

# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**For**

**Artist in Residency Program**

**Reflections through Art:**

**Inclusive Access on Water Trails in the Susquehanna Basin**

Developed and Requested by:

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council

810 River Avenue, Suite 201

Pittsburgh, PA 15212



**Date issued: Friday, February 21, 2025**

**Proposal Due Date and Time: Monday, March 31, 2025 at 11:59 PM**

## 1. General Provisions

### Background

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) is a non-profit organization which protects and restores the natural and built environments through innovation, collaboration, education and advocacy. PEC believes in the value of partnerships with the private sector, government, communities and individuals to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians. In addition, PEC's work connects people to their local waterways and Water Trails and educates and empowers citizens to be active, informed stewards of these resources.

One way in which PEC does this is to direct the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the National Park Service. The primary goals of the PA Water Trails Program are to:

- Facilitate the recreational use of Water Trails while promoting conservation of natural resources
- Increase and improve inclusive and welcoming access to Pennsylvania Water Trails to enhance citizen enjoyment and stewardship of local water resources
- Strengthen the connections between and among water trails and land trails to create a networked and more cohesive recreational system
- Provide assistance and support to local Water Trail managers for water trail promotion, access enhancement, management, and community engagement.

PEC's programs and projects, including the PA Water Trail Program, are supported by private foundations as well as government agencies including the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the National Parks Service, whose Community Conservation Partnership Program and Chesapeake Gateways Grant Program, respectively, are supporting this project which seeks to reconnect the people of central Pennsylvania to their local waterways and to the rich culture, history, and recreational assets of the Susquehanna river basin.

### Artist in Residency Intent and Statement of Purpose

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council is seeking three (3) artists interested in connecting diverse community audiences to Pennsylvania Water Trails in the Susquehanna Basin and the remarkable recreation opportunities on those trails through creative, experiential, interactive, and exploratory engagement. We are looking to showcase unique ways to reconnect the people of central Pennsylvania to their local waterways and to the rich culture, history, and recreational assets of the Susquehanna.

The artist will be expected to create a locally meaningful piece(s) of art, experience, and/or event that reflects the stories of the people, places, histories, cultures, and natural environments. The artist will be expected to interact with the local community and water trail partner to explore ways to reimagine water recreation and environmental stewardship and conservation. By intentionally bringing communities together to share in a creative, contextual experience this project will inspire a more collective imagination and will help activate new awareness and engagement on Pennsylvania's Water Trails and nearby special places.

The artists who will be selected for this three-week Artist in Residency (AiR) experience will be tasked with:

- Exploring and researching the local narratives of the respective Water Trail of their residency geography and places nearby,
- Interpreting and sharing those narratives using their own unique creative talents and interpretations, and
- Attending at least one event at which the artist’s creation, activity, or program will be shared and presented.

Artists should consider how to connect and reflect the unique people, history, culture, and natural features of these places and encourage direct, participatory engagement by community members.

Artists should also consider how their projects serve to develop new and original ways for audiences to envision their own connections to these special places within the Chesapeake Watershed and the ways in which they can enjoy, access, and responsibly take part in recreational activities in, on, and near Pennsylvania’s Water Trails.

The AiR programs, with one artist placed for each, will be on location at an appropriate site, to be determined, along three designated PA Water Trails in the Susquehanna Basin:

- The West Branch and Lower North Branch Susquehanna, managed by the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership,
- The Lower Susquehanna River managed by the Susquehanna National Heritage Area, and
- The Swatara Creek Water Trail, managed by the Swatara Watershed Association.

If an artist wishes to be considered for a specific location, this must be noted in the responses to the application. Otherwise, each applicant will be considered for any of the sites/locations. PEC staff and Trail manager partners will assist the artist with finding suitable housing options as necessary.

A representative of PEC, at least one external reviewer with expertise in the creative sector, as well as an appropriate representative of the partner Water Trail Manager will be involved in the review and selection process of the artists.

All responses to this request for proposals/applications shall be consistent with the goals and objectives of the project and all underlying Federal and State laws and regulations governing the implementation of the project, including funding conditions of DCNR and NPS. Copies of the grant agreements can be provided upon request.

PEC reserves the right to pursue contract awards in a manner that is in the best interest of the partner Water Trail Managers.

### Residency Deliverables

Each artist is expected to create and or develop a piece of art that can be shared with the public, ideally in such a way that the public can in some way “interact with” the art, though public involvement in the creation of the piece is also acceptable. Final projects can include such pieces or items as a visual art, film, sculpture, song, interactive game, digital media, and others. **No work shall be “installed” temporarily or permanently in any location** (if you have questions about this, please contact Tali MacArthur at [tmacarthur@pecpa.org](mailto:tmacarthur@pecpa.org)) The final piece of art will be displayed, shown, or shared at a public event hosted by the Water Trail partner. Costs associated with the showing will be minimal for the artist but travel to the location will be necessary.

### PEC Procurement Process

Procurement (selection) activities shall be conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner with fair treatment to all applicants, and in accordance with established procurement processes, consistent with 2 CFR Part 200- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

### Applicant's Obligations

The applicant must review all sections of this Application and submit all information and materials required, providing sufficient information to PEC to evaluate the proposal/application. The applicant, by submitting a proposal/application, agrees that any costs incurred in responding to this request are to be borne by the applicant and may not be billed to PEC.

If PEC has any difficulty in obtaining the required information from the applicant's proposal, it may result in the disqualification of said proposal/application.

### Disposition of Proposals/Applications

All material submitted in response to this request for applications will become the property of PEC and may be returned only at the option of PEC. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email. PEC shall not be obligated to detail any of the results of the evaluation but will entertain requests for feedback.

### Contractual Commitment of Proposal

The contents of submitted proposals/applications will be considered obligations of the successful bidder. No information should be submitted that is not intended to be incorporated into the proposal and any contract that may result from such proposal. If there is any inconsistency between the terms herein and any of the other contract documents, the terms in the other contract documents shall prevail.

### Insurance Requirements

The artist is solely responsible for being adequately insured during the residency, including but not limited to automobile insurance if using a vehicle. Neither PEC nor the NPS nor the Water Trail Manager organizations will be responsible for any damages or costs to the artist(s), property, or others during the term of the residency or public engagements.

### Applicable State and Federal Requirements

The applicant shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and local laws, regulations (rules), assurances, and orders, whether specifically referenced herein.

PEC reserves use and ownership rights with respect to any resulting artwork, consistent with program funding requirements including but not limited to 37 CFR 401. PEC may modify this arrangement in consultation with the selected artist(s).

### Liability

The applicant agrees to indemnify and to hold PEC, the National Park Service, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, the Swatara Watershed Association, and the Susquehanna National Heritage Area harmless and immune from any and all claims for injury or damages arising from this RFP or any awarded Contract

which are attributable to the applicant's own actions or omissions or those of its trustees, officers, agents, employees, subconsultants, suppliers, joint ventures, or third parties utilized by the bidder.

#### Artist Stipend and Payment

PEC will provide an \$8600 stipend to each selected artist which can be used by the artist for costs incurred during this three-week residency, including, but not limited to, housing, meals, transportation and mileage, costs incurred while researching and learning about the region's culture, history, and natural assets (e.g. museum entrance fees, community events, etc.), and funding for supplies and materials necessary to create and implement the artistic creations, activities, and/or project including procuring tents, tables, chairs or other elements necessary for successful "showcasing."

It is anticipated that 50% of the stipend will be paid to the selected artist upon execution of the contract between PEC and the artist. Following the successful outcome of a product proposal meeting among the artist and relevant partners, the artist will receive an additional 30% of the stipend. The final 20% will be paid upon completion of all project outputs and deliverables per the contract and Scope of Work. Federal, state, local taxes and filings are the responsibility of the artist.

#### Additional Opportunity during the AiR Term

This project will include an opportunity for each of the selected artists to experience firsthand a recreational opportunity on the Water Trail in the geographic region of the residency, such as a paddle, "paddle and pedal," or other similar activity. In this way, the artist(s) will gain a perspective they may not have had of the waterway, the landscape, and the natural and cultural assets of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Water Trail Manager partners will host this event with PEC staff attending. Items such as kayak rental, life jacket, paddles, will be provided to the artist for use during the event at no cost to the artist. A personal vehicle or rental vehicle and overnight stay may be necessary depending on location. Additional details will be provided at a later time.

#### Right to Reject

PEC reserves the right to reject, in its sole and absolute discretion, any and all proposals/applications, for any reason, to waive technicalities, and to pursue project implementation that is in the best interest of the organization and the Water Trail Manager partners. PEC shall not be required to award a contract or to any entity that responds to this request for applications. The final award of the AiR Projects are conditional on the selected applicants executing a Contract acceptable to PEC, in its sole and absolute discretion.

#### Timeline

While subject to change, it is anticipated that artists will be selected by April 30, 2025, and all projects, events, activities, etc., will be complete no later than October 31, 2025. This Artist and Residency program is for 21 days in duration between June 1, 2025 and October 31, 2025. The 21 days need not be consecutive nor do the three Artist in Residency programs need to occur during the same 21 days. Schedule and timing for each residency will depend on artist availability, local opportunities, and Water Trail Manager preference and capacity for assisting with project/event/activity planning and development.

### Questions Regarding this Request for Applications

PEC will host one Information/Q&A Session for potential and interested applicants via Zoom on **Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 11 AM**. Anyone interested in participating must email Tali MacArthur at [tmacathur@pecpa.org](mailto:tmacathur@pecpa.org) with “Request for Artist RFP Zoom Link” in the subject of the email no later than 12:00 PM on Monday, March 10. A Zoom link will be sent Monday afternoon after that deadline. PEC, however, is not required to answer any questions that are not pertinent to the RFP or are considered to be PEC’s proprietary information.

### Restricted Communications

It is PEC’s policy to avoid situations which (1) place it in a position where its judgement may be biased; (2) create an appearance of conflict of interest with respect to rendering an impartial, fair, technically sound, and objective decision prior to selection; or (3) give an unfair competitive advantage to competing applicants. Therefore, to ensure an ethical RFP process, applicants will not be able to submit questions or otherwise communicate with PEC after March 24, 2025.

### RFP Submission Information and Deadline

Proposals shall be submitted via email to PEC not later than 11:59 PM Eastern on March 31, 2025. No late proposals will be accepted.

All applications must be submitted online via Submittable. Please visit [www.pecpa.org/apply](http://www.pecpa.org/apply)

Submittable is free to use, but all applicants must create an account with log in name/password. Responses to application questions and all additional documents can be uploaded directly to Submittable.

If an accessibility issue prevents an applicant from being able to access or use Submittable, please contact Tali MacArthur at [tmacarthur@pecpa.org](mailto:tmacarthur@pecpa.org) or 570-285-8013 to discuss other options.

### Important Dates

February 21, 2025: Application Period Opens/Public Announcement

Informational Q&A Session: March 11, 2025 at 11 AM

March 31, 2025: Applications Due

Week of April 21, 2025: Committee Selection Meeting

No later than April 30, 2025: Notify Applicants

May 2025: Contracts Executed

June 1 – Oct 31, 2025: AiR takes place

November – December: Evaluation and Project Close

## Applicant Questionnaire

*You may use this document to prepare your responses. However, do not submit this document as your application. You must complete your application using Submittable.*

### 1. General Information

Applicant Name:

Applicant Address

Applicant Phone:

Applicant Email:

Applicant's Company Name (if applicable):

### 2. Location Preference

*If you would like to be considered for a specific location, please list it here. You may also rank locations in order of preference. Otherwise, your application will be considered for an AiR in any of the three Water Trail geographies.*

### 3. Previous Interactions

*Please indicate if you have done business with PEC and/or any Water Trail Manager partner organizations please provide information about the project, date, and a point-of-contact.*

### 4. Legal

Are there any judgements, suits or claims pending against you or your company? Y/N

If yes, please explain.

### 5. In no more than 500 words, please address the following:

Why do you think art is an effective means or medium through which to connect people to the natural environment, including rivers, streams, and other waterways, and to encourage a sense of curiosity and desire to understand, explore, and steward these places and resources?

### 6. In no more than 2-3 paragraphs, please address the following:

Describe how you would approach learning about a place, how it has been shaped, literally and figuratively, and about the people and communities that live, work, and visit it?

### 7. In no more than 2-3 paragraphs, please address the following:

Describe your idea/s for your artwork, from concept to medium to how it will be finished and viewed. This can change once you are present in your residency but sharing the beginnings of your concept is helpful.

### 8. In one paragraph, please address the following:

One community outreach program or event is included as part of your residency. This could take place at a community festival, as part of a single or multi-day paddling event (with stops for educational presentations, meals, camping, etc.), or a workshop/public workshop/art opening. These events will be

planned with staff from a local organization who is partnering with PEC on this residency. How do you envision sharing your artwork at such an event and what will your interactive program look like?

9. In no more than two paragraphs, please address the following:

What are your personal creative goals for this residency?

10. Additional Questions

The residency will be three weeks in duration between June 1, 2025 and October 31, 2025. The artist will be expected to spend 3 weeks (21 days) "on location," however, those days/weeks do not have to be consecutive. The artist is expected to find housing on location as necessary to comply with the duration requirement.

Are you able to comply with these requirements?

The artist will be expected to communicate and coordinate with PEC staff and the local partner- the Water Trail Manager- throughout the residency. This can include, but is not limited to, discussing residency dates, sharing ideas for artwork, and coordinating the public engagement/art showcase event.

Are you able to comply with this requirement?

The funding source for this opportunity requires adherence to Executive Order 14005, entitled "Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers." The artist, shall therefore "maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States, and whenever possible, procure goods, products, materials, and services from sources that will help American businesses compete in strategic industries and help America's workers thrive."

Can you comply with this requirement?

The artist selected for this AiR will be expected to participate in at least one paddling trip on the local Water Trail. This trip will be hosted by the local Water Trail Managers and will be planned to accommodate a brand new or novice paddler, i.e. no previous kayaking or canoeing experience will be necessary. All gear will be provided and accommodations for most accessibility needs will be met.

Can you participate in a paddling trip?

Are you at least 18 years of age?

Are you willing to assume liability for personal injury or for the loss of articles during residency?

**Additional Requirements:**

- Professional resume and summary of creative achievements
- Writers and poets may upload a work sample of no more than 2 pages.
- Visual, video, and musical artists are encouraged to provide at least two examples of previous work no more than 5 years old.
- Artists who work in mediums that are not easily shared via a traditional attachment to this application may contact Tali MacArthur at [tmacarthur@pecpa.org](mailto:tmacarthur@pecpa.org).



## **Selection Criteria**

The Selection Committee will consider and score applications on a sliding scale based on the following –

### **Portfolio**

- The extent to which the artist’s application and previous work suggest that they can creatively engage a diverse audience in an interactive and exploratory artistic experience that leads to a greater awareness of and connection to natural assets and resources.

### **Accomplishments**

- The extent to which the artist's work demonstrates professional competence and that they have a track record of achieving what they set out to do.

### **Public Engagement, Outreach, and Interaction**

- The extent to which to the artist’s approach to public engagement, interaction, and outreach is meaningful, novel, interesting, and provides the public with opportunities to experience (figuratively or in a tangible way) waterways, the region, their community in new ways.

### **Motivation and Spark**

- The extent to which the artist exhibits a sense of passion and excitement to connect, explore, and share learning experiences with partners and the local community.

Additionally, your responses to each question above will also be reviewed and scored.