

PURPOSE

The Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT) is a program to acquire land for conservation and recreation to leave as a perpetual gift to all Hoosiers as part of the Bicentennial Celebration in 2016. This statewide effort honors a tradition of conservation established 100 years ago with the creation of the state park system. The state identified \$20 million to fund the BNT, to which the Lilly Endowment generously added a \$10 million grant.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS/APPLICANTS

The BNT was specifically designed to encourage public/private partnerships with an emphasis on funding projects that are considered a priority to the local community.

Anyone may submit an application for review. Typical applicants include Community Foundations, land trusts, trails groups, non-profit organizations, individuals, and local units of government. Examples of successful projects include wetlands areas, forest tracts, river buffers, trails projects, green spaces and local parks. Playgrounds, ball fields, and structures are generally not a good fit for BNT funding.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The BNT is designed to encourage local participation, so each project requires a \$1:1 match. The match could be provided by the Community Foundation, non-profit or philanthropic organizations, local unit of government, private or corporate donors, or a bargain sale.

To ensure availability of funds for a wide variety of projects in every corner of the state, a cap of \$300,000 has been set for the BNT component of an individual project.

BNT funds may only be used for the acquisition of land and cannot be used for capital improvements, stewardship, or programming.

A successful BNT project requires a willing seller. The BNT will not acquire property through eminent domain or condemnation.

The program is flexible to allow local ownership and management of acquired properties. In exchange for funding, the state takes an interest in each property through a Conservation Easement to ensure public access and to protect the property in perpetuity.

A BNT Project Committee composed of technical experts from the Dept. of Natural Resources has been established to vet project proposals and make recommendations to the Bicentennial Commission for final approval. The committee meets quarterly, and submission deadlines are: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.

For more information, please visit www.in.gov/naturetrust or contact:

Mark Becker, Bicentennial Nature Trust Program Director, 317-234-8494 or mbecker@dnr.in.gov