Renovate 4 rooms at Tudek Park storage building	Paint, glass, lighting, insulation, Lumber and hardware	1,500
21. Construct, install furnishings, utilities and accessories in wetlab.	Wire, hardware, piping	500
22. Build exhibits, make interpretive displays and directional signage.	Plexiglass, lumber, hardware	500
23. Construct and install habitat boxes for various parks	Lumber, hardware and pipe	150
Inclement Weather Subtotal		\$2,650
Total Project:		\$20,000.

8. Development cost summary

<u>\$20,000.00</u>	Total development costs
x 0.75	
<u>= \$15,000.00</u>	Maximum reimbursable amount (may not exceed \$15,000)

9. Have you included the following?

- 1) One project site map
- 2) One complete, original, unbound, grant application package (Grant Application sheet, + Attachments A and B)
- 3) Three extra copies of the Project Proposal (Attachment A)

Also included:

- 4) One Mt. Nittany brochure w/ map and letter
- 5) MMNC Report
- 6) One copy of the PCC webpage from www.crpr.org
- 7) Authority Resolution #4-2008