



**Application for Community  
Preservation Funding  
For Projects Requesting \$25,000 or more**

Project Name **ADAPTIVE REUSE OF NORTH LEVERETT SAWMILL**

**1. APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Project Sponsor or Organization: Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill

Address: PO Box 57

City: Leverett State: MA Zip: 01054

Daytime Phone: 914-282-6575 Fax: NA

Email: slynton@att.net

Property Owner (if different from applicant)

Contact Name: Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill & Town of Leverett

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Project Information**

CPA Category

☐ Open Space # of acres: 4.6

☐ Recreation # of acres: 4.6

☒ Historic Preservation

☐ Affordable Housing

Project Location/Address: Slarrow Sawmill, Junction of Cave Hill and N. Leverett Rd

Leverett Assessors Map: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Lot: 11

Brief Project Description: While the \$683,500 NPS grant recently received will allow FONLS to mitigate most of the physical threats to the building and restore power, it is not enough to make it ready for the public to use. Additional funds to cover well, septic and restroom installation is needed to obtain an occupancy permit. Other construction projects outside include an appropriate patio space and retaining wall in the front to accommodate visitors. Completing these would allow the mill to be operative as a museum and community space.

AMOUNT OF CPA FUNDING REQUESTED: \$230,000

**For CPC Use**

Date Received	Funding Recommendation
Date Application Deemed Complete	
Public Hearing	

## A. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

### 1. Goals and Description:

#### a. Project goals and background:

This proposal concerns the Slarrow sawmill aka North Leverett Sawmill that was built prior to the Revolutionary War and adhered to its function until the early 1990s attesting to its sustained contributions to the local timber industry and the development and growth of America. That it still stands shows its iconic role and the care of its owners over the centuries. The saw has been silent for the last 30 years and the mill and dam are deteriorating. In 2003, a beam in the central section of the mill collapsed bringing down part of the roof and parts of the northern and eastern walls. This catastrophic damage was repaired using upcycled mill components for the most part, funded by a \$176,000 Community Preservation Act grant. However, the mill is unsafe for public use at present and there is no access for those with disabilities.

These defects must be remediated to preserve and adaptively reuse this iconic structure as a museum and community space. Accordingly, the 501c3 non-profit, *Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill* (FONLS), which is its current owner, has applied for and received grants for structural assessment, design and planning from Leverett CPA funds as well as from the Mass Cultural Council and Development Fund and going forward is being supported in part by a Semi-quincentennial grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service (NPS), US Department of the Interior. While the NPS grant will allow FONLS to mitigate most of the physical threats to the building and restore power, the \$683,500 is not enough to make it ready for the public to use. (See attachment A for list of remediation items that will be covered by funds from the NPS grant). FONLS needs additional funds to cover well, septic and restroom installation to obtain an occupancy permit and in addition will apply for other funds to finish the lower level of the mill for 4-season use as a studio and gallery space consistent with its most recent use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other construction projects outside include an appropriate patio space and retaining wall in the front to accommodate visitors. Completing these would allow the mill to be a fully operative museum and community space. The goal of this project is to complete the sanitation system, the well and the patio space.

#### b. Project activities & outcomes:

Below we list the specific items for which this application is requesting funding. Other grant funds we have obtained from the National Park Service, the Commonwealth and prior CPA funds will provide us with fully articulated plans that specify construction and installation of the items described in this application. While currently the plans and specifications are not completed, they will be available for review by the CPC committee before its March 2025 meeting. A perc test has been successfully completed underpinning planning for installation of a septic system and leach field which can support installation of a conventional toilet facility or a composting toilet facility. The planning documents will include all areas of historic preservation and adaptive reuse, including those which are not covered by the Department of Interior grant:

1. Sanitation system: Plans for the sanitary system are being developed and include toilet and freshwater facilities. The requirements for public accessibility include the creation of a restroom

which may require a septic system including a leach field if it is decided that a standard waste system is the best solution for the Mill (vs a composting toilet). Depending upon the requirements and design for the leach field it may affect the ingress and egress of motor vehicles onto the site and thus additional fill may be required.

2. A well needs to be drilled for water for hand washing and the appropriate piping installed.

The fittings for the restroom required include ADA compliant toilet, handwashing facilities and safety features such as handrails, emergency notification system, etc. and are requested here.

3. Patio: The creation of a patio and retaining wall in front of the mill will provide a place for people to sit for events, such as small-scale intimate concerts and theatre productions since it will allow a view of the entire structure. The NPS grant includes funds to replace the currently closed sections of the front of the mill (formerly used as log-ingress openings) with fully retractable glass doors. Together, these would allow outside terrace seating to view an inside production and the installation of the doors will render the mill in compliance with the historic restriction under which we are currently operating.

c. Eligibility for CPC funding:

Historic preservation - this proposal addresses rehabilitation of the 1774 mill as a museum of early industrial development and a community event center. This rehabilitation requires a change of occupancy and must be compliant with the ADA, including provision of toilet facilities, while retaining the spatial and structural integrity of the building consistent with its original use, i.e., the saw, pulleys and belt systems and the lower floor of the mill was most recently used as a studio space in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see photo in Appendix). Recreation, Open Space, or Affordable Housing: not applicable.

d. Project Applicants & Partners:

i. Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill: we are the authors of this proposal and included on the Board of Directors are two members with EdD degrees, a licensed mechanical engineer, two scientists with PhDs who have had extensive grant writing experience and people with business experience who have managed multi-millionaire dollar projects and budgets, and a former member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

ii. Foresight Land Services: The engineering firm, Foresight, which will work on this project (<https://foresightland.com/environmental-services/>) has experience with dams, and septic systems near water. Foresight will also present septic plans or alternative waste disposal systems for Board of Health review this fall and articulate where the well will be placed, create an NOI for the mill property for these changes, including ingress and egress to the property and the ADA parking.

iii. Structures North, (<https://structures-north.com/>): A team of structural engineers headed by Preservation expert, John Wathne, P.E. has combed through the building to determine carrying capacity (loads), etc. for the adaptive reuse of the building. Members of the firm are known as preservation specialists.

iv. Walt Cudnohufsky Associates, Inc. ([wcala.com](http://wcala.com)): They are supporting the architectural firm in the creation of a landscaping plan to meet requirements for public use. Walt was founder of the

Conway School of Landscape Design and taught the Kirley brothers. We will have a tabletop model of the site that will indicate the aspects for which this funding will be used.

v. Clark & Green + Bek Architectural Design (<https://www.clarkandgreen.com>): They have completed topographical surveying and 3D imaging of the building with a drone to create a CAD model of the mill and surrounding area as a reimagined museum and community space. This model will be available at Town Meeting with specifications and bid documents for execution of the next steps. They have completed over 50 historic restoration and rehabilitation projects including in the Western Massachusetts hill towns. Their team works closely with the firms mentioned above for civil and structural engineering and landscape design. The architects have visited the site on many occasions and assessed the problems. They will employ preservation experts as required by the National Park Service and with whom they have previously worked.

vi. NFF (<https://nff.org/rfp-systems-replacement-plan-engineer>): This firm has been contracted by the State of Massachusetts using funds from a grant award to FONLS. They will complete a systems replacement report detailing near and long-term system replacement needs for the property. The State requires that this firm is used. Decisions about how to heat, cool and the waste systems need to be completed by Clark & Green + Bek before NFF can do their analysis.

vii. Architectural historians and preservation consultants we have previously engaged: Eric Gradoia, formerly at Historic Deerfield (<https://www.historic-deerfield.org>); Dennis Picard, a local historian and expert on mills; Pleun Bouricius, PhD in American History, expert on local mills and timber; Sawyers Barry Black and Bill Pearson who worked at the mill from 1970-1990's; Will Melton, Dave Palmer and Eva Gibavic for historical aspects.

## **2. Community Need:**

Leverett's "Comprehensive Plan Phase 2- one stop grant application" submitted by Margie McGinnis in June 2022 indicates that *recreation development, and historic, natural and cultural resource preservation* is a goal of the Town. This project will contribute to the desire to preserve cultural resources (see Section 2.7). It is also in line with the 2021 report by the Sustainable Economy Committee, highlighting the value of increasing educational amenities in Leverett to enhance its livability. We would also like to partner with LES for educational purposes. See community responses below regarding the need for community space and also the need for more space for studios and display of art. The high ceiling upper level of the mill would allow both creation and installation and display of large-scale artwork.

## **3. Community Support & Outreach:**

In May of 2024, the Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill reached out to the community in two separate meetings to continue to gauge the importance of the mill to the community and uses for it. Meetings were held in the bottom floor of the Town Hall. These supplemented two community meetings in earlier years. Suggestions for use included: a museum to memorialize Leverett's history using artifacts from the mill and other museums, an event space for music, theatre, yoga, dance, and art classes for adults, educational programs for youth and families, the mill pond for recreational uses, a self-sustaining model that would maintain the structure for generations to come and pay homage to the original families of Leverett, their descendants and all those whose families worked at the mill. The participants ranged from people who had grown up around the mill and/or had

family who had worked in the mill to those who had never visited it but recognized its value to the Town. All were vocal about what could be future uses for such a historic place. Some participants had children employed locally, while others worked for the university or further afield, but all had similar desires for the space. As one participant said, *“One of the things that Leverett is very short of is large spaces where people can meet. You see where we're meeting, in this little narrow downstairs.”* This theme reverberated through all groups.

Another theme that surfaced was that the mill could be used as a place to educate children about the history of their environment, and more broadly a place to bring children to learn, *“I’m thinking about what we could do to bring children there.” “That river had so many mills, and we have none of that history for kids to see in a kind of hands-on way.” “I do think in winter, especially, it’s hard for parents... so if there could be art classes or something for the community children, maybe very inexpensive....get the kids there.”* Martial arts, dance, gymnastics, occasional meetings, small comfortable usable space were all mentioned by multiple people in each group. Even the dam was mentioned as providing recreational potential with things like fish derbies or just casual fishing on a weekend or after school. As an example, one person said it should be, *“A comfortable, predictable, and moderately sized meeting space...it’s not always wise to put it in a town hall and try to open that up.”* The general consensus was that a museum and community space was desired, and the trick would be to figure out how to make it economically viable.

#### **4. Maintenance:**

One of the requirements of the Massachusetts Cultural Grant is economic feasibility. These are our current approaches to determine maintenance requirements:

- We have hired a grants administrator with experience in running a non-profit as well as managing federal grants. She and our accountant will review a proposed maintenance plan.
- We have had discussion with LCA board members to ensure that we are complimentary in our efforts to theirs and not competing for dollars in this community. We have discussed gaps in available space that the Sawmill may be able to fill.
- We are putting together a realistic budget that can grow as use of the facility grows.
- We are putting in place partnerships and building relationships with other historical places in the valley. (See two letters we recently received in support of a grant proposal for a theatrical production submitted to the State for a small drama and reenactment at the mill site during the nation’s 250 celebration.) We plan to expand those interactions.
- Since this will be a community event space, fees obtained by using the facility will support operating, maintenance and insurance. We will explore partnerships with local catering companies that can be employed when the facility is used for social events including retreats for businesses and academics from the 5 colleges, cultural events such as performances, and health and wellness events (exercise, dance and meditation). It could serve as a senior gathering space.

#### **5. Success Factors – Deliverables:**

Messages we want to communicate or inspire in the museum: reflection on (i) past activities in the area of Native Americans, (ii) ingenuity of the colonial settlers with respect to their technology and industry, (iii) how current technology and industry contrast with early industrial development and culture in Leverett. It will be an educational site along with the accompanying Heritage Park that

will serve elementary school students through adults. The overriding factor determining success is that the facility meets sustainable costs described above and thus community interest and involvement is a key feature to long term success. It would be helpful if the Town recognized this as an important aspect of what it has to offer its residents, and which is not available in other Towns.

#### **6. Project Permits & Approvals:**

Town committees: Leverett’s Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and Historical Commission (which holds the HPR on the property) will all be engaged in the planning and permitting process to meet local and Commonwealth codes.

## **B. PROJECT BUDGET, FUNDING & TIMELINE**

### **1. Project Budget:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Requested from CPC</b>	<b>Total cost</b>
Sanitation system	Well, septic, plumbing fixtures, lighting, water & waste	\$170,000	\$170,000
Landscaping	Patio, retaining wall	\$60,000	\$60,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$230,000</b>

### **2. Other funding we have obtained since 2022:**

- CPC grant for the “Heritage Park and Nature Trail” \$90,582
- Mass Cultural & Development Fund Feasibility grant for Phase I \$35,000
- Mass Cultural & Development Fund Systems Replacement grant \$8000
- CPC grant for matching of Mass Feasibility grant for Phase 1 activities \$24,500
- Nat’l Park Service grant \$683,500 for Phases 2, 3 and 4 below
- Bank and private contributions—more than \$40,000 – contributes to all phases

### **Other funds we are planning to apply for in the coming year:**

- Massachusetts Cultural & Development Fund – to finish the lower-level studio and gallery space as a 4-season room and further development of ADA compliant parking spaces.
- A To-Be-Determined fund for restoring the dam and spillway to be able to more effectively regulate the water level to prevent flooding.

**3. Phases [& timelines]:** This funding will be for Phase 5 following (1) assessment of building [Dec 1, 2024]; (2) architect’s models & drawn plans [Mar ‘25]; (3) review by NPS and bidding process to give exact components and costs to execute plans [Oct ‘25]; (4) NPS funds employed to execute the construction contract [Oct ‘27]; (5) this proposal is for work not covered by NPS funds but is to meet public accessibility requirements for change of use and occupancy permit [Nov ‘25 to Nov ‘27].

## **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL**

List of appendices:

- I. National Park Service grant's goals
- II. Two supporting letters from grant proposal submitted to the Commonwealth for theater production
- III. Bids from Clark & Green + Bek
- IV. Eugenie's resume
- V. Letters of support from the community—coming in this next month. The community meetings that were held in April attest to support. For all our other proposals we have multiple letters of support from Federal, State, and local organizations, two of which we are enclosing here

## Appendix I

### **National Park Service funding will cover the following:**

1. The cedar siding is in bad shape in some places, particularly on the river side, weathering away with gaps between the boards allowing the wind and rain to move through. These will be repaired.
2. The 17 wooden window frames are rotting away with some loose, absent or broken glass panes. These will be restored/replaced as required.
3. The new wooden inserts in the large openings for bringing in the logs were needed for insurance purposes but prevent the public from seeing into the building and have altered the aesthetics of the structure. This has violated the conservation restriction on the outside appearance of the building. These will be replaced with fully retractable glass doors. Other wooden doors on the ends of the upper floor will be repaired or replaced.
4. The floors are rough and uneven in some places, presenting hazards to visitors and making it unsuitable for public gatherings. These will be rehabilitated to make it suitable for handicapped as well as able-bodied persons.
5. A few posts that support beams and roof joists require replacing or amending to stabilize the roof and the upper catwalk.
6. Water floods the lower level during storms or during periods of high water largely because of overspill from the dam onto the platform proximal to the sluice gate. This needs baffling to prevent the water influx. The sluice will be repaired or replaced.
7. Improvement or replacement of steps and doorways with hand railings to safely access the building on both levels and to comply with ADA requirements
8. Drainage and other hardscaping are needed to allow people to access the lower level of the building in places where currently springs come out of the hillside or run-off is a problem.
9. Refurbishment of the long log carriage and saw and enclosure in transparent material to protect visitors. This will be cleaned and protected to prevent injury.



## **Eugenie Sills, Grants Consultant**

**esills@twmedia.com | 413-329-8748**

### **Related Qualifications**

Experienced, detail-oriented grants consultant with 7+ years of demonstrable success researching, securing, and managing grants from private foundations and federal, state, and municipal entities. Pre- and post-award grant experience includes prospect research, proposal writing and editing, budget development, fund accounting, contract negotiation and management, compliance oversight, and reporting. Broad understanding of legal, financial, governance, and compliance matters. Excellent research, writing, editing, and communication skills honed during two decades as a publisher, editor, and digital strategist. Accustomed to maintaining high levels of confidentiality; adept at anticipating and solving problems, and managing risk.

### **Recent Highlights**

- Instrumental in securing \$4.6 million in funding for nonprofit clients, including \$4 million in historic preservation, programming, and operating grants\*
- Developed and executed the funding strategy for a multi-phased adaptive reuse project to transform a historic Black church into an African American cultural heritage center
- Successfully managed contracts, compliance, and fund accounting for 30+ grants awarded by private foundations and federal, state, and municipal entities

\*Partial list of grant funders: Mellon Foundation, National Park Service, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, Mass Humanities, Preservation Massachusetts/1772 Foundation, American Historical Association, Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Act, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **Principal/Consultant**

Eugenie Sills Consulting/TWT Media

2010 – Present

Provide business development strategy and implementation consulting for nonprofits, small businesses, and individuals. Current services, tailored to client goals and objectives, include:

- Grant research, strategy, and writing, and pre-award assistance
- Post-award grant administration, including fund accounting
- Contract administration, reporting, and compliance
- Project and grant budgeting, phasing, and management
- Business planning and strategy
- Areas of particular interest: historic preservation and nonprofit capital projects, cultural resource development, heritage programming, and startups

#### **Grants and Project Manager (contract)**

The W.E.B. Du Bois Center for Freedom and Democracy, Inc.

May 2023 – May 2024

Transitioned to the sole grants and project management role after serving as the interim executive director of this startup nonprofit for five years (see below) and securing funding to conduct a national

search for a permanent director. In addition to supporting the new director, I continued to manage all aspects of the nonprofit's capital grants, including researching, writing, reporting, and compliance, as well as overseeing the project's design and restoration work, procurement, and contracts.

### **Interim Executive Director (contract)**

The W.E.B. Du Bois Center for Freedom and Democracy, Inc. (fka, Clinton Church Restoration, Inc.)

April 2018 – April 2023

Responsible for managing all aspects of this startup nonprofit, formed to transform a historic Black church into an African American cultural heritage center in the hometown of author, scholar, and civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois. Once restored, the Center will constitute the first museum and living memorial in North America dedicated to Du Bois' life and legacy. Accomplishments include:

- Plan and execute strategy for this multi-phase \$7+ million historic preservation and interpretation project
- Instrumental in securing more than \$3.4 million in grants and \$.6 million in individual gifts
- Manage contracts, compliance, accounting, and reporting for 30+ public and private grants
- Oversee procurement, ensuring adherence to federal and state regulations
- Represent board in vendor negotiations, including several six-figure, multi-year contracts
- Recruit majority-African American board in a primarily white community

### **Additional Experience**

- Founded and managed an award-winning regional publication for women
- Managed studio-side finance and administration for a \$16M special effects IMAX film
- Volunteer board member for numerous nonprofits and institutions

### **EDUCATION**

Colorado College | Political Science and Urban Studies

University of Illinois, Chicago | Political Science and Women's Studies

Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Continuing Ed | Digital Media Strategy

### **TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**

Grants: Grants.gov, Candid/Guidestar, Foundation Directory, SAM, Fluxx, eGMS Reach, Foundant

Remote collaboration: Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting, Asana, Monday.com

Productivity: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint); GSuite/Google Workspace (Drive, Docs, Sheets), Apple (Pages, Numbers, Keynote), Todoist

MarComm: MailChimp, Constant Contact, Canva, Squarespace, WordPress, Social Media

Other: QuickBooks Online, Little Green Light (CRM), Adobe Acrobat Pro



## FRANKLIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PO Box 6, 79 Old Main Street, Deerfield, MA

[www.franklincc.org](http://www.franklincc.org)

[moretofranklincounty.org](http://moretofranklincounty.org)

August 23, 2024

The Executive Office of Economic Development  
Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism  
1 Ashburton Place, Room 2101  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce & Regional Tourism Council, I am writing to express support of the MA250 grant application of the Friends of North Leverett Sawmill.

We believe that the program planned by FONLS has the potential to be an impactful and memorable early event in marking our regional celebration of the Semiquincentennial of Massachusetts and has the power to draw in history enthusiasts, tombstone tourists, and arts & culture fans alike.

The more than 2.8 million visitors to Franklin County last year represent a very promising audience to support FONLS and other historical sites in our region, drawing from Franklin County's top three markets—Boston, Connecticut and New York. The profile of those visitors is impressive. Nearly half earn a household income of more than \$100,000, and an equally large share hold a bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment. Combined with Hampshire County's five college area, Franklin County's five independent boarding schools, our outdoor recreation opportunities, and our cultural attractions and museums make Franklin County attractive to this affluent and well-educated audience, and I Will Fight the King is just the kind of stimulating presentation our visitors come to Franklin County to experience.

The Franklin County Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically endorses the proposed project and stands ready to maximize the marketing strategies of the FONLS with guidance, coordination, and amplified micro-targeted advertising to our top tourist markets to ensure the event entices travelers from across New England.

With Gratitude,

Jessye Deane

Jessye Deane  
Executive Director  
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce & Regional Tourism Council





22 August, 2024

Susan Lynton

Treasurer, Friends of North Leverett Sawmill

63 N. Leverett Rd.

Leverett, MA 01054

Dear Susan,

I write in enthusiastic support of the application of the Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill for the project to film a production of "I Will Fight the King." This seems to me to be just the right combination of locally based history intertwined with national issues that will appeal both to residents of the Pioneer Valley and tourists who will be visiting our area during the semi-quincentennial celebration.

Historic Deerfield was first incorporated in 1952, and we have been serving a local and national population for almost 75 years. During that period we have seen tourism numbers ebb and flow, but we feel that the upcoming national celebration has the potential to bring our regional visitation numbers above anything we have seen in the last decade. In order to draw those tourists and sustain their interest for more than an afternoon, we need a number of engaging programs and activities on more than one site to convince families planning trips that an extended stay in our region is worth their time.

In recent years, historic sites have found that one of the most successful ways to encourage visitation and exploration is through place-based, open-air theater. Indeed, here at Historic Deerfield, we are planning a series of original one-act plays to debut in the summer of 2026. We are convinced that our efforts will gain strength from similarly thoughtful original productions at our neighboring museums. For that reason, I am very excited by the plans to step up interpretation of the Slarrow Sawmill Complex, a rare surviving mill from the revolutionary period.

We look forward to seeing the results of the "I Will Fight the King" production, and we anticipate fruitful collaborations with the Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill throughout the celebration of the semi-quincentennial.

Yours sincerely,



John Davis

President and CEO

September 30, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill

Re: North Leverett Sawmill Project – CPC Grant Application – Conceptual Construction Costs

---

The conceptual cost of the proposed sanitation system for the building, including well, septic, plumbing fixtures, lighting, water & waste is approximately:

\$170,000

The conceptual cost for constructing the patio and a lower retaining wall, which should be possible with the smaller septic system proposed for gray water only, is approximately:

\$60,000

Steve McAlister  
Senior Architect/Agent

