

# THE HORIZON FOUNDATION

## Letter of Inquiry for Land Acquisition Funding

The Horizon Foundation is a private charitable foundation committed to ensuring that Texas' iconic landscapes and natural resources remain for future generations. To achieve this mission, The Foundation has created a \$20 million conservation land protection fund that will be distributed to qualified non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other qualified entities for the purposes of land protection efforts (both in fee simple acquisitions and through permanent conservation easements).

Prior to discussing a potential project with The Horizon Foundation, we ask prospective partners to review the below criteria and guidance, and if your project qualifies, respond to our questionnaire in a concise manner.

### Land Protection Criteria

1. Is the tract part of a more extensive ecological system; not isolated (i.e., bringing considerable acreage into conservation ownership/management, linking existing tracts of public or otherwise protected ownership together, or making permanent protection for adjacent conservation lands easier);
2. Is it big enough to be meaningful?
3. Does it demonstrate scientific value benefiting important habitats and/or species populations?
4. Is there future management or restoration potential?
5. Are there impending threats or risk of development?
6. What is its importance to local, regional, or state water resources, including benefits to water quality and quantity?

### Additional Guidance

1. **Grant Funding.** Horizon funding is for fee simple and permanent conservation easement capital acquisition costs. In most circumstances, these costs should be supported by a third-party appraisal.
2. **Leverage.** Projects that leverage other funding sources will be given priority. Leverage may come from bargain sales, in-kind donations, or other grant programs (private donations, public funds, etc.).
3. **Minerals.** Whenever possible, the mineral (subsurface) estate should be acquired, or surface use restrictions placed on the mineral estate holder to limit future surface disturbance.

4. **Natural Resources.** Natural resource values include the property's endemic flora, fauna, invertebrates, geology, water, and other native attributes. Properties with Endangered Species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), migratory, grassland, or shorebird populations, or other attributes of unique significance will be given priority.
5. **Disposition of Acquired Property/Exit Plan.** Applicants must clearly demonstrate that there will be a legally enforceable mechanism to guarantee the permanent protection of all acquired property.
6. **Due Diligence and Grant/Credit Agreement.** Site visits will be required. Once a project is approved and a formal application is accepted, The Horizon Foundation will send an award letter confirming the grant details. In certain cases, the applicant will enter into a grant agreement with The Horizon Foundation. Further, prior to the release of funds for each individual closing, The Horizon Foundation will conduct a due diligence process that will review the applicant's financial situation as well as documentation surrounding the specific property including title, environmental and conservation values, other funding that will be used to acquire the property, and, when applicable, final disposition plans.

## **LOI Questionnaire**

This is considered your Letter of Inquiry (LOI). All LOIs will be reviewed, and you will be notified within 45 days if your project will move forward for consideration by the board. Please email the completed form and budget excel template to [land@thehorizonfdn.org](mailto:land@thehorizonfdn.org).

**Organization Requesting Funding:**

**Project Name:**

**Requested Grant Amount:**

**Project Contact:** Name, phone, and email

**1. Project Description & Location:**

- a. Project size in acres:
  
- b. Project capital cost per acre:
  
- c. Describe the project's location and if it is part of or near any federal, state, or other protected areas, including other conservation easements.
  
- d. Provide a brief **project summary** (150 words or less) stating the significance of the overarching project (e.g., connect a landscape, prevent development in a critical wildlife corridor, prevent mineral development to protect a watershed, etc.).



- h. Provide a map showing the property(ies) to be acquired and nearby protected land (distinguished by the managing agency/partner's name with the public land unit's official name). *Upload the map here or attach as an appendix to the submission.*





