

**218 Uber Road
Mercer County, PA
Agricultural Lease
Request for Proposals**



Western Pennsylvania
Conservancy



water, land, life.

ANNOUNCEMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
218 Uber Road – AGRICULTURAL LEASE

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, with central offices located at 800 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is accepting proposals for two agricultural leases at 218 Uber Road, Findley Township, Mercer County, PA.

This process is an open call for qualified farmers.

Proposals will be considered until leases are awarded. Proposals may be sent by email or in a sealed envelope to:

Andrew Zadnik
Director of Land Stewardship
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 586-2318
Fax: 412-231-1414
azadnik@paconserve.org

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
218 Uber Road – AGRICULTURAL LEASE**

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Introduction

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), a non-profit organization, requests proposals from qualified farmers to lease and manage portions of its 218 Uber Rd. property. The property is located at 218 Uber Road, Findley Township, Mercer County, PA.

Established in 1932, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy was Pennsylvania's first conservancy. To date, WPC has protected more than a quarter million acres of natural lands in Pennsylvania, helped to establish eleven state parks, and protected or restored more than 3,000 miles of rivers and streams. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

The Conservancy is committed to owning properties for the leasing to farmers for the production of local food for the Pittsburgh region. The production system must be Certified Naturally Grown, OR USDA Certified Organic, OR adhere to a largely equivalent set of standards approved by WPC. Marketing methods for delivery primarily into the Pittsburgh regional food supply may take such forms as: pick-your-own, community-supported agriculture (CSA), roadside stands, farmers markets, and/or direct sales to individuals, restaurants and grocery stores. The Conservancy will use a "Whole Farms" approach, whereby portions of the Conservancy properties will be leased for agriculture and portions will be restored and maintained in their natural condition, such as wetlands, woodlands or stream buffers. Residential structures will also be available for lease to the farmers.

The food produced on the leased property must be supplied primarily to markets within the Pittsburgh regional food supply, and a portion of the products supplied within the City of Pittsburgh itself. It will help the proposal to also commit to providing food to "food deserts." The proposal should provide details about what type and amount of food will be provided to the region, the City and food deserts.

Background and Property Description

The property located at 218 Uber Rd., Mercer County, was acquired by WPC in December 2018 as part of WPC's Farmland Access Program. The property consists of 45.79 acres total, with approximately 18.5 acres of agricultural fields. Existing structures include a double-wide manufactured home with attached garage, a single-story frame house, a large detached garage, a bank barn (constructed in 1888), and a small tool shed. The structures have been vacant since 2015, but the property has been maintained – the houses heated, the lawn mowed regularly, and the fields mowed annually.

Recent Management

Since WPC's acquisition, all structures have been inspected, the water has been tested, and both propane tanks have been filled. Priority repairs to the houses and barn have been identified, and contractor bids are currently being sought. A water source will be provided at the barn. Minor repairs and debris removal will be completed by WPC staff and volunteers.

Soil tests have been completed for the agricultural fields, and the results are available upon request. It is proposed to treat the fields with agricultural lime later in the spring/summer of 2019.

Project Description

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is addressed to persons interested in leasing up to 18.5 cultivatable acres of agricultural fields located within WPC's 218 Uber Road property, beginning no sooner than July 1, 2019. As shown in the figures, these 18.5 acres have been sectioned into about 5 well-defined fields of varying size, and are suitable for culturally intensive fruit and vegetable production, small to medium-sized intensive grazing operations, or integrated crop-livestock enterprises. In order to accommodate two farmers on the property, the fields have been partitioned into two potential lease areas, referred to as 218A and 218B, of approximately 8-10 acres each. The barn has also been partitioned, with a portion to be shared with WPC.

Each farming enterprise will reflect the characteristics and capabilities of the particular farm site and the particular knowledge, skills, and preferences of the farmers. Marketing methods may take such forms as: pick-your-own, community-supported agriculture (CSA), roadside stands, farmers markets, and/or direct sales to individuals, restaurants and grocery stores.

The two farmers will be expected to provide all necessary tools, equipment, labor, and materials to complete the tasks defined within their proposals. A tractor (New Holland, 27 HP diesel 4x4 with front-end loader with bucket, rotary cutter, and box scraper) will be available for shared-use by the farmers and WPC in accordance with a separate agreement.

As an additional condition of each lease, the farmers shall be required to host, possibly in collaboration with WPC, at least one educational program/tour per year. The purpose of these events will be to showcase the agricultural activities and surrounding natural area.

All areas of the property outside the lease areas will be reserved solely for use by WPC, possibly as a nature reserve open to the public for low-impact recreation. The Conservancy shall also have the right to access the lease areas so long as it does not interfere with the agricultural activities. The public's use of the lease areas will be limited to specifically delineated rights-of-way that will be identified in the lease agreements.

This RFP is open to all interested parties on a competitive basis. The two farmers who submit the proposals judged to be the most likely to achieve the purposes of WPC's management goals for the property - and demonstrate the capacity to successfully implement the proposals - will be awarded the opportunity to sign leases agreeable to all parties. The initial term of the leases shall be five (5) years, with the potential to renew for three (3) additional 5-year terms.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy encourages all qualified farmers, including individual farmers or farm-cooperatives, to submit proposals for the management of a portion of the property. It is WPC's aim to balance sustainable agricultural productivity with environmental stewardship, while educating the public and supporting the local food system. The farmers on 218 Uber Road will have the opportunity to create and maintain aesthetically pleasing and ecologically healthy landscapes while simultaneously strengthening the local food system and educating regional residents.

Housing

As described above, housing is currently available on the property. If housing is needed by the farmer, a separate residential lease will be entered into. As shown in the figures, two residential areas have been delineated - one containing the double-wide structure with attached garage and detached shed (referred to as 218A), and one containing the frame house and detached garage (218B). Further, WPC may consider alternative housing options, including camping or temporary structures (e.g., a 'yurt') if proposed by a potential farmer, but subject to the approval of WPC in WPC's sole discretion.

Rental Rates/Fair Market Value Rent

Bids proposed at rates below fair market value rent for the fields, structures and houses will be considered.

Proposal Development

This RFP is open to all interested parties on a competitive basis. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy encourages all interested parties to prepare a proposal. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should follow the simple format suggested below. Honest, accurate responses are essential to determining the best matches for the property. False statements are a basis for disqualifying any proposal, or for voiding a lease if discovered at a later date.

Selected proposals will be awarded a contract for a 5-year lease, with the potential to renew for three (3) additional 5-year terms. Each contract must be reviewed and approved by WPC's Board of Directors before the winning lessee is permitted to begin their agricultural operations.

Each proposal must include the following:

- **Proposer Information**
Each proposal must include the full identification of the person or persons accountable for the proposal that is submitted, including any managers of the proposed farming enterprise. Please include name(s), address(es), telephone number(s), fax number(s), and email address(es) as appropriate. Please include at least two professional references.
- **Proposed Fields/Structures**
Please describe which field(s) and structure(s), including which house, as described in the figures, your farming enterprise will include. Explain the function and plan for each.

If you are not selected for your first choice, would you consider an alternative operation on the property? If so, please elaborate.

- **Proposed Farming Operation/Enterprise**
Please describe your proposed farming enterprise. Explain the proposed locations desired, the type of operation, and the amount of acres. Describe what is anticipated to be grown/produced. Describe your proposed certification program. Describe in detail what and how the products will be supplied to the regional Pittsburgh food system, with at least a portion going into the City of Pittsburgh, and, ideally, some benefitting known “food deserts.”
Provide a timeline and narrative of your operation for the first two years of your farming enterprise. Also, feel free to describe what you may accomplish by year five as well as year ten (if you are approved for an additional 5-year lease).
- **WPC Compatibility**
Describe how you will encourage interaction with WPC property visitors, and how your farm will provide at least one educational program event per year. Include the types of interaction, type and number of people targeted, and frequency of events.
- **Prior Farming Experience**
Please describe your prior farming experience. You are encouraged to provide a description of the type of farming, number of years, and farms/businesses that you’ve worked for. Additionally, please list any relevant farm, non-farm and/or business skills that may apply to your farming enterprise.
- **Proposer Resources**
Provide a description of the physical resources (tractors, tools, etc.) that you have available in order to successfully carry out your farming enterprise.
Describe any human resources that may be involved in your proposed operations.
- **Proposer Financial Competency and Business Plan**
Provide a 3-year business plan and a 1-year budget, including all farm income and operating expenses. Include your proposed rental rates for the fields, barn, and house if applicable.
Provide a description of your financial resources for carrying out your proposal. Describe your funding sources, amounts, and accessibility of funds. You may be asked to provide proof of these sources at a later date.

Additional Requirements

If awarded an agricultural lease on WPC’s 218 Uber Road property, each lessee shall be required to submit the following for review and approval by WPC, as appropriate, prior to beginning active farming operations:

- Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Plan
- Conservation plan
- Manure Management Plan (if applicable)
- Grazing Plan (if applicable)

Insurance Requirements

INSURANCE: Lessee shall furnish proof of coverage of Commercial General Liability Insurance. Unless otherwise specified in the Request for Proposals, the minimum amount of insurance coverage required is \$1,000,000.

PROOF OF INSURANCE: Lessee must attach a certificate of insurance to the final executed copy of the lease.

COMPREHENSIVE AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE: Lessee shall furnish proof of Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance covering all owned, non-owned, and hired automobiles used in connection with the operations permitted in the lease. The minimum amount of coverage required is \$1,000,000.

WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE: per Pennsylvania statutory limits.

Before the issuance of a lease, and before commencing any operations, the Lessee shall furnish a certificate, satisfactory to Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, from each insurance company showing that the above insurance is in force, stating policy numbers, dates of expiration, and limits of liability thereunder, and further providing that the insurance will not be canceled or changed until the expiration of at least thirty (30) days after written notice of such cancellation. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy must be listed as an "Additional Insured" on all policies.

Discussions and interviews may be held with farmers under final consideration prior to making a selection for award; however, proposals may be accepted without such discussions or interviews. In addition, proposers are welcome to visit the property at any time, as it remains open to the public. In the event that mutually acceptable terms cannot be reached within a reasonable period of time, WPC reserves the right to undertake negotiations with the next most advantageous farmer without undertaking a new procurement process. **SELECTION OF A FARMER IS IN THE SOLE DISCRETION OF WPC AND WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE THE HIGHEST PRICED PROPOSAL. WPC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT ANY PROPOSAL OR NONE AT ALL.**

Farmers responding to this RFP are encouraged to visit the property and meet with WPC staff. In addition, the selected farmers will be required to meet on-site with WPC staff after finalizing the leases for an orientation to the property and buildings.

Any inquiry desired by a proposer regarding the meaning or interpretation of the RFP should be directed to:

Andrew Zadnik
Director of Land Stewardship
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 586-2318

Fax: 412-231-1414
azadnik@paconserve.org

Project Schedule

Proposals will be considered until leases are awarded.

Access to and use of the lease areas can begin as soon as the contract is finalized by all parties.

If awarded a contract/lease, each lessee will be required to submit the items from 'Additional Requirements' above (Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Plan, Conservation Plan, etc.) for review and approval by WPC prior to beginning any active farming operations.

Submittal of Proposal

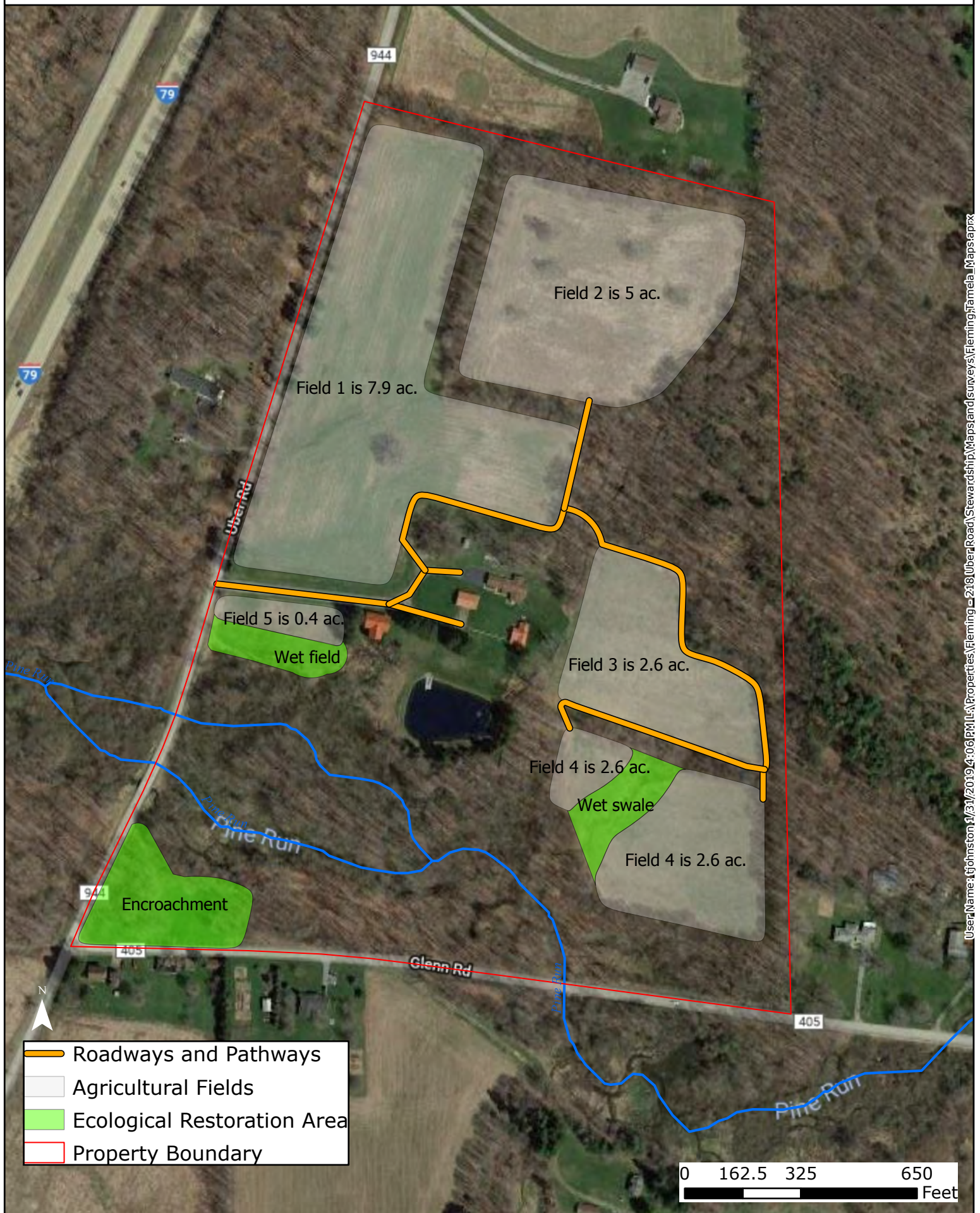
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Proposals will become the property of WPC. They will not be returned.

Fleming Property - Ag Field and Restoration Areas

Findley Township, Mercer County



Fleming Property - Agricultural Lease Areas

Findley Township, Mercer County



Fleming Property - Residential Lease Areas

Findley Township, Mercer County

