

Ideas and Tips on how to Setup an Orchid Society Conservation Committee

<https://www.orchidconservationcoalition.org/articles/osconservation.html>

At the bottom of this document are links to various orchid society conservation committee webpage where you can see how these conservation committees handle various aspects that are referenced in this document.

Structure:

1. Chairperson often comes down to a person who is willing. A procedure should be set up to select a conservation chairperson. Is it by conservation committee members or the orchid society's board or membership as a whole?
2. Chairperson is in charge of the whole committee (coordination, public relations, fund management, managing applications for funds) A donation person is needed for soliciting, arranging for storage and care, inventory and transfer of plants. A person is needed to coordinate the sales booth, to develop signage, setup and organizing volunteers to work at the sales booth.
3. Conservation fund accounting- The easiest would be an account within the orchid society's accounting. It should be an account where funds not used in a year get carried forward to future years.
4. Funding of approved conservation projects – Is this by approval of the conservation committee and/or orchid society board and/or the entire society? One thing about getting a vote of the entire society of applications that have been approved by the conservation committee is that it is good advertising. It gets the whole society involved and to know what is going on with the conservation committee. You may spark more participation from members.
5. The orchid society or conservation committee needs to be a registered non-profit in order for donors to be able to deduct charitable contribution from taxes. In the US, a 501 (c)3 is the tax designation for a charitable organization for a cause. In the US, a 501 9 (c)7 is the tax designation for social and recreational clubs. Non-profit status also allows for an organization not to have to pay taxes on donations.

Raising Funds:

1. Direct Cash Contributions

A) The New Hampshire Orchid Society uses a donation jar with their Orchid Conservation display. They use a gallon size clear glass vase found at a Goodwill store. They tape a plastic lid with a slot on it so that a hand can't reach in and take money out. You can also place it at a membership or other staffed table for extra security. The jar can also be used at any conservation talk. They have collected more money this way.

B) Consider having a way people can donate through a website or social media webpage either with PayPal or an address for checks.

2. Selling Orchid Plants at Shows and Society Meetings

In general, it is good to get the donor to help by providing an inventory and price of orchids. Prices can always be adjusted. The more you can spread the work around, the easier that it will be for everyone. **The ideal would be getting donors to transport orchid plants to the point of sale with an inventory list and sale prices. The plants would be sold. Those that were not sold, the donor would take back and care for until the next sale. The donor would be given a letter of donation with the total amount sold from their donated plants.

A) Getting Donated Plants Challenges:

- Getting enough plants
- Getting a variety of orchids for sale. Conservation Committee could be a dumping place for orchids that did not sell. You need to assess whether plants are worth the time and effort.
- Storing plants before the show. If space and time are an issue, try to get people to donate orchids at the beginning of show or meeting. Taking donations before a sale requires space, care and transportation. The further from a sale you take in orchid donations, the more time and care. Care and storing of plants can be spread around by conservation members or hire a board and care greenhouse, though this would cut into funds generated for conservation projects.
- Assess health of the plant before accepting for donation. It makes no sense in accepting a plant that will not sell and which you will throw away.

B) Selling donated Orchids:

- A good banner over your booth that advertises orchids for sale for conservation.



- Pricing can be done by an orchid conservation committee member or by the donor. Prices can always be adjusted later. San Diego Orchid Society Conservation Committee prints a lot of sturdy plastic tags that are preprinted with price amounts \$2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 20, etc. They take the tags out of pot when the plant sells, or at the end of the show to reuse. Occasionally, you get people who switch price tags, or remove the tags, so it is helpful to have knowledgeable person in the booth. Be aware that people will hide plants, and then come back for them as the show

closes, expecting a bargain.

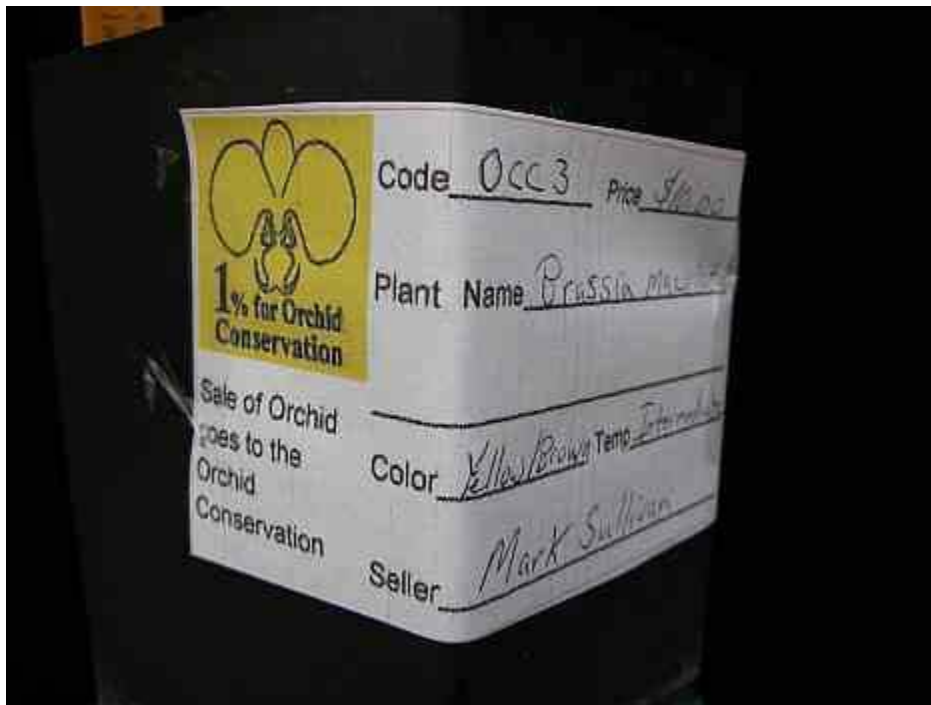
- When pricing at an event where vendors pay for a booth. You should be careful and price plants competitively with vendors at the beginning of the show. You do not want to undercut the orchid society's show and how it gets paid.

- Conservation Committee can have its own booth at a show or if there are few orchid plants they can be put in membership sales area and designated for conservation on inventory sheet and orchid plant. - An inventory of all conservation plants should be kept. The easiest way is separate inventory sheets by donor as this will allow for easier tally of donated amount. Each plant should have an individual identifying code on the inventory sheet and on the orchid plant so that they can be tracked. An inventory sheet is needed by the donor if they are planning to use the non-cash charitable contribution as a tax deduction.

[Link to Plant Sales Inventory Sheet and Plant Sales Tag Sheets](https://www.orchidconservationcoalition.org/saletags/orchidsalestags.html)

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- Conservation orchid plants should be advertised by special sales tags and/or by special marked plant labels.



- When you get a big specimen plant, San Diego Orchid Society Conservation Committee used to consider dividing it and selling divisions. Now they do not divide specimen plants. They aim to sell it quickly at a good price. Dividing is not worth the time and effort and leaves lots of leftover established divisions to grow on.

- Organize orchid plants by type or easy of growing in your area. You want to match orchids to

the skill level of the purchaser so that they can succeed and buy more. - Consider taking donations and selling of other related orchid items like books, Spanish moss, potting material, etc.

- At the sales booth, it is better to have one person as the designated cashier. - Bring spare pens, markers, paper, and cash to make change.

C) Donation Amount Determination –

In the US donation amount should be the fair value of an orchid based on type, size, and health. If the orchid is sold the fair value is easy to determine and the contribution can be considered a charity cash contribution. If an orchid plant(s) is donated to the conservation committee, then the donation is considered a non-cash contribution, and the donor is responsible for determining value. A charity cash contribution is a clear cut charitable contribution and will not raise the scrutiny of the IRS. The donor owns the plants until time of sale. At sale, the cash is donated to the Conservation Committee. If a donor leaves unsold plants to the conservation committee, they are responsible for value.

D) Unsold Donated Plants – If the donor does not pick up any unsold plants decisions should be made based on health, place for board and care until the next sale opportunity and chance of future sale as to whether a plant should be kept or tossed. Another solution is to give away those plants to other members, especially new members. This accomplishes two things: less work and spreads good will to members. Members who receive orchids may in the future be willing to donate orchids to conservation or join the conservation committee. You should arrange for the distribution of unsold plants before the sale event.

Application Submission:

Conservation Application Submission- Set up a webpage on your orchid society's website. It should list have an explanation of the process:

- Application- It would be helpful to all involved to have a form to be filled out for submission. This will help make sure all necessary information is submitted. A systematic application process will make it easier to evaluate, compare, and talk about projects between conservation committee members. You can download a sample application form provided in doc format and manipulate it for you own need here:

Generic Application Form

<https://www.orchidconservationcoalition.org/articles/osconservation/conservationgrantapplication.docx>

- Criteria for application should be listed on your conservation committee webpage. This allows a person or organization to assess if their project would be a good fit to start the application process.

Possible criteria: geographic limitation, time limitation, amount of the awarded donation, whether it is a one-time donation or can be ongoing, whether funds can be used as part of an

overall project budget, institutional backing, research allowed, in-situ and/or ex-situ study allowed, what kind of references are needed, letter of recommendation, and education level. You should also consider what you will not fund. San Diego Orchid Society Conservation Committee does not fund land purchasing. They also have a limit of \$2,500 for a grant proposal and that cannot be less than 10% of a project's budget.

- Submission and Notification of Applicants Deadline Date – You want one deadline date a year for application submission. An open end application process will be more work for your conservation committee. A notification to applicants does two things. It puts the conservation committee on a deadline to get its work done; and inquiry will be held to a minimum. The New Hampshire Conservation Committee has an open end application process. The San Diego and San Francisco Conservation Committee has a specific date.

- Consider local projects that can be funded, can be provided non-monetary funding or a combination. New Hampshire Orchid Society Conservation Committee has donated expertise, plants, and labor to a few local projects which helped them, provided publicity, made use of excess pots, plants and growing materials. They purchased some from a local vendor for use in these projects. No direct money was given to the project.

- You should have a point person whom the reviews are submitted to and who can distribute the submissions. Don't forget to put contact information on your webpage! This person should make sure the overall application process is followed from review by committee, scoring or grading, results to the committee and the applicant. This person should be willing to answer questions throughout the year. The soliciting of applications for review can be advertised on internet orchid forums and on the Orchid Conservation Coalition website and newsletter. Prepare a short brief statement of what you are asking for, where to find more information to submit a grant, and a contact e-mail address.

Review and Approval of Application(s)

Applications should be reviewed singularly and not compared. Comparing sets up the best of the bunch for approval. While in reality, none may be worth funding. The grant application should be viewed as a work in progress, not a final document. Don't be afraid to ask for clarifications, additional information, make alterations on the suggested budget, and fund some, none, or all of it, now, and in the future.

Some good questions are: What difference will this funding make? What wouldn't happen if a conservation project was not funded?

After a discussion, open approval of an application can simply be done by a yes or no vote by the committee or you can use some sort of grade scale. A grade scale is when each committee member grades each application on a scale of 0-5 or 0-10. The grades are then added together for an application and divided by the number of reviewers. This gives you an average grade. You can set a grade that an application must reach for funding and/or continue discussion on the top application(s) if merited.

Informing Applicant(s) of the Decision

It is important to inform all applicants of the decision on their application. It would be beneficial to inform rejected applicants as to why in order for them to improve their applications in the future. Sometimes you just do not have enough money to fund the project submitted. I highly advise you to encourage conservation applicants to continue, as the whole purpose of a conservation committee is to encourage conservation. Especially in the beginning, you may want to get feedback comments from applicants about the application procedure. An online survey can be done.

Funded Application(s)

You should have an agreement/contract with the person or institute getting the grant. You should specify that the granted money is to be used as outlined in the grant application. You will want to require a final report about the result of the project or research. If it is a long term project, you will probably want periodic reports. If a project never gets off the ground, you will want your money back. These things should be spelled out in an agreement/contract. If you do not have a contract, you should consider it as a no strings attached donation, as you will not have any legal enforcement.

Currency Exchange with International Funding of Grants

The Orchid Conservation Alliance takes transfer fees and currency conversion on a case-by-case basis, judging who needs money more. The San Diego Orchid Society Conservation Committee pays wire transfer fees currency conversion happen at the recipient's end and is paid by the recipient.

Conservation Award History

It is good to have a webpage listing the conservation awards that have been given out each year.

This document is from the cumulative experience of multiple people from the San Diego Orchid Society, the New Hampshire Orchid Society, the Orchid Conservation Alliance, the San Francisco Orchid Society and the Naples Orchid Society. The document will change as more experience is acquired.

One last consideration is to become aware of similar conservation groups and plant groups in your area. There may be opportunities to team up or learn of opportunities.

Links to orchid society conservation committees webpages:

The Native Orchid Conference Fred Case Grant link to application form
<https://www.nativeorchidconference.org/fred-case-grant>

The New Hampshire Orchid Society Conservation Committee
<https://newhampshireorchidsociety.wildapricot.org/page-1579475>

The San Diego Orchid Society Conservation Committee
<https://sdorchids.com/Conservation.html>

The San Francisco Orchid Society Conservation
Committee: <https://www.orchidsanfrancisco.org/conservation.html>