

Entity Held Easement Monitoring Reporting Form

Entity	Easement Program	Ownership Verification
		Date Landowner(s) Contacted
Landowner(s) <i>(Must match names on the current deed.)</i>	Program Agreement and Parcel Contract Number from NEST, Protracts, or CD	Method of Contact
		Date Ownership Verified
Monitoring Date	Monitoring Type	Verifier's Name

Reporting Questions

1. If there is a new landowner, were they notified of the easement and have records been updated? *If yes, new landowner(s) information:*

Yes **No** **N/A**

2. Is there any follow up requested from the landowner(s)? *If yes, describe:*

Yes **No**

3. Are the terms and conditions of the easement deed being met? E.g., no unauthorized uses, change in land use, new utilities, buildings outside of approved building envelopes, etc. *If no, list issue(s):*

Yes **No**

4. Are threatened or endangered species present on or proximal to this land? *If follow up is needed, list actions required:*

Yes **No**

5. Are there landowner, partner, or entity suggestions or comments? *If yes, describe:*

Yes **No**

6. Additional notes and observations:

7. Is there an additional monitoring report merged and enclosed within this PDF?

Yes **No**

Submission between October 1st and September 1st is required for NRCS internal Federal Fiscal Year recording. Entities who understand and complete their monitoring responsibilities according to the agreement and deed terms, and who do so prior to September 1st of each year, may receive a higher prioritization rating on future parcel applications. Please email each easement monitoring form separately to NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov. Monitoring forms may also be uploaded to the USDA Box Account, which can be setup by emailing the same address.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is easement monitoring and why is it required?

Easement monitoring is a method used to enforce the terms of the agricultural land easement deed. Accountability is the objective of conducting easement monitoring for lands enrolled under NRCS easement programs. Monitoring ensures that the terms and conditions of an easement deed are being met and that program objectives are being achieved in accordance with statutory and regulatory authorities and requirements.

NRCS Washington is required to report on all easements, including entity held easements, to NRCS National Headquarters every federal fiscal year. Monitoring reports are the primary mechanism to meet national reporting requirements. Failure to report on easements, including entity held easements, may decrease Washington's annual financial allocation for easement programs.

To meet reporting requirements, an entity held easement enrolled in an NRCS easement program must be monitored annually after it closes. A baseline documentation report satisfies the monitoring requirement for the federal fiscal year of easement acquisition. During subsequent years, the eligible entity monitoring the easement should include a comparison of the current conditions on the easement to the conditions documented in the baseline documentation report. Monitoring findings must be documented and reported once per each federal fiscal year for every closed easement in accordance with the cooperative or program agreement between NRCS and the stewarding entity.

Why do I have to provide this form to NRCS-Washington?

NRCS-WA provides an Entity Held Easement Monitoring Reporting Form for entity use that standardizes monitoring requirements and reporting instructions. The form collects required information needed for NRCS reporting purposes. If an entity elects to use a different monitoring worksheet, the entity needs to merge a PDF version of the monitoring worksheet to the end of *this NRCS monitoring form* and submit as a **single file**.

What does NRCS consider as annual monitoring?

Monitoring by the eligible entity must be conducted through onsite visits or through a review of the most recent and best publicly available imagery. Monitoring must occur each federal fiscal year (FY), which runs from **October 1 through September 30**. NRCS-WA requests that an entity submit their monitoring report(s) before September 1 to allow NRCS-WA time to upload the documents and submit to NRCS National Headquarters prior to the end of the FY and software closures. Entities who understand and complete their monitoring responsibilities according to the agreement and deed terms, and who do so prior to September 1st of each year, may receive a higher workload prioritization rating on future parcel applications. Example monitoring & reporting timeline scenarios:



Entity completes monitoring on 7/22/21 (FY21) and submits their monitoring form to NRCS-WA on 8/22/21 (FY21) satisfies their FY21 monitoring responsibilities.



Entity completes monitoring on 7/22/21 (FY21) but submits their monitoring form to NRCS-WA on 11/22/21 (FY22) does not satisfy their FY21 monitoring responsibilities.



Entity completes monitoring on 10/20/21 (FY22) and submits their monitoring form to NRCSWA on 11/22/21 (FY22) satisfies their FY22 monitoring responsibilities.



Entity completes monitoring on 10/20/21 (FY22) but submits their monitoring form to NRCS-WA on 11/22/22 (FY23) does not satisfy either their FY22 or FY23 monitoring responsibilities.



If an entity completes monitoring on 10/20/21 (FY22), submits their monitoring form to NRCS-WA on 11/22/21 (FY22) and then monitors again on 5/6/22 (FY22) and submits another form to NRCS-WA on 11/22/23 (FY23), NRCS counts two separate FY22 monitoring sessions, with one report submitted on time (the report submitted on 11/22/21 for the 10/20/21 monitoring session). NRCS would then expect to receive a FY23 monitoring form prior to the 2023 deadline (September 1, 2023). Completing multiple monitoring sessions in a single FY is beneficial if there are any concerns with an easement that requires frequent monitoring or if land ownership changes hand.

What is the National Easement Staging Tool (NEST) Number?

Every easement enrolled prior to FY20 under an NRCS easement program receives a unique identifier number called a NEST number. NEST stands for the National Easement Staging Tool, which is a data platform used by NRCS to track individual easements. NEST numbers are included on executed easement agreements (e.g., cooperative agreement or parcel contract) but are not publicly shared. Entities may contact NRCS directly to receive their easement NEST number(s) if they cannot locate the number on their easement agreement documents. Entities must include their easement NEST number on the annual monitoring form.

Example NEST Number: 7305460500M6L

Example Legacy Number: 73-54-6-075

NOTE

Before NEST numbers were standardized, easements enrolled in NRCS programs were given a "project" or "legacy" number. However, all "project" or "legacy" numbers have since been updated to NEST numbers. Entities should reference their easement NEST number when communicating with NRCS.

What is a Parcel Contract Number?

Easements enrolled after FY20 utilize new and updated software. This software generates a parcel contract that is specific to each parcel enrolled. For landowners, Parcel Contract Numbers work very similarly to NEST numbers discussed previously.

Why does the monitoring form require ownership verification?

Ownership verification is required as part of the annual monitoring requirements because NRCS must verify land ownership for all enrolled easements every fiscal year.

There are four places on the Entity Easement Monitoring Reporting Form that correspond to this requirement:

1. Date landowner contacted. This is the date that the stewarding entity contacts the landowner regarding annual monitoring requirements.

2. Method [used to verify the landowner]. Stewarding entities must document how the current landowner was verified. Allowable verification methods include, but are not limited to, onsite visit, phone call, email, letter, or obtaining a public record.

3. Landownership verification date. Entities must document when landownership is verified. This date may often be the same as the date the landowner was contacted. For example, if a phone call was used to contact the landowner, both dates would be the same if the landowner picked up and verified ownership. However, if a message was left and then the landowner returned the call the next day and verified ownership, then the dates would be different.

4. Verifiers Name. The verifiers name is the entity representative who verified the ownership.

How are monitoring forms submitted?

Please email each easement monitoring form separately to NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov. Monitoring forms may also be uploaded to the USDA Box Account, which can be setup by emailing the same address. NRCS cannot accept private drop box links. If submitting via email, entities must submit only one monitoring form per email. The subject line should read "AMW entity name NEST# or PARCEL CONTRACT#" to assist NRCS with identifying and tracking monitoring emails.