

**FARM AND RANGLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM (FRPP) 2014
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) VIRGINIA
APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

I. Application Process

A. Application Content and Format

Proposals must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration.

Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applications must contain a summary of not more than one page that provides the following:

- Project title;
- Project duration (beginning and ending dates);
- Name, address, telephone, e-mail, and other contact information for the project; director(Provide a mailing address, not a Post Office Box,);
- Names and affiliations of project collaborators;
- Number of parcels and acres to be addressed by the proposal;
- Project objectives;
- Summary of the work to be performed;
- Total project cost;
- Total Federal share of the total project; and
- Total partner contribution in terms of financial and technical assistance.

B. Submission Requirements

Applications must be submitted as hard copy to:

Mr. John A. Bricker, State Conservationist
USDA, NRCS
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209
Richmond, VA 23229

Applications must include narrative sections described in this notice and:

- Farm and Ranchland Protection Program Virginia Application 2014
- SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance”,
- SF-424A “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs” and
- SF-424B review and sign the “Assurances Non-Construction Programs”
- CCC-1200 Application for Program Funding (completed by landowner)
- CCC-1026 Certification of Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance (signed by the landowner or certified to be on file with FSA)
- Virginia 2014 Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) Ranking Worksheet
- Landowner Interview Worksheet and Estimate of Matching Funds and Stewardship Fees

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

If submitting proposals for more than one project, submit a separate, complete application package for each project. Applications are to be typewritten on 8½” x 11” white paper, double spaced, and on one side only. The text of the proposal must be typewritten in a font no smaller than 12-point, with one-inch margins. Applicants must submit one signed original and two complete copies of each project application. Each copy of the proposal must be stapled securely in the upper left hand corner. Hard copies must be accompanied by an electronic copy on a compact disc. Electronic files must be either Microsoft Word or Acrobat (PDF) files.

C. Proposal Due Date

Proposals must be received at the previously aforementioned address by 5:00 p.m. EDT on **December 20, 2013 and January 17, 2014**. A proposal’s postmark date is not a factor in whether an application is received on time. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in proposal delivery. Proposals that have been selected will be notified by mail within 10 business days of the final selection. Applicants whose proposals have not been selected will be notified within 15 business days of the final selection. Notification of elimination will be e-mailed or mailed to the applicant.

D. Acknowledgement of Submission

Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses. If the applicant’s e-mail address is not indicated, NRCS will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter. If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 7 days of the submission deadline, please contact Diane Dunaway, FRPP Program Manager, Tel. 804-287-1634, diane.dunaway@va.usda.gov.

II. Review

A. Proposal Review and Selection Process

Prior to proposal review, the NRCS State Office will screen each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete and ineligible applications will be eliminated from competition. Applications meeting the requirements of this Notice will be ranked by NRCS utilizing a comprehensive ranking worksheet.

B. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates Awards are anticipated to be announced by **January 31, 2014 and February 28, 2014**.

C. Award Notification

Applicants who have been selected will be notified by official notice from the NRCS State Conservationist. NRCS staff will develop cooperative agreements with those cooperating entities whose parcels have been selected. Applicants whose proposals have not been selected will be notified by official letter.

III. Administrative Review

A. Administrative and Technical Reviews

NRCS will perform an administrative review of the appraisals on ninety percent of the parcels that are accepted for purchase of an easement. NRCS will also perform a technical review of the appraisals of 10 percent of the parcels accepted for purchase of an easement. The NRCS National Appraiser will also perform a technical review of all appraisals with a fair market value of more than \$1 million and all appraisals performed by appraisers who are performing their first appraisal for NRCS.

B. Review of Conveyance Document and Title

The conveyance document (i.e., conservation easement deed or conservation easement deed template) used by the eligible entity must be reviewed and approved by the USDA NRCS National Headquarters. NRCS reserves the right to require additional specific language or to remove language in the conservation easement deed to protect the interest of the United States. The conveyance document must include a “Rights of Enforcement” clause for the United States. NRCS shall specify the terms for the “Rights of Enforcement” clause to read as set forth in the cooperative agreement. The conveyance document must also contain a clause that all rights conveyed by the landowner under the document will become vested in the United States should the cooperating entity abandon, or attempt to terminate the conservation easement. The conveyance document must also specify the impervious surfaces shall not exceed two percent of the easement area.

The title must be approved before an easement can be closed. USDA reserves the right to deny funding for any application where there are exceptions to clear title on any property

C. Conservation Compliance

As a condition of participation, all highly erodible land in the easement must be managed in accordance with a conservation plan. The conservation plan will be developed using the standards and specifications of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and 7 CFR Part 12, unless otherwise determined by the State Conservationist, in partnership with the eligible entity. The conservation plan must be implemented on the highly erodible land, as determined by the State Conservationist, prior to the easement being recorded.

D. Cooperative Agreement

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), through NRCS, enters into a cooperative agreement with a selected eligible entity to document participation in FRPP. The cooperative agreement will address, among other subjects:

- The easement type, terms, and conditions;
- The management and enforcement of the rights acquired;
- The role and responsibilities of NRCS and the cooperating entity;
- The responsibilities of the easement manager on lands acquired with FRPP assistance; and
- Other requirements deemed necessary by the CCC, acting through NRCS, to protect the interests of the United States. The cooperative agreement will also include an attachment listing the pending offers accepted in FRPP, landowners' names, addresses, location map(s), and other relevant information.

Interested entities should contact Diane Dunaway, diane.dunaway@va.usda.gov for a copy of a sample cooperative agreement.