



Town of Bethlehem

Farms and Forests Conservation Program

Conservation Project Landowner Application

Thank you for your interest in exploring a voluntary partnership with the Town of Bethlehem’s Farms and Forests Conservation Program – **we look forward to working with you!** Applications for conservation projects are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year and should contain a minimum of 5 acres of undeveloped land.

Step 1: Please first review the Town’s brochures that describe our two main conservation programs: 1) the **Conservation Easement Exemption program**; and, 2) the **Farms and Forests Fund**. These brochures, and other useful information explaining the Town’s conservation priorities, including the Town’s Open Space Plan, can be found on the Town’s website: www.townofbethlehem.org/783/Open-Space-Planning.

Step 2: Submit application - Complete the information below to help us understand your vision for the land that is being proposed for conservation. This information will help the Town’s Director of Planning, Open Space Coordinator, and the Conservation Easement Review Board (CERB) evaluate your proposed project and determine eligibility for Town programs. The CERB is the advisory body for this program, which meets as needed to evaluate and make recommendations to staff, the landowner, and ultimately the Town Board. *Completion of this application in no way commits you to a conservation project, but serves to initiate the dialogue between you and the Town.*

Step 3: Application meeting and statement of intent- Once you have submitted this application, you will be contacted by Bethlehem’s Open Space Coordinator, Karen Shaw (kshaw@townofbethlehem.org, 518-439-4955 x 1106), who will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your conservation interests and vision for your land, as well as begin to complete the evaluation criteria for the proposed project (see website). We know each potential project and parcel of land is unique, and we look forward to collaborating with you at this informal meeting. Should you choose to proceed with a conservation project, the next step will be to have all landowners sign the **statement of intent** below. Then, your application will be reviewed by the CERB, who will provide their recommendation to the Town Board. You are invited to attend any CERB meetings, which are open to the public.

Please note: *The Town cannot provide legal or tax advice. It is recommended that you consult with an attorney that can help advise you on the legal and tax benefits or implications of any proposed conservation project.*

Property and Project Description:

Date: _____ Landowner/Applicant name(s) (list all actual owners): _____

Contact name(s): _____

Contact phone: (home) _____ (cell) _____

Email: _____

Contact mailing address: _____

Address of property/parcel(s): _____

Parcel(s) Tax ID# (if known): _____

Acreage of entire, or each, parcel(s): _____ Proposed acres to be conserved: _____

Proposed Type of Conservation Option Desired for the Property:

- a. Term Conservation Easement Exemption (“lease” of development rights to the Town)
 - Desired conservation easement term length:
 - 15-29 years for a 50% tax exemption
 - 30-49 years for a 75% tax exemption
 - 50-75 years for a 85% tax exemption
 - perpetuity/forever for a 90% tax exemption
- b. Sale of the entire property, or Sale of portion of the property: _____ acres
- c. Sale of a permanent conservation/agricultural easement (land remains in private ownership)
- d. Other conservation proposal: _____

Please include, if available:

_____ Copy of the property deed _____ Copy of property survey map or other map of property

Property and project narrative – Please describe your land and resources (active or former agriculture, forest, wildlife observed, wetlands or streams, scenic or historic attributes, development pressure, etc.) and why you would like to explore a conservation project to protect this land. See page 3 for a summary of Bethlehem conservation values and associated resources to help with this narrative. (Attach additional page, if needed.):

TO BE COMPLETED FOLLOWING APPLICATION MEETING

Statement of intent: I _____, hereby propose to explore a conservation project with the Town of Bethlehem Farms and Forests Conservation Program for the above described lands. I certify that all statements made on this application are true and to the best of my belief. I agree to allow Town of Bethlehem staff and members of the Conservation Easement Review Board to visit my property for purposes of evaluating the land for its conservation benefits to the Town. (Please have all landowners, if there are more than one, sign below or on additional sheet, if necessary.)

Landowner signature: _____ Date: _____

Landowner signature: _____ Date: _____

<p>Mail or bring this application to: Town of Bethlehem Department of Economic Development and Planning Attention: Farms and Forests Conservation Program 445 Delaware Avenue Delmar, New York 12054</p>	<p>Questions, need help?: Karen Shaw Open Space Coordinator 518-439-4955 x 1106 kshaw@townofbethlehem.org www.townofbethlehem.org</p>
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Thank you! We look forward to working with you.

Bethlehem Farms and Forests Conservation Program

Purpose and Values

The purpose of the Town's **Farms and Forests Conservation Program** is to conserve the publicly supported conservation values for a wide range of resources in the community, as indicated in the Town's 2017 Open Space Plan, that include, but are not limited to:

Town of Bethlehem's Conservation Values:

1. **Community character:** including active working farms; agricultural soils and farmland; locally significant historic, and cultural resources; buildings on the National Historic Register or that are contained within an Historic District; scenic views, vistas, and landscapes; and unique geological or physical features or forms.
2. **Recreation and greenways:** including lands suitable for parkland and trails, and/or public access to waterways; lands adjacent to streams, such as the Normans Kill, Vloman Kill, Onesquethaw Creek, Binnen Kill, and the Hudson Riverfront or their tributaries; lands adjacent to preserves or public/private recreational facilities; lands adjacent to roads used by cyclists or that provide a scenic view; lands near existing trails such as the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail; and also contiguous lands that serve as viable wildlife greenways and travel pathways.
3. **Forests, fields, and wildlife ecosystems:** including forests and woodlands, particularly larger forests of five acres or more; working woodlands and forests; forested lands or grasslands adjacent to streams (riparian lands); forested wetlands or vernal pools; grasslands, pastures, and shrublands; and lands that support habitat for rare or threatened plant and animals species important to regional and local biodiversity, particularly areas surrounding the Normans Kill, Vloman Kill, and Onesquethaw creeks, and the Upper Hudson River Significant Biodiversity Area (SBA) along the Hudson River shoreline that encompasses the eastern border of the town and several streams, and the Hudson Valley Limestone and Shale SBA in the southwest corner of town.
4. **Natural Water Systems – streams, wetlands, and the Hudson River:** including lands important for the protection of water quality or flood attenuation; wetlands (especially those not already protected under state or federal wetland law), ponds, streams, groundwater recharge areas, vernal pools, and the Hudson River; the tributaries of the Hudson River that flow through town including the Normans Kill, Vloman Kill, and Onesquethaw Creek (which supports cold water trout and is a part of the Hudson Valley Limestone and Shale SBA), as the health of these streams and their watersheds contribute to the health of the Hudson River Estuary Ecosystem, a nationally and globally significant freshwater tidal river ecosystem.

See Bethlehem's [Open Space Plan](#) and more information at:

www.townofbethlehem.org/783/Open-Space-Planning