

We ask you to be honest and transparent in answering the following questions. This is an opportunity to not only celebrate and share what is exciting, but also to share challenges and tensions you experience in the work. Our review process invites readers and review committee members to offer feedback, suggestions and ideas, which we will share at the end of the process.

The Grassroots Fund's Values can be traced back to our founding principles and remain an important touchstone for all of our work. These Values open up opportunities to have conversations around who is involved in (co-)creating local solutions, how a group's work is (or can be) contributing to a Just Transition and what we can do to support on-the-ground efforts.

If you are not familiar with the Grassroots Fund's Guiding Values, you can find them [here](#). These values provide a sense of priorities for our programs. Please use them as context for your application and a starting point for further conversations about the work.

I have read the Grassroots Fund's Guiding Values Statement **+**

Amount requested **+**

Grow grant requests can range from \$1,000 to \$3,500.

\$ 1500

Primary Project Issue Area **+**

Please review the Grassroots Fund's [program issue area page](#) for more detail. Select the issue area that best describes the focus of this application.

- Climate Change & Energy
- Food
- Environmental Health
- Land & Water
- Living Economies

Town **+**

Please determine which town or city is most impacted by the proposed project. If the project spans multiple towns, please answer this question appropriately but remember that Grassroots Fund's focus is on community-level work.

Atkinson

State **+** New Hampshire **+**

### PLEASE INDICATE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE COMMUNITY YOUR PROJECT SERVES:

Please give the characteristics of the town or city most impacted by the work of your group. If the group's work spans multiple towns or is operating at a statewide level, please answer this question appropriately but remember that Grassroots Fund's focus is on community-level work. For reference: [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com) or [www.census.gov/quickfacts/](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/).

Population size **+** people 6751 – from [RPC Master Plan](#)

Estimated median household income **+** \$98,000 – from [city-data.com](#)

For reference: <http://www.city-data.com/>

[From city-data:](#)

Estimated median household income in 2016: \$98,000 (it was \$69,729 in 2000) Atkinson; \$98,000 NH: \$70,936 Estimated per capita income in 2016: \$48,470 (it was \$30,412 in 2000)

Read more: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Atkinson-New-Hampshire.html>

\$

Percentage of residents considered 'minority'  % 3.9% - from RPC Master Plan

Percentage of residents living below poverty level  % 3.6% - from RPC Master Plan

Percentage of households where a language other than English is spoken  % 7.7% - from [www.census.gov/quickfacts/](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/)

Describe your group's project in a few sentences

Tell us more about the project for which the group seeks funding. We want to hear about the full project, not just the part that would be funded with Grassroots Fund support. Note that you are limited to **2,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

This grant proposal will support the first stage of developing a comprehensive Land Conservation Plan to guide our future decisions concerning protecting environmentally significant natural resources and open spaces in Atkinson.

We are forming a Working Group of both Conservation Commission members and the community at large, whose sole focus will be to listen to our community, set reasonable goals for land conservation, and establish criteria to use when setting priorities for protecting specific pieces of land.

This first phase, for which we are currently seeking your help, will enable us to hire a technical assistance provider to help define what this conservation plan needs to address, identify and vet qualified individuals to work on it, and support a second phase of grant applications once the scope of the plan and budget are better understood.

(How) Does your proposed project have environmental, social and/or economic impacts?

Please describe how your project is contributing to a shift toward procedures and strategies that ensure ecological and social well-being, cooperation and regeneration in your community. Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

Atkinson is under enormous pressure from land developers. In recent years, several large unfragmented blocks of land have been developed with clustered residential housing with open space that is only available to residents of the development. As a result, there is an increasing outcry to “fight back” to protect environmentally significant tracts of land and make them available for public use before they are gone forever. While we have approximately \$510,000 in a Conservation Fund that is restricted to purchasing land or easements, we do not have a plan for how to identify and prioritize the most important lands for protection. We don’t even have a good idea what such a conservation plan would look like.

Over the past 20 years, residents have consistently voted to maintain funding for our town’s Conservation Fund. The Land Conservation Plan would guide the town on how to spend it wisely.

Describe your group’s vision for the community and how this project ‘fits in’ 

We totally agree that this is a huge question to ask but/and this is a space to share a little more about the full vision group members have for the community. If resources weren’t an issue, what do you ultimately hope for your community? Note that you are limited to **1,500 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

We:

Provide a focal point within the town for environmental concerns. Be an advocate for the conservation of our natural environment. Raise public awareness of the benefits of open space in our town.

Serve as an advisory board to the NH State Wetlands Bureau and the Atkinson Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment for development proposals and applications for zoning relief .

Manage the Town Forests, as authorized by RSA 31:112 and numerous Town Meeting votes, including but not limited to periodic selective logging, invasive species control, and establishment of public use regulations.


Inspire, organize, encourage, advise, and educate conservation-minded residents to help maintain the town’s conservation trails, and provide signage, blazes, maps, and interpretive markers to facilitate the public’s use and enjoyment of our open spaces.

Actively seek out opportunities to further protect our dwindling open spaces and groundwater resources, including but not limited to purchasing land, or


conservation easements to land. Where possible, look for grants to augment our town's Conservation Fund.

Help town residents understand wetland zoning and state regulations, and advise homeowners with questions about their property, especially those private lands that abut conservation lands.

Support Scout Troop 9 and similar organizations by providing opportunities, guidance, and modest funding for Eagle Scout and other conservation-related public service projects.

Please describe how your group makes decisions and set(s) priorities for the proposed project  We want to understand how the group decides on the direction and priorities for this work. What processes or protocols are followed to move forward? Note that you are limited to 1,000 characters (including spaces). Please use the Character counter on the bottom-right of the text box.

The Conservation Commission meets on a regular basis – usually the first Monday evening of each month. Our meetings are open to the public, are televised, our agendas are posted ahead of time and our minutes are posted on the town's web site. We follow a strict policy of having open meetings, and I actively discourage "email meetings" in which issues might be discussed without public visibility. As Chairperson, my management style is to encourage input from all members, as well as the public, and to work towards forming a consensus on issues.

What lived experiences do current decision-makers offer that will help with the project?  We are interested in the perspectives and diversity (however you choose to define that) of the core group of decision makers. Note that you are limited to 1,000 characters (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.


Among our core members we have a surveyor, a retired biologist, several engineers, and several members with corporate management backgrounds, myself included, who are good at organizing and motivating groups of diverse individuals.

Describe the group's strategies to engage neighbors/the broader community in this project? 

Share some of the communication channels and tools the group plans to use to tell community members about the project. Are there specific opportunities for the community to be involved? Note that you are limited to 1,000 characters (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

Since taking over as the Commission's chairperson about a year ago, I have been working to improve our communications with the community.


We have formed a very active Facebook Group – on Facebook, search for ‘Atkinson Conservation’ – on which we post information about our trail system, and updates about volunteer opportunities to visit and care for our trails. One very common remark to such postings is “I didn’t know that!” Our Commission meetings are televised on the town’s community access television channel, and we are developing a loyal group of followers. I make regular appearances at Selectmen and Planning Board meetings – also televised – to give them and the community updates about our work. And, with a few other members, I’ve begun to hold “office hours” one Saturday morning a month at our library just to make it possible for community members to come in and chat in an informal way with their questions and ideas about the town’s conservation efforts.

Describe how the group makes efforts to understand and address barriers to participation in this project. 

We are interested in understanding how the group advances (or plans to advance) equitable access to resources, events, information and participation in the project. Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.


Our largest barrier to participation seems to be people’s time, and their perceived inability to commit a large amount of time to a land conservation project. In response, we are trying to engage a broad range of individuals, with the thought that “many hands make light work” will encourage more people to participate, or at least add their voice.

Another impediment is expertise. I have been on the Conservation Commission since 1998, and I feel very inadequate to do the environmental studies necessary to assess the value of potential additions to our town’s conserved lands. Others in town have even less experience, and so are hesitant to get involved with something for which they are inadequately prepared. Our response to this is to admit that we need to “hire out” much of the preliminary planning work and technical parts of this study to one or more qualified environmental scientists who do this sort of thing for a living.

Will this project build upon previous or parallel efforts (either initiated by your group or by others) or is this a new organizing strategy for the community? 

We would like to understand the community context. Are there other groups nearby that do similar work? Is this project re-invigorating previous efforts? Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter on the bottom-right of the text box.

While the Conservation Commission has had a long-standing goal to protect environmentally valuable lands in town, this actual planning work is a new initiative. We have come to realize that “purchase as much as we can and spend as little as possible” is not a plan, and we need a much more targeted yet broad-based, community-led planning effort to help us quantify the conservation values we should be looking to protect, and what the priorities should be before we consider individual pieces of property.


How does the group plan to learn about the project’s impact(s) and understand whether this project’s continuation meets a need within the community? 

Please describe how the group plans to monitor the impact of the work. What protocols/processes exist to adjust the work based on feedback from community members? Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter on the bottom-right of the text box.

We have the first of hopefully many Public Forums already scheduled for Thursday, May 2, 2019, in our town’s public library. We chose the library for its good meeting space, and to separate our efforts from “town government.” We really want the Land Conservation Plan to be a community-driven plan.

During this first Forum, we will host a presentation by Julie LaBranche from the Rockingham Planning Commission, who will speak on what a Land Conservation Plan should address, and the overall process for accomplishing such a plan. A goal for the evening will be to define a draft list of the community’s priorities for Land Conservation. Our town’s Master Plan supports development of a conservation plan to protect important environmental and cultural resources and to expand recreational spaces for residents and visitors.

Other Public Forums will be scheduled in the future to give updates to the community about our progress, and to seek additional input.

How much money is needed in total to complete the full proposed project? 

i.e. what is the total program(s) budget?

\$ 3000; \$1500 from you, with matching funds from our operating budget. Unspent funds would roll over to the actual Land Conservation Planning work.

[Show row weights](#)



PLEASE BREAK-DOWN/CATEGORIZE THE TOTAL PROJECT COSTS +

\$ Amount\$

Item

Covered by Grassroots Fund Grant?

Type Of Expense

Remove

Budget categories, or line items, 'tell the story' of your project. The categories should provide more detail on types of expenses you are predicting. Please review the [Telling Your Story through Your Budget handout](#) for an example.

Add another item

Tell us how the group is prepared to manage a Grassroots Fund grant? +

For example, does the group have a 'treasurer'? How do you currently keep track of group expenses? Does the group have a bank account in the group's name? Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

Funds from the Grassroots Fund must first be accepted by our Board of Selectmen, and will then be held by the town's bookkeeper. Disbursement of funds will only be done after a majority vote of the Commission, taken at an open meeting, with the motion to spend the funds, the members who made and seconded the motion, and the vote, recorded in the Commission's minutes, which are available for public inspection on the town's web site. The Selectmen have overall responsibility for overseeing the budget.

In a discussion with our Board of Selectmen at their meeting on March 11, they supported our effort to apply for this grant, and indicated that they would accept the grant funding should it be offered to the town. The Conservation Commission has received confirmation from Julie LaBranche at the Rockingham Planning Commission that she is available to provide technical assistance we need to accomplish our "plan for a plan" strategy supported by this grant.

Has your group fundraised or accessed resources in the past? +

No

Yes

Does the group have a (long-term) fundraising plan to bring in diverse sources of funding? **+**

- No
- Yes

Describe any specific challenges and opportunities your group faces in accessing resources for your work? **+**

These can range from skills & capacity to group tax status to competition for local resources. Please give us some insight in to the group's specific context. Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

**We are all volunteers with limited experience in writing grant proposals. We will be seeking assistance from organizations such as the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, the Rockingham Conservation District, and others with experience with grant proposal writing.**

Please select which of the following RootSkills training topics would be useful for members of your group as they start implementing the project **+**

Below are the overarching track topics offered during RootSkills workshops and conferences ([learn more by clicking here](#)). Please select as many topics as relevant and use the "Other" option to suggest additional topics.

- Equity/inclusion
- Fundraising
- Asset mapping & communications
- Co-creating with young leaders
- Group resilience & governance
- Other

Is there anything else we should know about this project?

Note that you are limited to **1,000 characters** (including spaces). Please use the Character counter at the bottom-right of this text box.

**Text**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Please feel free to attach any application support materials. For example: overall group budget, volunteer biosketches, news articles, etc. Note that file size should not exceed 500kb.

**Add a new file**

Files must be less than **500 KB**.

Allowed file types: **txt pdf doc docx xls xlsx**.



Upload

**Nice work!** You have reached the end of this section. Remember to click the Save button (at the bottom of your screen) to save your progress. **Next: Ready to Submit?**

Vertical Tabs

Save Progress

Our Mission