Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
Project Selection Criteria Form

The following criteria guide the actions of the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy’s Land Protection Committee and Board of Directors in selecting land conservation projects. They have been developed to ensure that the Committee and Board act in a manner consistent with its mission, strategic land conservation goals, and the Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS) regulations governing tax deductibility of charitable donations. The Land Protection Committee and Board of Directors retains discretion over acquisition or disposition of projects and will evaluate each project proposal on its own merits after investigating the property, its natural resources, and its public benefits.

The following steps are to be completed after a physical site visit to the property and meeting with landowners and CPC staff and will serve as an evaluation of the property for project selection purposes:

Site Evaluation Form (attached)

Goals Criteria: To be considered for project selection, the project must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. CPC Mission: To conserve natural and cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations through the protection of open space in the central Pennsylvania region;

2. Kittatinny Ridge: Protection of forested mountain ridges and critically important migratory bird route with local, national, and international significance, important watershed and hydrologic resources, Natural Area Inventory (NAI) sites with species of concern as designated by Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DCNR) and PA Natural Heritage Inventory;

3. Agricultural and Farmland Preservation: Protection of agricultural lands that have been identified as significant by their designation as an Agricultural Security Area (ASA), as a priority area for agricultural protection by the County Agricultural Preservation Program, the significance and productivity of their soil resources, riparian or water resources contained within the property, and the property’s location in relation to agricultural or other lands that have been permanently protected;

4. Water Resource Protection: Protection of high quality streams and springs, headwater streams, forested riparian buffers, limestone and coldwater streams, designated Natural Area Inventory sites, and large tracts of land that have riparian (waterway) frontage.
Briefly describe which of the **Goals Criteria** the project meets:

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Public Benefit Criteria: To qualify for selection, the property must meet AT LEAST ONE of the following of the Internal Revenue Code’s Conservation Purposes Test and Additional Conservation Values:

1. **Outdoor Recreation and Educational Values**: The preservation of land areas for outdoor recreation by, or the education of, the general public.

2. **Natural Resources Conservation Values**: The protection of a relatively natural area of fish, wildlife, or plants, or similar ecosystem.

3. **Open Space Conservation Values**: The preservation of open space (including farmland and forestland) where such preservation is for the scenic enjoyment of the general public and will yield a significant public benefit.

4. **Historic Conservation Values**: The preservation of a historically important land or certified historic structure.

Describe the significant **Public Benefit Criteria** that subject property meets:

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Additional Conservation Values.  *Check all that are applicable.*

___ 1. Project contributes to protection of lands in furtherance of federal, state, regional, or local conservation plans or policies (critical areas or Natural Areas Inventory [NAI] plan, comprehensive land use plan, local parks and recreation plan, or local zoning ordinances).

___ 2. Project contains or buffers endangered, threatened, or rare species or natural communities.

___ 3. Project contains or buffers relatively natural wildlife habitat, exemplary or critical ecosystems, or natural features (such as wetlands, wildlife migration routes, migratory wintering areas, old-growth forests, or exceptional natural communities).

___ 4. Project involves land in active sustainable agriculture or forestry use (such as property designated as prime agricultural land or as an agricultural security area, or forestlands that are managed for sustainable timber harvest).

___ 5. Project contains important hydrologic features necessary for protecting water supply, water resources, wetlands habitat or for providing natural flood control such as wetlands, flood plains, waterways, riparian corridors, aquifer recharge areas, or lake shores.

___ 6. Project borders or affects the integrity of a significant river, stream, or tributary including those classified as exceptional value or high quality resource waters.

___ 7. Project contains land that buffers or is contiguous with existing protected land or that is likely to be protected in the foreseeable future (such as land that shares a boundary with, or is in close proximity to, a state forest, state game land, other land permanently protected by land trusts or by other perpetual means, or other public preserve) or provides access to public land or public waters.

___ 8. Project provides connection to other open protected lands and is important for movement of wildlife between habitats or through developed corridors so that natural areas do not become isolated islands.

___ 9. Project contains open space contributing to the scenic enjoyment of the general public (has scenic attributes visible from parks, roadways, public foot trails, waterways used by the public for recreation, or public use areas within municipal, county, state, or national parks or forests or is situated such that its development would obstruct or diminish scenic views from public use areas, interfere with views across already protected open space lands, or diminish the visual integrity of the community).
___ 10. Project has recognized historic, archaeological, or cultural value; especially land included in, or adjacent to, designated historic properties, and necessary for the protection of these resources, including land providing a buffer for properties of historical, archaeological, or cultural value.

**Feasibility Criteria:** One or more of the following factors may preclude involvement even though the property may meet the selection criteria favoring a land protection proposal. *Check all that are applicable.*

___ 1. Land trusts cost for completing the project exceeds current financial capacity.

___ 2. Adjacent properties are being developed in a way that is likely to significantly diminish the conservation values of the site or the surrounding land use or character prohibits potential linkage to protected lands or avoidance of potential hazardous waste sites.

___ 3. Project would be unusually difficult or burdensome to monitor, manage, and/or enforce in perpetuity in relation to the land trust’s limited financial and time resources, including inadequate access to the property for management and monitoring.

___ 4. Landowner insists on reserved rights or provisions in an easement or deed that would seriously diminish the property’s primary conservation value or the land trust’s ability to enforce.

___ 5. Property cannot be negotiated or acquired by the land trust with reasonable effort in relation to the property’s conservation value, size, or merit.

___ 6. Project may incur an unacceptable legal or financial liability due to a known threat to public health or safety, irreparable contamination, or prohibitive cleanup costs.

___ 7. There is an equal or more effective way to achieve conservation through cooperation with other, or more qualified, conservation organizations, institutions, or holders, such as the town, the state, the federal government, or another non-profit agency.

___ 8. Legal, ethical, or public image problems are associated with the acceptance of the project (conflict of interest, project may jeopardize IRS non-profit status, opposition or no support from local property owners, community, or political support, etc.)
9. Lack of financial and staff capacity to manage the project over time, monitor and defend the easement or manage and care for the land.

Date form completed: _____________________________________________________
Name: ___________________________________________________________________
Title: ___________________________________________________________________