

**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the
Clean Water and Open Space Program (CWOSP)
March 2008**

What is the Clean Water and Open Space Program?

The CWOSP is a voluntary program available to landowners in the Town of New Paltz. The program is funded and spearheaded by the Town of New Paltz and is managed by an appointed 11-member CWOSP commission. The goal of the program is to provide interested landowners with options and funding sources for completing conservation projects that are a priority to the Town of New Paltz.

Who is eligible to participate in the program?

Any landowner in the Town of New Paltz is invited to submit an application to the CWOSP program. Interested landowners are encouraged to review the *summary of conservation priorities* to determine if the project is a good match for the program.

What types of conservation options are available for landowners?

Each property and landowner is unique and requires a customized program for conservation. The commission will meet with each qualifying landowner to discuss needs and available options for conservation. Options might include conservation easements, purchase of development rights (PDR), fee-simple purchase of land, and conservation development.

I am a New Paltz landowner interested in conservation. What should I do next?

Fill out an application form and return it to the CWOSP commission, following the instructions on the form.

What is the purpose of the application form?

The application form determines the goals and needs of the landowner and serves as the starting point for a conversation between the landowner and the commission.

At what point in the process do I need to make a commitment to the town regarding conservation of my land?

Filling out an application form does not commit a landowner or the town to any conservation project. Commitment to the project will be requested when the town has formally agreed to fund the project. At this time, a letter of intent to proceed with the project will be developed and signed by both the landowner and the town supervisor.

If my project is approved for town funding, does that mean I will receive funds from the town?

In order for the town to commit funds to the project, all of the projects details must fall into place. In complex projects that involve multiple funding sources (such as state grants), the town's commitment to fund the project may be conditional, based on the receipt of state or other grants or funding sources.

What are the town's priorities for conservation projects?

A set of criteria have been established to guide the selection of projects for advancement. These criteria evaluate resources on the property, as well as the overall feasibility of the project and the potential benefits to the town. The criteria are based on the New Paltz Open Space Plan which was developed with broad community

Town of New Paltz ~ Clean Water and Open Space Program

participation and support. Review the *summary of conservation priorities* for more information.

Who is the CWOSP Commission?

The Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission consists of 11 members appointed by the New Paltz Town Board. The members demonstrate substantial commitment to open space and agricultural conservation and/or retain expertise that is valued in the decision-making process. The role of the commission is to guide the implementation of the CWOSP, providing an advisory role to the town in terms of project selection and advancement.

Who selects the projects that are advanced for funding by the town?

The Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP) reviews each project and makes recommendations to the Town Board of New Paltz. The town board ultimately decides which projects to advance for funding. A public hearing will be held before the town board approves funding for a project.

How long will it take to complete my project?

Each project is unique. Simple projects may take one to three months to complete. More complex projects can take more than a year, especially where outside funding is tied to state and federal grant program deadlines.

If I donate or sell an easement, do I have to allow public access on my property?

No. There are many different kinds of easements. Some easements allow for public access, but many do not. Public access is not a requirement for an easement.

If I donate an easement do I still own my land?

Yes. You continue to hold title to your land and retain all rights to sell your land. You continue to make day-to-day management decisions for the purposes that are not prohibited in the easement terms.

How was the program established?

The *New Paltz Open Space Plan* was adopted by the Town of New Paltz in June 2006 with broad support of the New Paltz community, including farmers, landowners and other stakeholders. The plan identified important resources in the town, including water resources; farmlands; forests and other significant natural communities; and historical and cultural resources. The plan identified the need for a diverse set of options for landowners who are interested in conservation. One of those tools was a town-financed open space acquisition fund. As an implementation element of the plan, a \$2 million bond referendum was put forth and approved by voters in November 2006 election. The bond passed with a majority vote and was placed into law on August 23, 2007 as Chapter 44 of the Code of the Town of New Paltz, New York. The purpose of this \$2 million dollar CWOSP fund is to acquire interests or rights in real property for the purpose of open space and farmland preservation.

For the full text of the law, consult the Code of the Town of New Paltz, New York; Part II, General Legislation; Chapter 44: Agriculture and Open Space Preservation and Acquisition.