For NRCS use only:

Easement/Program Agreement No.	Parcel No.

Landowner Name(s):_____

Farm name (if applicable): _____

Signature from Authorized Entity Representative:	Date:

NRCS ACEP-ALE Ranking Form 2024

Part 1. National Ranking Factors (Maximum points = 200)	**Score** (Make Selection)
1. Percent of prime, unique, and important soils in the parcel to be protected (Maximum points = 35) • 0 points for less than or equal to 50% • 10 points for greater than 50% and less than or equal to 60% • 15 points for greater than 60% and less than or equal to 70% • 20 points for greater than 70% and less than or equal to 80% • 25 points for greater than 80% and less than or equal to 90% • 35 points for greater than 90%	35
2. Percent of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland in the parcel to be protected (Maximum points = 25) • 0 points for less than or equal to 33% • 5 points for greater than 33% and less than or equal to 40% • 15 points for greater than 40% and less than or equal to 50% • 20 points for greater than 50% and less than or equal to 75% • 25 points for greater than 75%	25

3. Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture) (Maximum points = 15) $Ratio = \frac{total\ acres\ of\ land\ in\ the\ parcel}{average\ farm\ size\ in\ the\ county (see\ Table\ 2\ in\ Ranking\ Guidance\ )}$ • 0 points for a ratio of less than or equal to 1.0, • 7 points for a ratio of greater than 1.0 and less than or equal to 2.0, • 15 points for a ratio greater than 2.0	15
4. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture) (Maximum points = 25) • 0 points for decrease of less than or equal to 0% • 5 points for decreases of greater than 0% and less than or equal to 5%, • 10 points for decrease of greater than 5% and less than or equal to 10%, • 15 points for decreases of greater than 10% and less than or equal to 15%, • 25 points for decreases greater than 15%	25
5. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of permanent grassland, pasture, and rangeland, other than cropland and woodland pasture, in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture) (Maximum points = 10) • 0 points for decrease of less than or equal to 0%, • 3 points for decreases of greater than 0 and less than or equal to 5%, • 5 points for decrease of greater than 5 and less than or equal to 10%, • 7 points for decreases of greater than 10 and less than or equal to 15%, • 10 points for decreases of greater than 15%	10
6. Percent population growth in the county as documented by the most recent United States Census (Census Bureau Home Page) (Maximum points = 15) • 0 points for growth rate of less than or equal to 0 times the State growth rate • 4 points for growth rate of greater than 0 and less than or equal to one times the State growth rate, • 7 points for growth rate of greater than one and less than or equal to two times the State growth rate, • 15 points for growth rate of greater than two times the State growth rate	15

7. Population density (population per square mile) as documented by the most recent United States Census (Census Bureau Home Page) (Maximum points = 15) • 0 points for population density less than or equal to 0.5 times the State population density, • 5 points for population density of greater than 0.5 and less than or equal to one times the State population density, • 10 points for population density of greater than one and less than or equal to three times the State population density, • 15 points for population density of greater than three times the State population density	15
8. Existence of a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established to address farm viability for future generations. **Documentation must be provided**. (Maximum points = 15) • 0 points for no plan, • 15 points for plan documented and prepared by industry professional	15
9. Proximity of the parcel to other protected lands. Protected lands such as compatible military installations; land owned in fee title by the United States or an Indian Tribe, State or local government, or by a nongovernmental organization whose purpose is to protect agricultural use and related conservation values; or land that is already subject to an easement or deed restriction that limits the conversion of the land to nonagricultural use or protects grazing uses and related conservation values. **Documentation must be provided.** (Maximum points = 15) • 0 points easement offer area (EOA) boundary greater than 3 miles from the protected land boundary, • 4 points EOA is greater than 1 mile but less than 3 miles from protected land, • 7 points EOA is within 1 mile of protected land boundary, • 15 points EOA boundary adjoins protected land boundary	15
10. Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure. **Documentation must be provided.** (Maximum points = 15) • 0 points if easement offer area (EOA) boundary greater than 3 miles in proximity, • 4 points if EOA is greater than or equal to 1 mile but less than 3 miles in proximity, • 7 points EOA is within 1 mile in proximity, • 15 points EOA boundary adjoins	15

11. Parcel ability to maximize the protection of contiguous or proximal acres devoted to agricultural use. **Documentation must be provided**. (Maximum points = 10) • 10 points if the parcel links two noncontiguous corridors of protected agricultural use, • 4 points if parcel is a contiguous or proximal expansion of agricultural use protected area, • 0 points parcel does not increase a protected agricultural use area	10
12. Currently enrolled in CRP in a contract that is set to expire within a year. (Maximum points = 4) • 4 points for YES, • 0 points for NO	4
13. The parcel is a grassland of special environmental significance that will benefit from the protection under the long-term easement. (Maximum points = 1) • 1 points if YES, • 0 points if NO	1

Part 2. State Ranking Factors (Maximum points = 200)	**Score (Make Selection)**
14. Does the county have a Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) or Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) Program. **Documentation must be provided.** (Maximum points = 40) • 40 points if Yes, and the parcel owner is a member of the EVAD • 20 points if Yes, and the parcel owner is a member of the VAD • 5 points if County does not have EVAD or VAD programs • 0 points if County has VAD or EVAD but parcel owner is not participating	40
15. Entity has demonstrated performance in managing and enforcing easements by monitoring 100 percent of its NRCS easements each year AND entity has provided information on any change in ownership to NRCS. (Maximum points = 10) • 10 points for YES, • 0 points for no or if there is no documentation to support a "YES" determination	10
16. Are landowners members of a historically underserved group? Socially Disadvantaged, Beginning, and Limited Resource Farmers/Ranchers, Veteran Farmers. Defined at the following website (Maximum points = 30): https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/slbfr/ • 30 points for YES • 0 points for NO	30

17. Parcel contains habitat for at-risk species that the landowner is **currently managing or protecting**. **Documentation must be provided.** (Maximum points = 30) • 30 points for federally listed threatened and endangered species, • 15 points for federally listed candidate species • 10 points for State species of concern, • 5 points for species of interest (according to State criteria) • 0 points for no species	30
18. Contains a **historical or archaeological** resource on the Local, State or National Register, or formally eligible for the National Register **OR** the farm is registered with the NC Department of Agriculture's Public Affairs as a Certified Century Farm. **Documentation must be provided.** (Maximum points = 15) • 15 points for Yes • 0 points for No	15
19. Capital Investment in Farm Operation – Does not include dwellings on the parcel except for employee housing. Substantial capital investment made within the following time periods **(Documentation must be provided)**: (Maximum points = 10) • 10 points last 0-2 years • 6 points last 2-5 years • 2 points last 5-10 years • 0 points no substantial investment within above criteria	10
20. Are non-NRCS funds used as the 25% match, excluding landowner contributions. (Maximum points = 10) • 10 points for funds provided by county, district, farming cooperative, foundation or entity fund raising • 5 points for state or other non-NRCS funding as match • 0 points for no matching funds	10
21. Is the parcel within a 2.0-mile radius of a city/town annexation boundary? **Documentation must be provided.** (Maximum points = 20) • **(-20)** points if YES AND the radius of the city/town annexation boundary exceeds 2.0 miles from city/town center to any annexed boundary • **(-10)** points if YES BUT city/town annexation boundary has a radius less than 2.0 miles from city/town center to any annexed boundary • 0 points if YES BUT the city/town annexation boundary has a radius of 1.0 miles or less to any annexed boundary • 20 points if NO	20

22. Is the parcel either in whole or in part within a source water assessment area as defined by the NC Public Water Supply Section? Current source water assessment areas can be viewed using the NC SWAP Mapping Application available on the web page referenced below. **Documentation (e.g. screen shot) must be provided.**: (Maximum points = 10) DEQ SWAPInfo 2.0 https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=26f4e2b3140f4e58825e48781ccebf5e (Select the map layers: PWS Surface Water Assessment Area 2020 and PWS Groundwater Assessment Areas 2020) Both surface water and groundwater areas should be considered. • 10 points for YES • 0 points for NO.	10
23. Parcel contains a 303(d) listed steam segment on the NC Division of Water Resources 2022 Final 303(d) list. (Maximum points = 15) See guidance document for finding streams on 303(d) list. • 15 points for YES • 0 points for NO	15
24. Parcel is within a National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) watershed (Maximum points = 10): ○ Indian (HUCs: 030501020502 and 030501020501) Howards Cr. (HUC: 030501020402) (Catawba Basin) ○ East Prong (HUC: 030401010405) and Middle Prong (HUC: 030401010404) of the Roaring River (Yadkin Basin) ○ Headwaters Great Coharie Creek (30300060402) House Pond-Sevenmile Swamp (30300060401) Ward Swamp (30300060403) Marsh Swamp-Great Coharie Creek (30300060404) White Oak Swamp-Great Coharie Creek (30300060405) Provide supporting documentation, e.g., screenshot of watershed with location of easement. See guidance document for instructions on viewing watershed. • 10 points for YES • 0 points for NO	10

Total Points for National Ranking questions: (Maximum =200)	200
Total Points for State Ranking questions: (Maximum = 200)	200

Signature from NRCS Approving Official:	**Date:**