

Grant Application

Applicant: The McWaters Park Permaculture Gardeners

Contact Person: Julia Rhode

Email address: juliadrhode@gmail.com **Phone:** (802) 442-4427

Address: 1425 West Mountain Road, Shaftsbury, VT 05262
(Our project site is located along River Road, in North Bennington)

Name of Project: The McWaters Park Permaculture Garden

Briefly describe the project you are requesting funding for:

We require funding in order to implement the Next Phase of our plan to create an enticing edible forest garden in McWaters Park in North Bennington. We are in the process of transforming a potentially beautiful – though more recently barren – flat, open field into a place to walk and meander, pluck food from plants, bushes, and trees, and to learn about the many benefits of permaculture.

Requested grant amount: \$1,500

Total estimated project budget: \$2,010 (in 2015)

Other Attachments: Project Description Project Budget Mission Statement
 501(c) 3 Tax ID Letter of Support

Questions:

1. Briefly describe your organization.

Our organization – non-hierarchically structured – is comprised of a core group of dedicated volunteers. We are permaculture enthusiasts, motivated by our desire to improve our world. We are passionate about our innovative park project, which holistically addresses a myriad of concerns, including food security, sound ecology, and community education.

2. Explain how your project will benefit open spaces within the community.

Our vision is to revitalize an underutilized, largely neglected public space. Located along the Walloomsac River, bordering the historic Henry Covered Bridge, the site has many intrinsic attractive qualities, such as river and bridge views; banks from which to fish; and a picnic area tucked under cottonwood trees. We are working to bring new life to the compacted soils of the large, open field, turning it into a food-producing, low maintenance garden, with walking paths and inviting open recreational spaces.

3. What makes your organization stand out against other applicants?

We certainly know how to make a little money go a long way! We are heading into our fourth year of work, and are at a time when our project could use financial support to help nurture its continued growth. We believe that our objectives are perfectly aligned with those of this grant, as we are highly focused on increasing our community's appreciation and utilization of this natural open space. With continued rejuvenation, this park will become a place where all ages can come to gather, play, learn, exercise, picnic, fish, and just relax in a beautiful, natural setting.

4. Will your organization partner with other organizations? If so, briefly describe your partnership.

Our fiduciary agent is Hiland Hall Gardens, Inc. Also, we are closely collaborating with the Village of North Bennington, owners of the parcel, who continue to mow and provide miscellaneous services to the park. We are working together to optimally site, install, and maintain a gravel footpath that connects the parking area to the picnic grove, to the river, to our garden scape.

5. From where is your organization receiving additional funds (if any)?

For the last four years, we have raised funds (approximately \$500 annually) through hosting film screenings, lectures and workshops, in addition to private direct contributions of materials. We have also done some plant sales, though they are more of a service than a fundraiser.

Date: April 10, 2015

Applicants Signature: Julia Rhode & Jane Sobel

Attachments:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A bit of context: we undertook this endeavor beginning in 2011. To date, we have fully prepared and partially planted our first fruit guild (or tiered plant community). We have a second guild in process, where we are working on weed control and soil enrichment. We are also focusing on improvements and planting on the steep bank behind the guilds, abutting River Road. Additionally, we have planted a nut tree orchard at the eastern end of the site. All of this has been financed through our fundraising activities listed elsewhere.

Our process of creating a guild generally follows these steps:

- 1) lay solarization material over new bed sites
- 2) broadfork the compacted soil
- 3) sheet mulch with cardboard and heavy layers of shredded organic matter
- 4) overlay with enriching compost
- 5) plant cover crop, fruiting trees and companion plants, which provide nitrogen fixation, beneficial insect attraction, mulch production, and nutrient accumulators

The **Next Phase** of our edible forest garden project (that we plan to accomplish during this year's growing season) involves the following four parts, which include many or all of those general steps, outline above:

A) Expand the islands around the nut trees to turn the orchard into connecting, self-sufficient, food-producing guilds, with winding walking paths throughout. Plants, trees and shrubs will have identifying signs. Paths will allow for close inspection, while protecting plants from being trodden upon.

B) Complete the installation phase of our already established paw paw and persimmon guilds, located on the north edge of our parcel.

C) Carry on with the work of taming the steep banks connecting roadside to field, and plant hazelnut guilds on the slopes.

D) Prepare soil for a park nursery, where we can propagate plants to be used on-site, and to be shared with the public. (Presently, volunteers are propagating fruiting shrubs and companion plants in their own gardens for the same purposes.)

Please note: we have both a website (<http://northbenningtonedibleforest.weebly.com>) and a Facebook page for public outreach, where you may see photographs and further details of our group and project. We hope, also, to have the opportunity to show you McWaters Park Permaculture Gardens in person, at which time we can share with you many more interesting details about what permaculture is, and how it works.

PROJECT BUDGET (2015)

Plants and trees	\$400.00
Metal sign for plants and trees	\$50.00
Printing and laminating text for welcome/informational sign	\$75.00
Technical computer support to put sign graphics into illustrator program	\$100.00
Compost (14 yards)	\$800.00
Mulch (4 truckloads)	\$160.00
Paid labor for weed whacking and moving/distributing mulch and compost	\$350.00
Cover crop seeds	\$35.00
Materials for small shingle roof over welcome/informational sign	<u>\$35.00</u>
TOTAL	\$2,010.00

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the McWaters Park Permaculture Gardeners is to design, plant and maintain an Edible Forest Garden that inspires our community to grow its own food.

Goals:

- To create a permaculture demonstration site
- To provide educational resources
- To produce food for the community
- To support the site's river-side ecosystem
- To work with others using the park

501(c)3 Tax ID: 27-4209541

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Village of North Bennington

P.O. Box 427 • Old Depot Offices
North Bennington, Vermont 05257
(802) 447-7031

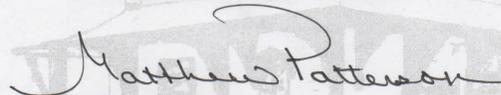
Lacey LaCroix
Southern Vermont College
982 Mansion Drive
Bennington, VT 05201

Dear Ms. LaCroix:

I am writing to express my support of the McWaters Park Permaculture Gardeners (MPPG) application for Southern Vermont College's Open Space Grant. Both the North Bennington Village Board of Trustees and the North Bennington Planning Commission have enthusiastically approved the MPPG design for an edible forest garden in McWaters Park in North Bennington. The garden is a resource for the whole community meant to draw people to the park for educational and recreational pursuits.

The MPPG, an all volunteer group, have been working at it since 2011 welcoming, recruiting and educating community members about permaculture through work days, planning meetings, movies and workshops. Young food producing gardens are taking root. It required intensive labor and natural soil enrichment to restore this beautifully sited, but largely neglected, compacted, non fertile field. An infusion of funding at this time would help greatly to continue the development of this valuable community resource.

The Trustees of the Village of North Bennington strongly support this project and urge your consideration of their grant submission



Matthew Patterson
Chair, Village of North Bennington Trustees

