



## **Request for Proposals: Community Partner Contractor Assistance for new PA Wilds Conservation Shop set-up at Leonard Harrison State Park**

### **Summary**

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (Center) is opening a leased retail space in the newly renovated visitor center at Leonard Harrison State Park. The retail establishment known as the PA Wilds Conservation Shop sources, promotes, and sells products that are proudly made in the Pennsylvania Wilds region by juried artisans and crafters who participate in the free Wilds Cooperative of PA network. The Center is seeking a community partner in Tioga County to help 1) deepen relationships between the Center's programs and the local community through outreach and engagement activities, 2) identify and connect local assets to support authentic storytelling related to the local experience, and 3) keep wealth rooted locally by helping the Center source within the community and PA Wilds region. Proposals will be accepted from non-profit organizations that are active in the local and surrounding community where the PA Wilds Conservation Shop will be operating (Tioga County), and responses should demonstrate the organization's capacity to uphold contract activities for one year.

### **Timeline**

RFP Issued: March 4, 2024

Responses Due: April 8, 2024 (COB)

Notifications: April 19, 2024

Contract Period: May 1, 2024 - April 30, 2025

### **Budget**

\$10,000

### **Contact**

Send questions and proposals to: [forms@pawildscenter.org](mailto:forms@pawildscenter.org)

### **About the PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc.**

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc., is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to integrate conservation and economic development in a way that inspires the communities of the Pennsylvania Wilds. The Pennsylvania Wilds is a 13-county region that includes the counties of Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Warren, and northern Centre.

The PA Wilds Center leads Regional Planning and Partnerships to advance the strategy and Regional Marketing to promote the region's 2+ million acres of public lands as a premier outdoor recreation destination. These efforts seek to diversify local economies, inspire stewardship, attract investment, retain population and improve quality of life.

The PA Wilds Center's core programs seek to help regional businesses and organizations leverage the PA Wilds brand and connect with new market opportunities, including: the Wilds Cooperative of PA (WCO), a



network of more than 575 place-based businesses and organizations; Sustainable Commerce, including the physical PA Wilds Conservation Shop and online PA Wilds Marketplace, which feature products sourced from the WCO; PA Wilds brand licensing.

For more information on the PA Wilds Center, visit [www.PAWildsCenter.org](http://www.PAWildsCenter.org). Explore the PA Wilds at [www.PAWilds.com](http://www.PAWilds.com).

### **About the PA Wilds Conservation Shop and Wilds Cooperative Programs**

PA Wilds Conservation Shops are gift shops managed by Center staff that feature products made in the PA Wilds by local artisans and craftspeople. Conservation Shops help connect PA Wilds travelers with locally made products and local service providers. Made possible by strategic partnerships, shops located at state parks are the result of a public-private partnership between the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), which manages the public lands, and the PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc., the nonprofit that manages the gift shops. The PA Wilds Conservation Shop also has an online presence via the PA Wilds Marketplace, which also allows regional artisans to create their own online storefronts and sell to customers. Details: [ShopThePAWilds.com/PA-Wilds-Conservation-Shops](http://ShopThePAWilds.com/PA-Wilds-Conservation-Shops).

The Wilds Cooperative of Pennsylvania (WCO) is the main program through which small businesses and nonprofits – from artisans to breweries to B&Bs to outfitters to retailers to restaurants to galleries to designers to videographers – engage with the Pennsylvania Wilds brand, networks and platforms. The value chain network is focused on growing and connecting unique place-based businesses, which are vital to creating vibrant, sustainable communities. The network is free to join and most businesses in the region are eligible to participate. WCO members receive access to a suite of opportunities, including branding and marketing tools, the opportunity to sell products to the PA Wilds Conservation Shop and online at ShopThePAWilds.com, networking and education programming, and mentorship and referrals to PA's financial and technical service programs. Details: [WildsCoPA.org/about/](http://WildsCoPA.org/about/).

### **Project Scope**

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (Center) is opening a leased retail space in the newly renovated visitor center at Leonard Harrison State Park. The retail establishment known as the PA Wilds Conservation Shop sources, promotes, and sells products that are proudly made in the Pennsylvania Wilds region by artisans and crafters who participate in the free Wilds Cooperative of PA network. The PA Wilds Conservation Shop previously operated out of a mobile unit at the state park, but the space inside the renovated visitor center provides a new opportunity to expand local product lines.

The Center is seeking a community partner in Tioga County to help with the following objectives:

- Deepen relationships between the Center's programs and the local community through outreach and engagement activities
- Identify and connect local assets to support authentic storytelling related to the local experience
- Keep wealth rooted locally by helping the Center source within the community and PA Wilds region





The selected contractor will support the Center's team through outreach and partnership building, product development initiatives, and storytelling activities.

**Community Partner Areas of Assistance / Outputs:**

- Outreach and Connections:
  - Find staff/applicants, help promote opportunities and recommend local places to advertise
  - Identify vendors for sourcing products
  - Recruit local vendors to join WCO
  - Support vendor connections if needed during set-up
  - Participate in an in-depth review of PAWilds.com for county, identify gaps
  - Provide insights for press releases related to obtaining quotes from local officials and community members and helping to infuse the community's voice about the asset and what it means to the community overall
  - Organize ribbon cutting (at the local level)
  - Provide updates to County Commissioners (set-up meetings)
  - Debrief on key partnerships and warm handoffs
  - Attend regular planning calls with Center staff
  
- Authentic Product Development and Storytelling:
  - Create a feedback loop with youth around product development
    - Facilitate a school product development project by working with Center staff to pick one design as a school spirit design that can be sold, and proceeds from sales would serve as a fundraiser for that school
  - Create a feedback loop for capturing the local vibe (to help with product development, signature vendors + community connections to be made)
  - Support the creation of content/storytelling around the opening or process of the shop by working with PA Wilds Communications Manager
  - Provide and/or contribute to 1-2 pieces of localized content for our platform (this can include videos or blog articles)
  - Participate in a debrief/interview with our team about the seasonality of the location (when are the peaks and standing events that drive high-volume traffic)

**Equipment Requirements**

Contractor must have the following to effectively perform activities outlined in the contract:

- a smart phone
- a laptop or computer with basic office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- a dependable vehicle
- internet
- office space
- access to and working knowledge of Google Drive and Gmail

**Contractor Requirements**

Contractor must:





- Understand entrepreneurial spirit and thinking
- Be a member of the Wilds Cooperative of PA network or be eligible and willing to join
- Have access to internal resources/information on regional data (help secure baseline and informing / expanding on data)
- Participate in training and professional development opportunities offered by Center staff to become more informed about the nonprofit; its mission, programs and services; and its partnership network

### **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals will be accepted from non-profit organizations that are active in the local and surrounding community where the PA Wilds Conservation Shop will be operating (Tioga County), and responses should demonstrate the organization's capacity to uphold contract activities for one year.

Include the following in your proposal response:

- Summary of your organization's qualifications to perform this type of targeted outreach and explain why you are interested in this opportunity. Indicate if you are already a member of the Wilds Cooperative of PA network and how it has helped your organization. (2 pages maximum)
- Description of your operation (include total number of staff, and identify who will be assigned as the lead in your organization for fulfilling the contract) and mission statement (if applicable).
- Overview of your current role in the community and the network of businesses located in Tioga County. Describe the experience your organization has in community outreach and engagement activities, partnership building, and contract work.
- Links to your organization's social media handles and websites.

### **Submission Instructions**

Please email your proposal as a pdf attachment to [forms@pawildscenter.org](mailto:forms@pawildscenter.org) by COB April 8, 2024

Thank you for your interest in responding to this RFP. We look forward to your response.