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Washington State
Natural Resources
Conservation
Service



2024 ACEP-ALE Kickoff Workshop
Presentation will begin at 12 pm (Noon)

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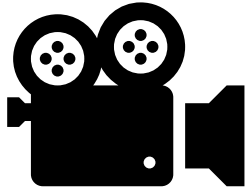
Welcome!

Alexandra James
Workshop Host

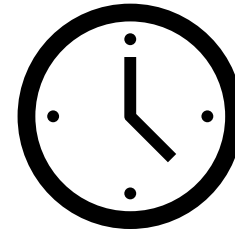


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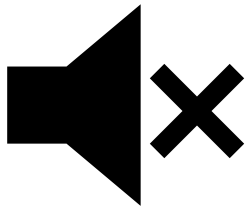
Housekeeping



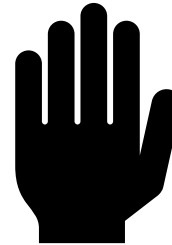
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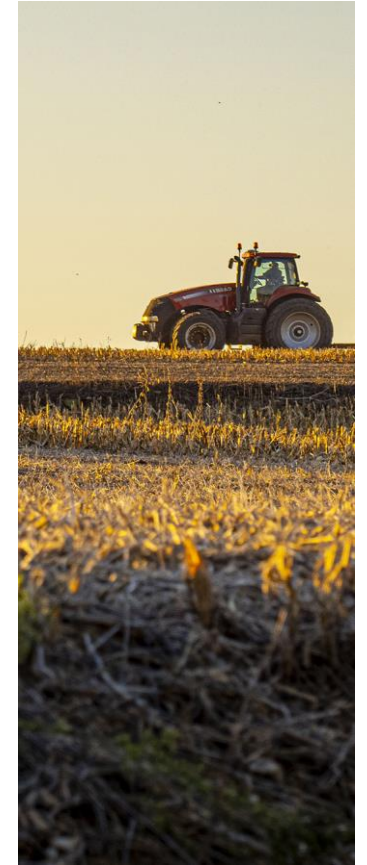
2.5 Hour Workshop with
Q&A



Please Mute Mic &
Turn Video Off



Submit Questions via
Chat



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Workshop Panelists

Roylene Comes At Night – NRCS State Conservationist

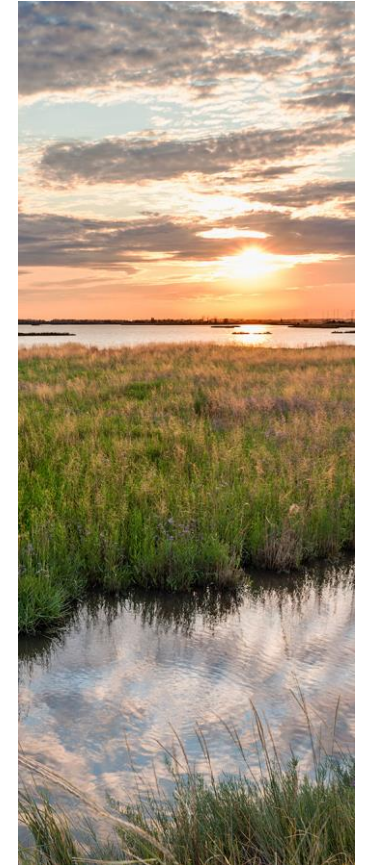
Keith Griswold – NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs

Kathy Wanner – NRCS Easement Analyst

Bobby Burken – NRCS Business Tools Coordinator

Kaitlin Davies – FSA Outreach & Beginning Farmer Coordinator

Alexandra James – RCPP Easement Liaison



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NRCS Partnership Updates

Roylene Comes At Night



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Workshop Agenda

Alexandra James

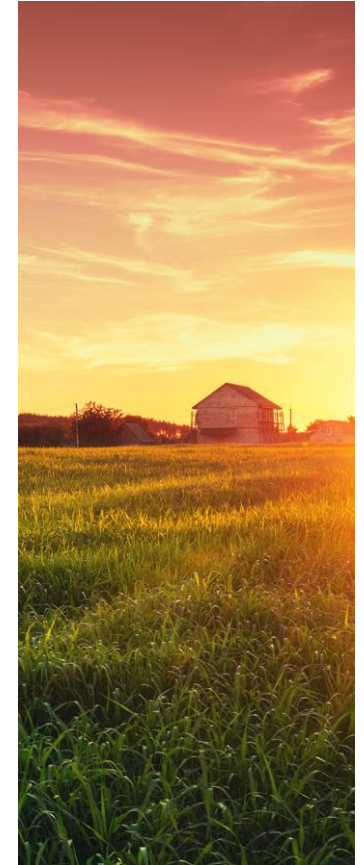


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Workshop Agenda

TIME	TOPIC
12 pm	Welcome featuring Roylene Comes At Night
12:30 pm	Session I: NRCS Programming & Resources – What’s New for FY 2024?
1:10 pm	BREAK
1:20 pm	Session II: FY 2024 ALE Application Process
1:50 pm	Session III: Tips & Tricks to a Successful ALE Application
2:20 pm	Closing Remarks



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Session I: NRCs Programming & Resources: What's New for FY24

Keith Griswold, Alexandra James,
Kathy Wanner & Bobby Burken



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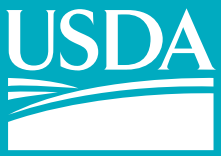
The 2023 Farm Bill and Inflation Reduction Act Updates

Keith Griswold



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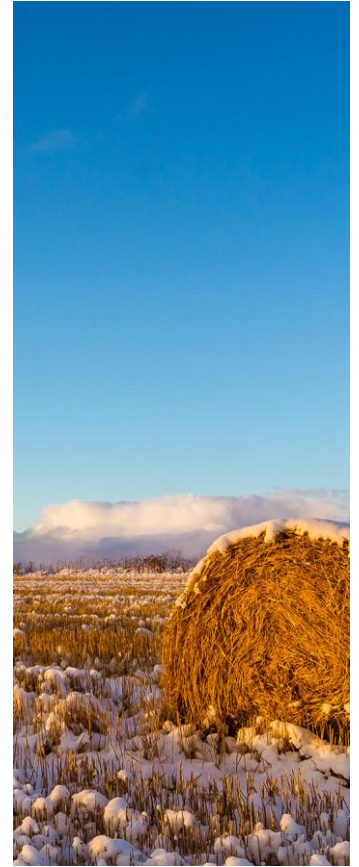
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2023 Farm Bill

- What's the latest status or rumors?



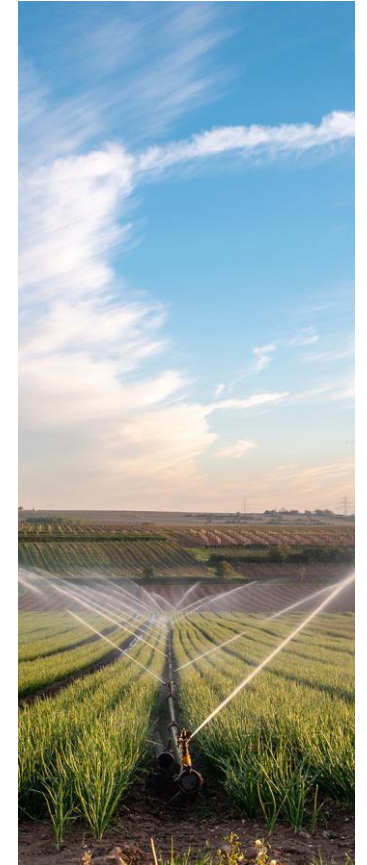
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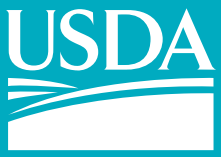
Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

- Expansion of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) priorities to include the sagebrush biome in addition to the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) will increase the conservation footprint of IRA investments and avoid greenhouse gas emissions in a biome at risk of conversion.
- Link to WLFW Sagebrush Biome Conservation Framework: <https://www.wlfw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SagebrushFramework.pdf>



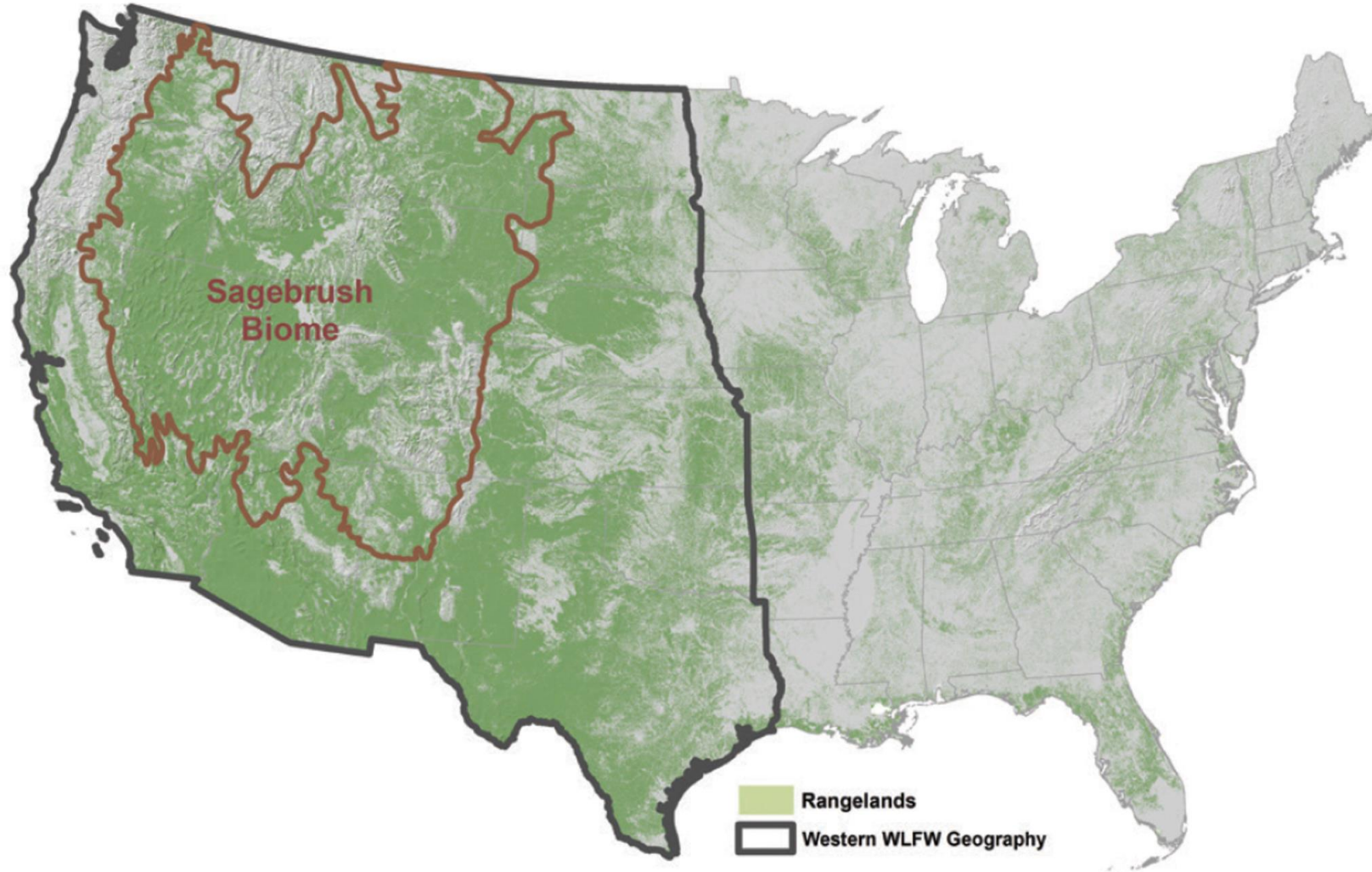
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IRA-ACEP



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IRA-ACEP

- The sagebrush biome stores considerable amounts of carbon in stable, below ground pools.
 - Approximately a quarter of the carbon in western ecosystems is stored in grassland and shrubland ecosystems including the sagebrush biome.
 - Most of the carbon in the sagebrush biome is stored in belowground biomass and as soil organic carbon, accumulated over decades to centuries. To avoid greenhouse gas emissions in sagebrush ecosystems, protecting stored carbon by avoiding conversion is paramount.
 - The sagebrush biome also includes moist soil habitats and wetlands that store significant carbon and can act as carbon sinks.



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IRA-ACEP

- So why not IRA-ACEP funds in Washington?
 - Not enough applications to spend yearly allocated Farm Bill funds. Washington turns back Farm Bill funds most years.
 - Need to ask and justify to NRCS National Headquarters (NHQ) for these additional IRA-ACEP funds. See NB 300-23-42: <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=49587>

Explanation: By August 7, 2023, submit to the [EPD SharePoint site](#) the following information:

1. A one- or two-page summary that describes where your state IRA funds for ACEP should be targeted and why. Include any management requirements necessary to maximize benefits. Include a description of existing coordination within NRCS or efforts with partners that may benefit ACEP prioritization in certain areas.
2. Maps of the proposed areas.
3. Peer-reviewed scientific literature that supports consideration of the proposed area.





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NRCS-WA Easement Staff Roles & Responsibilities

Keith Griswold



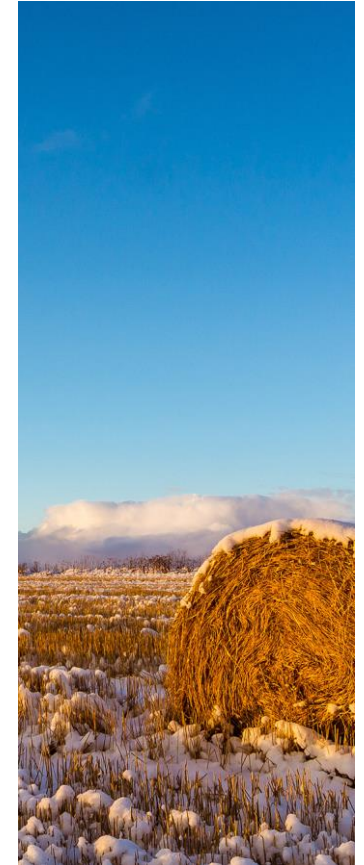
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Easement Team

- RCPP Easement Liaison – Alexandra James
- West Area Easement Specialist – Scott Cook
- Central Area Easement Specialist – Jacob Pieper
- East Area Easement Specialist – Brandt Becnel
- Realty Specialist – Vacant
- Easement Analyst – Kathy Wanner
- Natural Resource Specialist – Heather Noel
- Easement Program Manager – Carlee Elliott

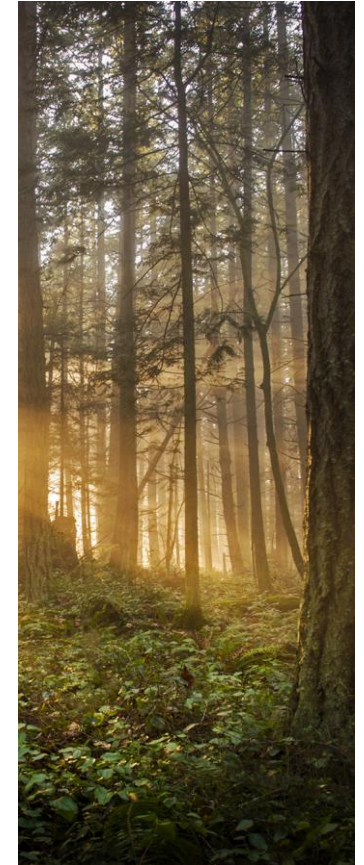


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Roles & Responsibilities

- **RCPP Easement Liaison**
 - Works with RCPP partners on correctly applying for RCPP-ACEP or RCPP Easement programs. Works with organizations and their individual landowners on program requirements.
- **Area Easement Specialists**
 - Conduct stewardship easement monitoring visits (stewardship = U.S. holds the easement), develop WRPOs and CUAs, develop restoration and stewardship contracts, and address easement violations.
- **Realty Specialist**
 - Provides support and guidance in real estate laws, concepts, and principles relating to the acquisition, administration and enforcement of conservation easements.

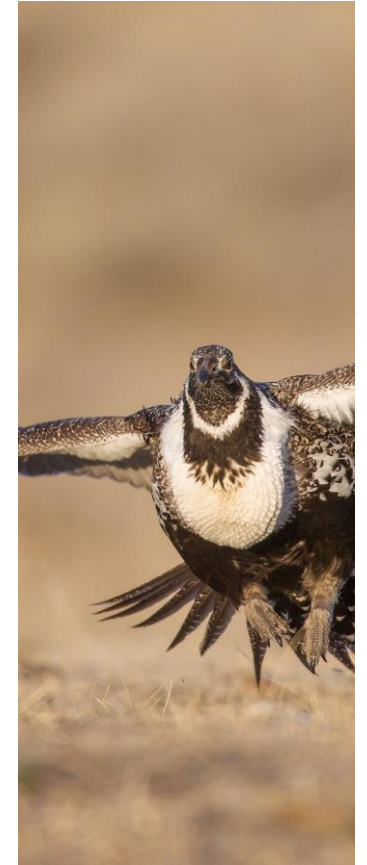


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Roles & Responsibilities

- **Easement Analyst**
 - Assists the Easement Program Manager and Realty Specialist in populating, updating, tracking and maintaining project files in NRCS business tools.
- **Natural Resource Specialist**
 - Conducts wetland compliance reviews. Assists with annual monitoring report reviews.
- **Easement Program Manager**
 - Provides overall management and delivery of the ACEP program in Washington (both ACEP-WRE and ACEP-ALE).



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ALE Website Overview

Alexandra James



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ACEP-ALE Website Overview

- New national website platform debuted last year.
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program/washington/washington-acep-ale>
- You'll find:
 - General program overview
 - Eligibility information
 - Instructions on how to apply
 - Links to success stories
 - Programmatic information
- Program Resources & Tools
 - RCO/NRCS Process Guide
 - BPS Criteria
 - Monitoring Reporting Form
 - Title Exceptions Guide
 - Impervious Surfaces Waiver Request
- Application Ranking Process & Documents
 - GSS maps and shapefiles
 - Program Ranking Criteria
- Application Forms & Documents for Entities
 - FY24 application packets
 - Minimum Deed Terms
 - Application forms
- Acquisition Documents & Forms
 - Program Agreement & Parcel Contract templates
 - Increase in Federal Share Request form
 - Other acquisition forms



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FY24 Timeline, ALE Workflow, Entity Documentation, & Annual Monitoring

Kathy Wanner



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FY 2024 NRCS-WA EASEMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

ACEP-ALE (General)	Responsible Person(s)	FY2024											
		October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
WA NRCS ALE Kickoff Meeting, 12-3p	NRCS	10/5/2023											
Submit Program Agreement Entity Application package to NRCS if program agreement is not already established for ACEP-ALE General.	Applicant	10/10/2023											
Signup Announcement (open minimum 30 days)	NRCS	10/10/2023											
Application packet deadline *NRCS to immediately check to see if ALE application coincides with an EQIP or CSP application due to CART assessments.	Applicant			12/15/2023									
FSA Eligibility (AGI, AD1026, FTE, 901/902)-- AGI must be filed. Active SAM requirement for eligible applicant.	Applicant and all Landowner(s) on deed			12/15/2023									
Program Analyst uploads application materials to DMS.	NRCS				1/5/2024								
WPT deadline/ Field visits scheduled for hazmat due diligence forms, WA land eligibility worksheet.	NRCS				1/12/2024								
Program Analyst submits request to EAB to order Environmental Database Search.	NRCS				1/12/2024								
AES completes CD/CART Assessment/Ranking/Cost est.	NRCS					2/9/2024							
EPM selects parcel applications for Pre-Approval	NRCS					2/13/2024							
AES creates CD Agreement items.	NRCS					2/23/2024							
EPM selects parcel applications for Approval	NRCS					2/27/2024							
Program Analyst completes pre-obligation checklist and submits for EAB full service request preobligation review. (30 days per policy for IC preobligation review time). IC corrections are made by Applicant/NRCS asap, and CPA1265, 1265Appendix, 1266 sent to applicant for signature asap after IC pre-ob completed	NRCS						3/8/2024						
Entity returns signed Parcel Agreement documents to NRCS	Applicant						EAB		EAB				
EPM enters applicant signature in Protracts, requests Fund Mgr role to accept, routes for STC signature, enters STC signature in Protracts, routes to ASTC-P for obligation, EPM or PA sends completed docs to entity.	NRCS								EAB				
NRCS deadline of initial allocation to obligate Parcel	NRCS									6/28/2024			
ALE Process Improvement Meeting	Easement									Anticipated			
FY 2025 ALE Prep	Carlee Elliott												
Preobligations due to IC for FY24	NRCS											8/16/2024	

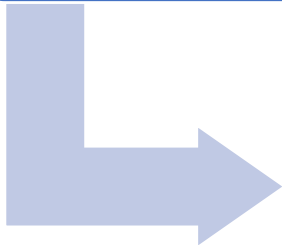
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ALE Workflow

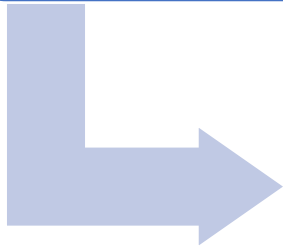
Program Agreement

- NRCS-CPA-41
- WA Entity Application Packet and required documents



Parcel Contract

- NRCS-CPA-41a
- FSA Eligibility
- WA Parcel Application Packet and required documents



Acquisition

- CE Deed
- Appraisal
- Secure Clear Title
- Baseline
- Misc. NRCS Forms

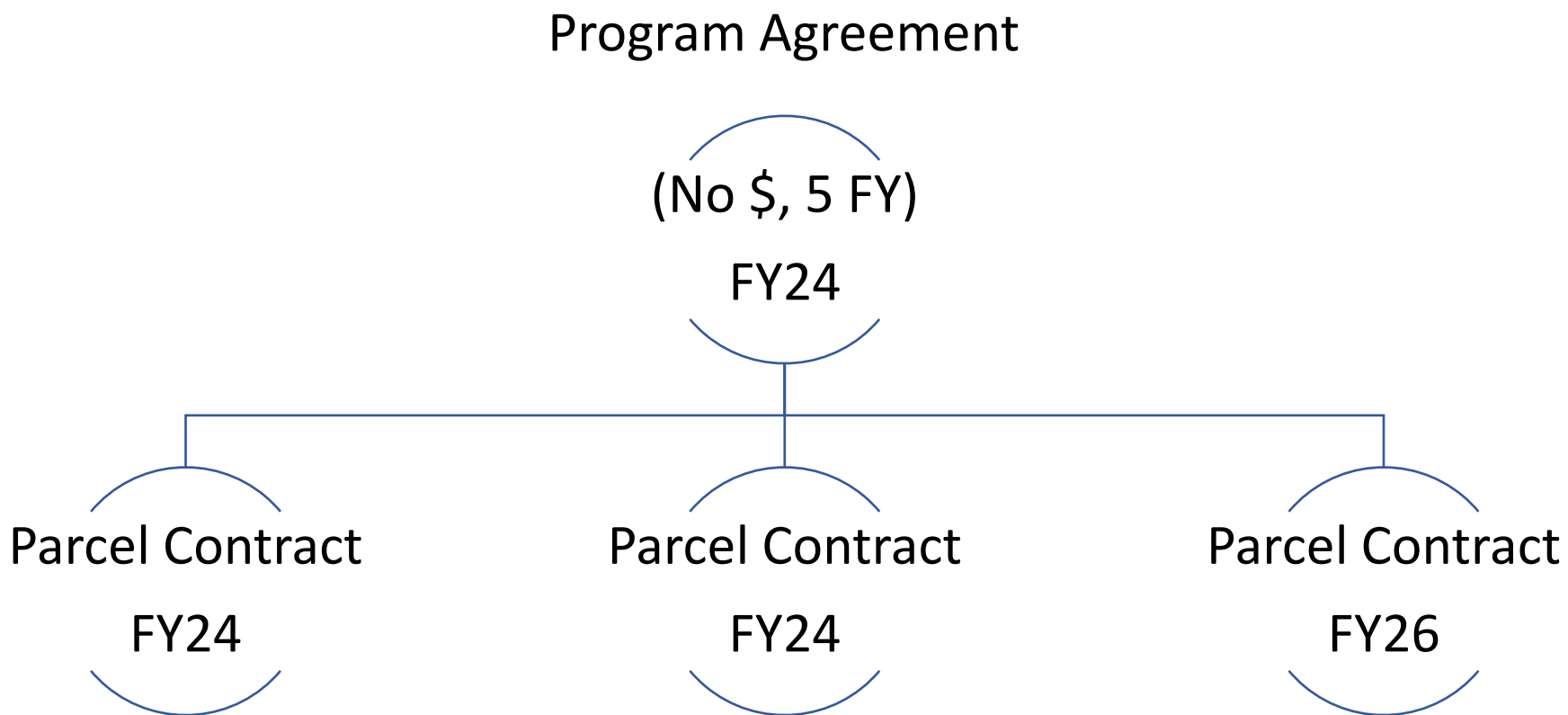


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ALE Workflow: Structure Example



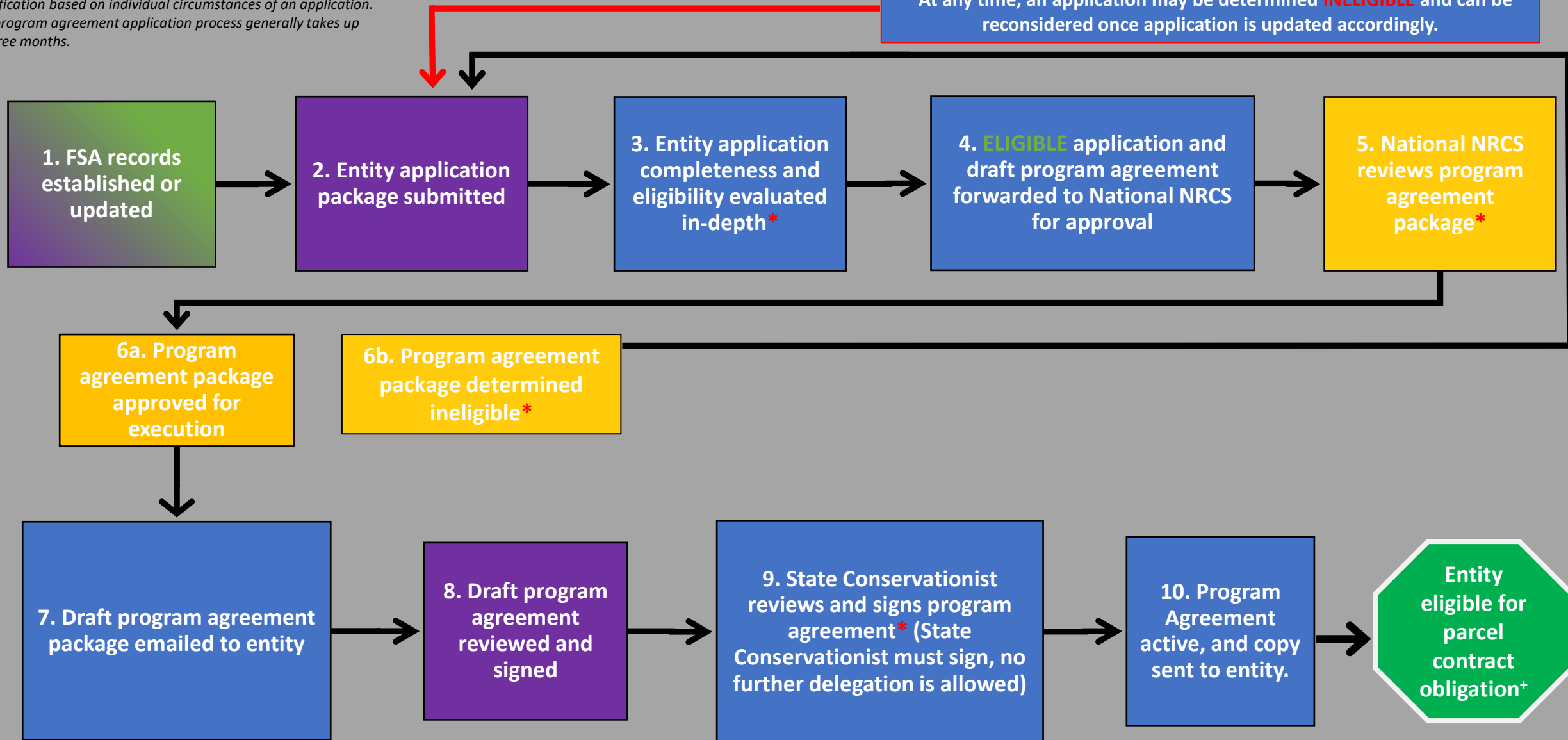
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WA ACEP-ALE PROGRAM AGREEMENT PROCESS

This flow chart represents a general process and is subject to modification based on individual circumstances of an application. The program agreement application process generally takes up to three months.

***At any time, an application may be determined **INELIGIBLE** and can be reconsidered once application is updated accordingly.**

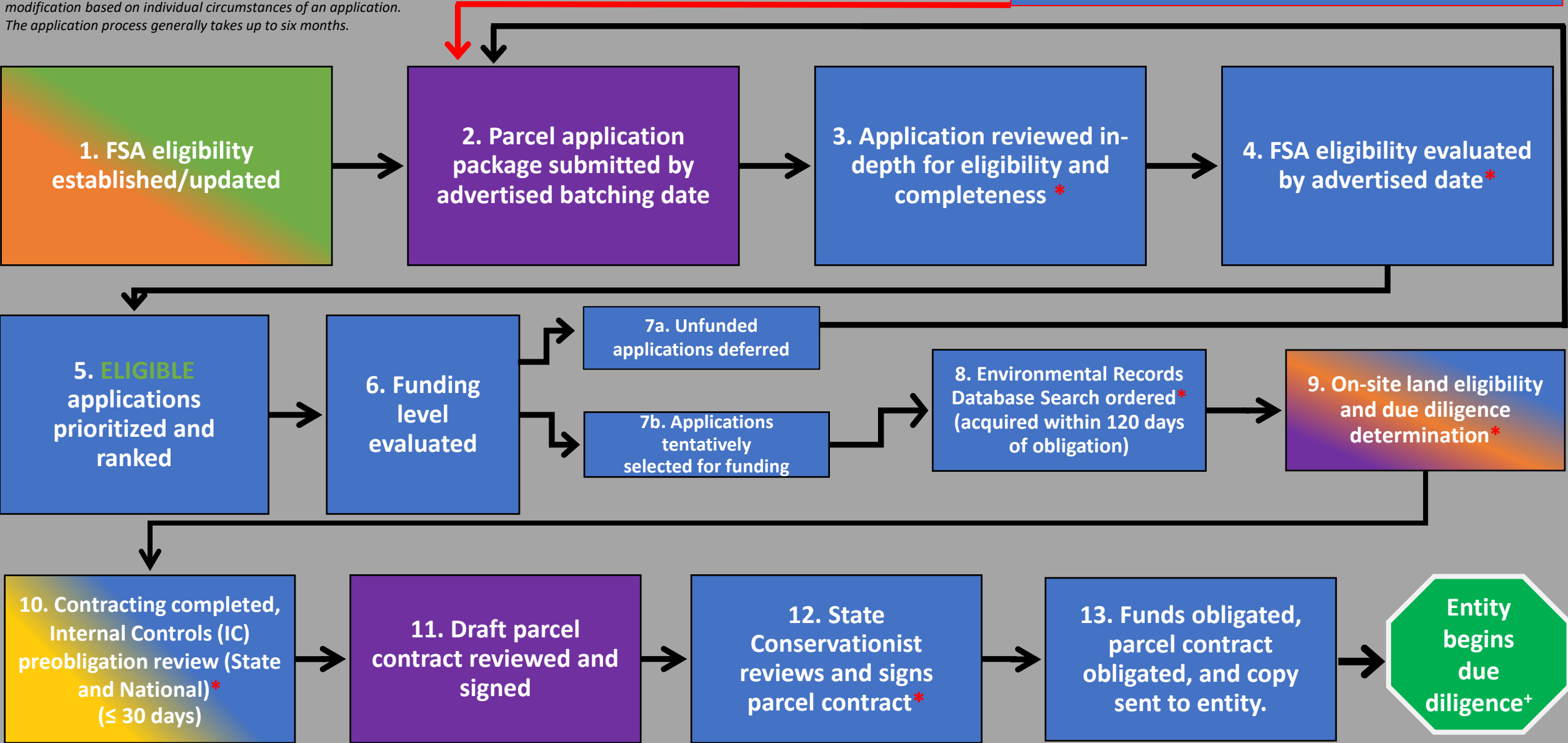


+See application process workflows for continuation.

WA ACEP-ALE PARCEL APPLICATION PROCESS

This flow chart represents a general process and is subject to modification based on individual circumstances of an application. The application process generally takes up to six months.

*At any time, an application may be determined **INELIGIBLE** or screen too low and can be reconsidered once application is updated accordingly.



*See closing process workflows for continuation.



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Entity Documentation

[Landowner Eligibility Matrix](#)

[FY24 ACEP-ALE GSS Parcel Application](#)

[FY24 ACEP-ALE General Parcel Application](#)

[FY24 ACEP-ALE Entity Application](#)

[FSA-211 Power of Attorney](#)

[NRCS-CPA-1270](#)

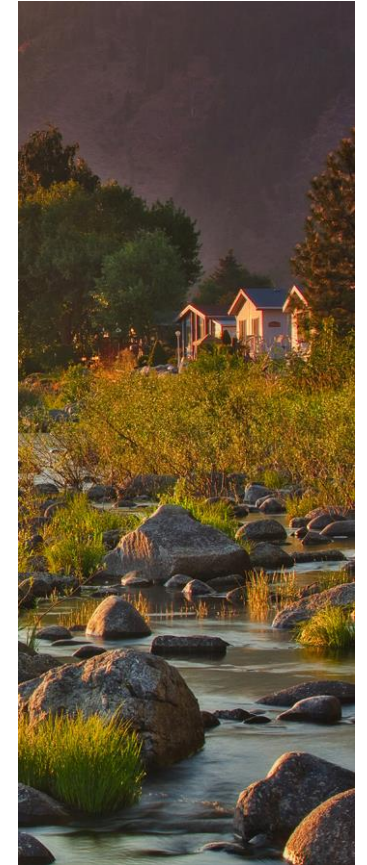
[CPA-41 Entity Application for an Agricultural Land Easement \(ALE\) Agreement](#)

[Parcel Sheet for Entity application for an Agricultural Land Easement agreement NRCS-CPA-41A](#)

[NRCS-CPA-41A BPS Supplement](#)

[SF-1199 Direct Deposit Form](#)

[February 2022 Minimum Deed Terms](#)



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Annual Monitoring

- Federal Fiscal Year 1 October – 30 September
- Send reports to NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov
- May receive high prioritization rating on future contracts for submitting reports prior to 1 September.

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.



Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington

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? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, new landowner(s) information:</i>
2. Is there any follow up requested from the landowner(s)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, describe:</i>
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. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If no, list issue(s):</i>
4. Are threatened or endangered species present on or proximal to this land? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If follow up is needed, list actions required:</i>
5. Are there landowner, partner, or entity suggestions or comments? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, describe:</i>



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Grasslands of Special Significance (GSS) Boundary Updates

Bobby Burken

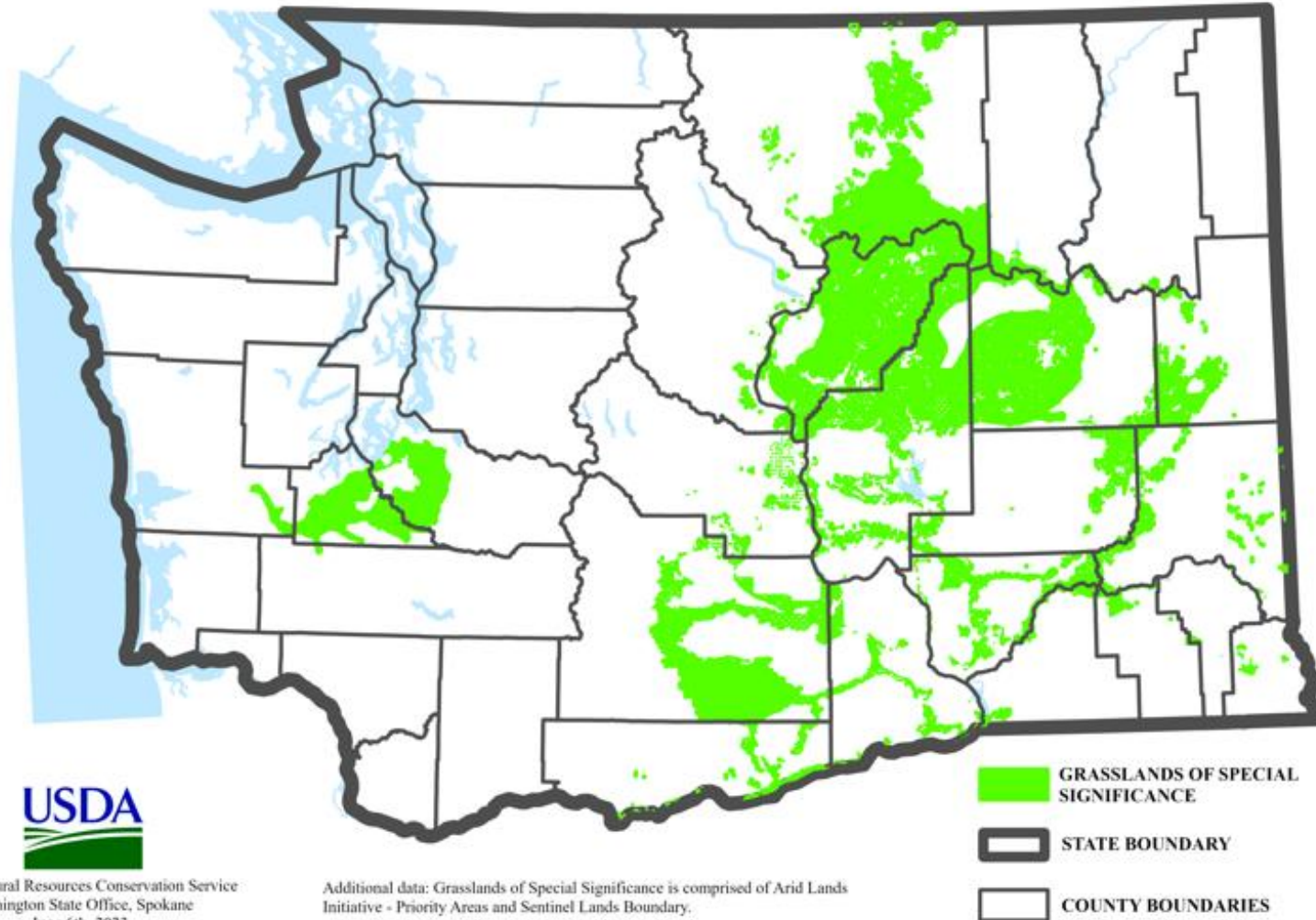


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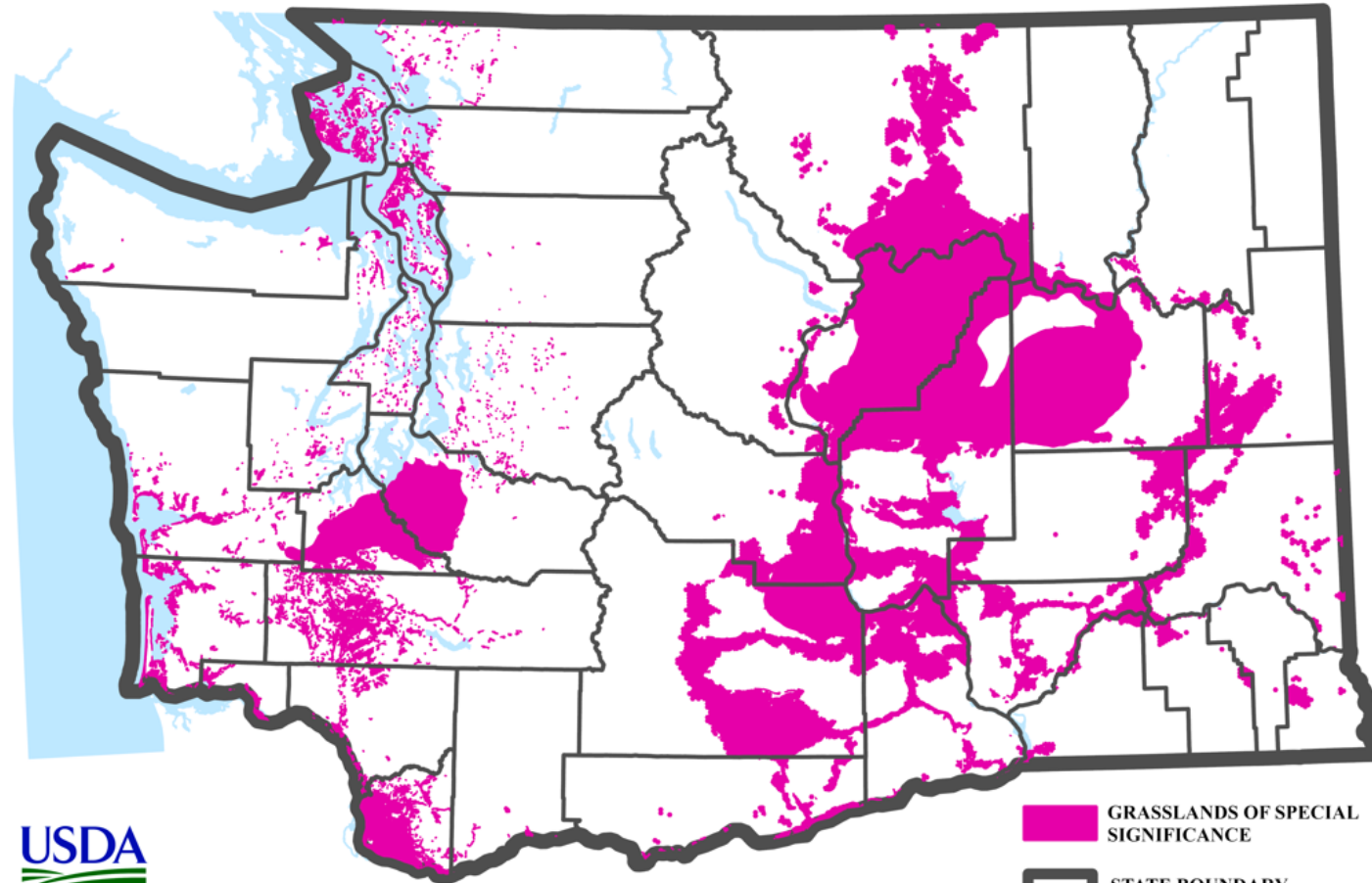
Former GSS Area




- Contains:
 - Arid Lands Initiative – priority areas
 - Sentinel Lands Boundary – EPA Southern Puget Prairies Ecoregion+



New GSS Area

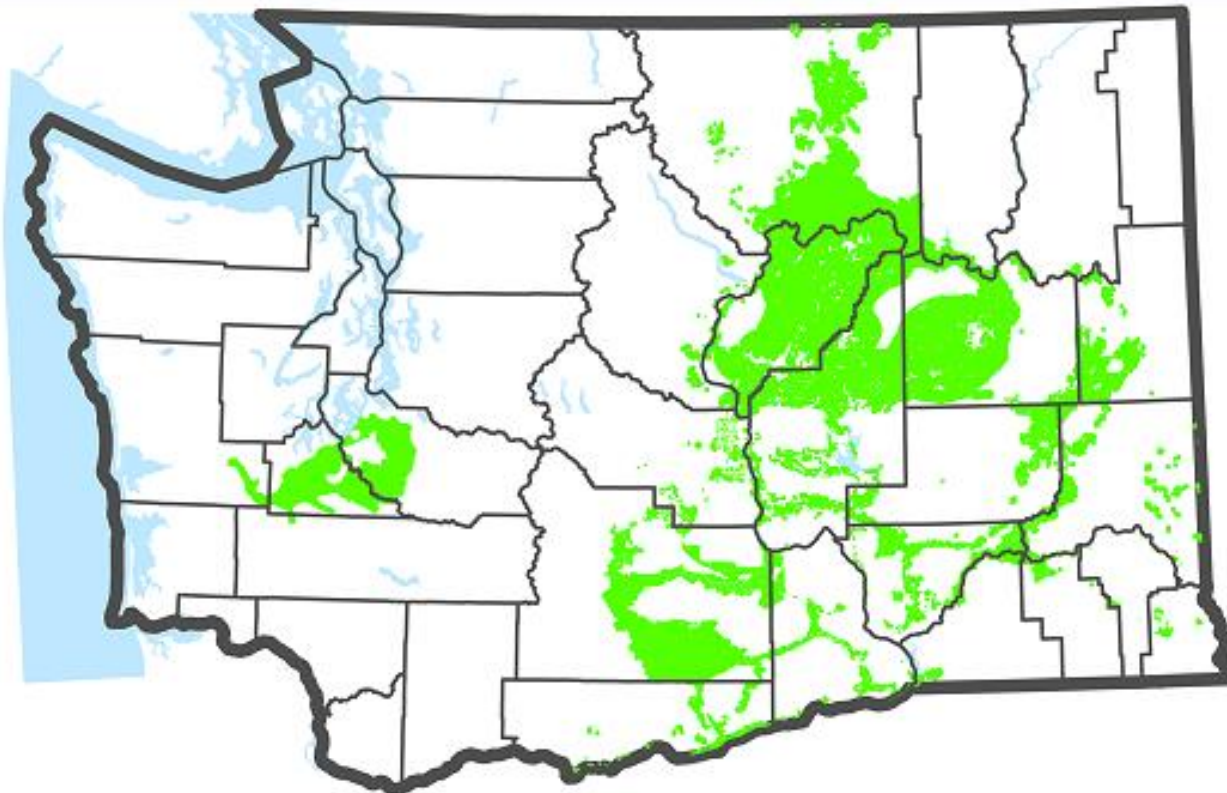
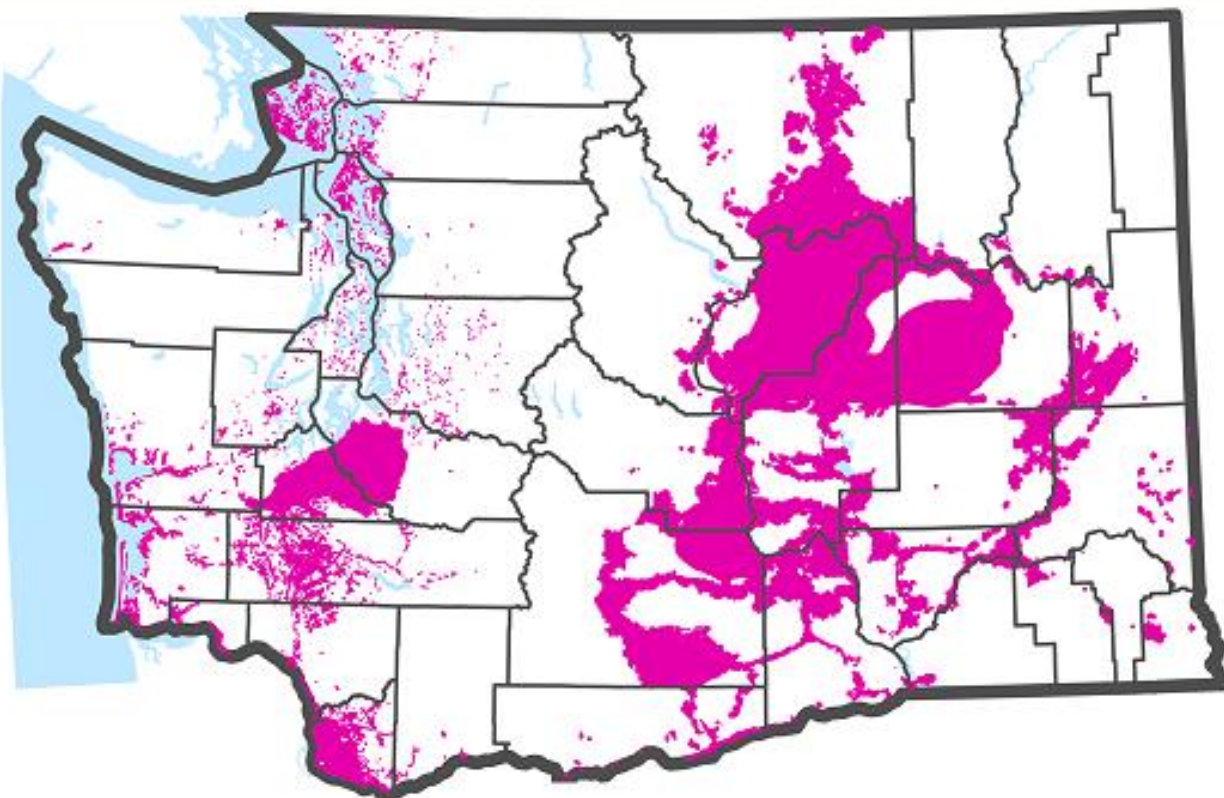
- **Contains:**
 - Arid Lands Initiative – priority areas
 - EPA Southern Puget Prairies Ecoregion
 - WDNR WNHP – Existing Grasslands and Oak Woodlands in the Puget Lowland and Willamette Valley Ecoregions + 200’ buffer
 - Western Washington Core Grassland Soils + 200’ buffer



	GRASSLANDS OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE
	STATE BOUNDARY
	COUNTY BOUNDARIES

New vs Former GSS Area

- East of the Cascades remains unchanged. Additions provided to areas west of the Cascades to better encompass western grasslands.





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10-Minute Break

Please ensure your mic is muted and video is turned off.

We will begin again at 1:05 pm



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Session II: FY24 ALE Application Process

Keith Griswold & Alexandra James



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Workload Prioritization Tool Application Ranking

Keith Griswold



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Workload Prioritization Tool (WPT)

- WPT is designed to assist users in managing workload associated from requests for assistance and applications in highly competitive programs (EQIP, CSP, ACEP).
- Starting in FY 2024, all program assistance requests must use WPT in Conservation Desktop.




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Workload Prioritization Tool

- Begins by selecting the program

Request Date:

9/6/2023 

Request Type:

Conservation Plan 

State:

Washington 

Service Center:

Ritzville 

County:

Adams 

Workload Prioritization

To set the priority level for this request, please complete all of the questions below.

What program is this application for?

- EQIP
- CSTwP
- ACEP
- RCPP

Not Started

Priority Level

-



Workload Prioritization Tool

- Options will appear as you move through the WPT

Workload Prioritization

To set the priority level for this request, please complete all of the questions below.

What program is this application for?

EQIP
 CSTwP
 ACEP
 RCPP

What type of ACEP application is this?

ALE
 WRE

1.(ALE) Is the parcel(s) within the application subject to a lien or bankruptcy? ⓘ

YES
 NO

2.(ALE) Does applicants offered parcel require a 2% impervious surface waiver?

YES
 NO

3.(ALE) Is the applicant subject to any ALE parcel(s) over three years old that have not been recorded? ⓘ

YES
 NO

4.(ALE) In the previous fiscal year, did the Eligible Entity FAIL to submit all required annual monitoring reports by September 1 for ALE or FRPP easements they hold? CPM440528.32C(2)(i) ⓘ

YES
 NO

5.(ALE) Does the parcel intersect Sentinel Lands or REPI project boundaries? ⓘ

YES
 NO

▲ In Progress

Priority Level



Workload Prioritization Tool

- The priority level will adjust when answering the WPT questions.
 - E.g., If all questions are answered “No” the priority level is “High”.

Workload Prioritization

To set the priority level for this request, please complete all of the questions below.

What program is this application for?

EQIP
 CSTwP
 ACEP
 RCPP

What type of ACEP application is this?

ALE
 WRE

1.(ALE) Is the parcel(s) within the application subject to a lien or bankruptcy? ⓘ

YES
 NO

2.(ALE) Does applicants offered parcel require a 2% impervious surface waiver?

YES
 NO

3.(ALE) Is the applicant subject to any ALE parcel(s) over three years old that have not been recorded? ⓘ

YES
 NO

4.(ALE) In the previous fiscal year, did the Eligible Entity FAIL to submit all required annual monitoring reports by September 1 for ALE or FRPP easements they hold? CPM440528.32C(2)(i) ⓘ

YES
 NO

5.(ALE) Does the parcel intersect Sentinel Lands or REPI project boundaries? ⓘ

YES
 NO

Complete

Priority Level
High



Workload Prioritization Tool

- The priority level will adjust when answering the WPT questions.
 - E.g., If questions 1-3 are answered “No” but question 4 is answered “Yes” the priority level is “Medium”.

Workload Prioritization

To set the priority level for this request, please complete all of the questions below.

What program is this application for?

EQIP
 CSTwP
 ACEP
 RCPP

What type of ACEP application is this?

ALE
 WRE

1.(ALE) Is the parcel(s) within the application subject to a lien or bankruptcy? ⓘ

YES
 NO

2.(ALE) Does applicants offered parcel require a 2% impervious surface waiver?

YES
 NO

3.(ALE) Is the applicant subject to any ALE parcel(s) over three years old that have not been recorded? ⓘ

YES
 NO

4.(ALE) In the previous fiscal year, did the Eligible Entity FAIL to submit all required annual monitoring reports by September 1 for ALE or FRPP easements they hold? CPM440528.32C(2)(i) ⓘ

YES
 NO

5.(ALE) Does the parcel intersect Sentinel Lands or REPI project boundaries? ⓘ

YES
 NO

Complete

Priority Level
Medium



Workload Prioritization Tool

- The priority level will adjust when answering the WPT questions.
 - E.g., If all questions are answered “Yes” the priority level is “Low”.

Workload Prioritization

To set the priority level for this request, please complete all of the questions below.

What program is this application for?

EQIP
 CSTwP
 ACEP
 RCPP

What type of ACEP application is this?

ALE
 WRE

1.(ALE) Is the parcel(s) within the application subject to a lien or bankruptcy? ⓘ

YES
 NO

2.(ALE) Does applicants offered parcel require a 2% impervious surface waiver?

YES
 NO

3.(ALE) Is the applicant subject to any ALE parcel(s) over three years old that have not been recorded? ⓘ

YES
 NO

4.(ALE) In the previous fiscal year, did the Eligible Entity FAIL to submit all required annual monitoring reports by September 1 for ALE or FRPP easements they hold? CPM440528.32C(2)(i) ⓘ

YES
 NO

5.(ALE) Does the parcel intersect Sentinel Lands or REPI project boundaries? ⓘ

YES
 NO

Complete

Priority Level

Low



Workload Prioritization Tool (WPT)

- Depending on how the questions are answered, the applicant will receive a high, medium, or low WPT rating.
- WPT is updated annually and is reviewed by the National Office Policy Branch to ensure it follows program rules and is not biased.



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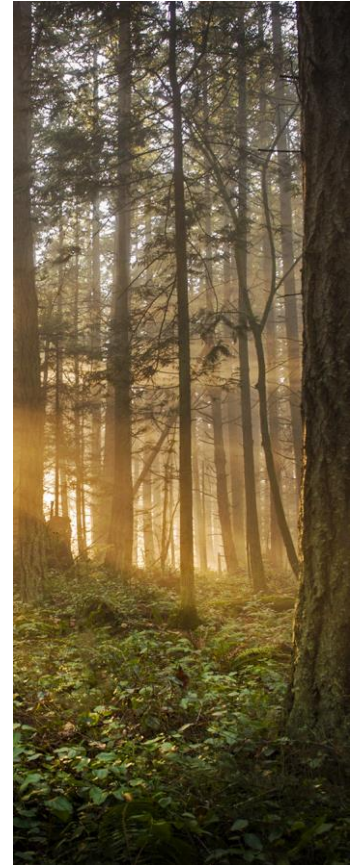
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Application Ranking

- Ranking includes two components for points:
 1. National Criteria
 2. State Criteria



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Application Ranking – National Criteria

- National Ranking Questions are required

Section: National Ranking Criteria (200 points)		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
1. Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland soils in the parcel to be protected.	Property has >80%	35
	Property has >70 to 80%	30
	Property has >60 to 70%	25
	Property has >50 to 60%	20
	Property has 50% or less	0
2. Percent of cropland, rangeland, grassland, historic grassland, pastureland, or nonindustrial private forest land in parcel to be protected.	Property has >50%	15
	Property has >40 to < 50%	8
	Property has >33 to < 40%	4
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.	Property has 33% or less	0
	Ratio > 2.0	15
	Ratio > 1.0 to <2.0	7
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)	Ratio of 1.0 or less	0
	Decreases >15%.	15
	Decrease of >10 and <15%.	9
	Decrease of >5 and <10%.	5
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)	Decrease of >0 and <5%.	1
	Decrease of 0% or less	0
	Decreases >15%.	15
	Decrease of >10 and <15%.	8
6. Percent population growth in the county as documented by the U.S. Census. (Census Bureau Home Page)	Decrease of >5 and <10%.	5
	Decrease of >0 and <5%.	3
	Decrease of 0% or less.	0
	Growth rate of greater than one and less than or equal to two times the State growth rate.	4
6. Percent population growth in the county as documented by the U.S. Census. (Census Bureau Home Page)	Growth rate of two and less than or equal to three times the State growth rate.	7
	Growth rate of more than three times the State growth rate.	15
	Growth rate of less than one times the State growth rate.	0

Application Ranking – National Criteria

- National Ranking Questions are required

Section: National Ranking Criteria (200 points)		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
7. Population density (population per square mile) as documented by the most recent U.S. Census. (Census Bureau Home Page)	Population density of greater than three times the State population density.	15
	Population density of greater than two and less than or equal to three times the State population density.	7
	Population density of greater than one and less than or equal to two times the State population density.	4
	Population density less than one times the State population density.	0
8. Existence of a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established to address agricultural viability for future generations.	Plan is documented and developed by an industry professional	5
	Plan is documented	3
	No	0
9. Proximity of the parcel to other protected land, 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.	EOA boundary adjoins protected land boundary.	15
	EOA is within 1 mile of protected land boundary.	7
	EOA is greater than 1 mile but less than 3 miles from protected land.	4
	Easement Offer Area (EAO) boundary greater than 3 miles from the protected land boundary.	0
10. Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure.	EOA boundary adjoins.	10
	EOA is within 1 mile in proximity.	5
	EOA is greater than or equal to 1 mile but less than 3 miles in proximity.	3
	Easement Offer Area (EOA) boundary greater than 3 miles in proximity.	0
11. Parcel ability to maximize the protection of contiguous or proximal acres devoted to agricultural use.	Parcel links two non-continuous corridors of protected agricultural use.	15
	Parcel is a contiguous or proximal expansion of agricultural use protected area.	6
	None of the above	0
12. Land is currently enrolled in CRP in a contract that is set to expire within 1 year and is grassland that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement or is land under a CRP contract that is in transition to a covered farmer or rancher pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 3835(f)	YES	5
	NO	0
13. Land is grassland of special environmental significance (GSS) that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement.	YES	10
	NO	0
14. Percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement that is the eligible entity cash resources for payment of easement compensation to the landowner and comes from sources other than the landowner.	Entity contributes 50% of FMV	15
	Entity contributes 25-49% of FMV	10
	Entity contributes 10-24% of FMV	5
	Entity contributes less than 9.99% of FMV	0

Application Ranking – State Criteria

- Review and approved by STAC

Section: State and Local Questions (200 points)		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
15. Does the parcel have prime, unique, statewide or locally important farmland soils in the parcel to be protected above 75% of the total offered acres?	75% and above.	40
	51 to equal to or less than 74%.	15
16. Eligible entity has demonstrated performance in managing and enforcing easements by monitoring 95 percent or more of its easements each year.	YES	25
	NO	0
17. A Federal or State listed or candidate Threatened or Endangered species located on, or within quarter mile, of parcel to be protected. This includes USFWS or NMFS Designated Critical Habitat polygons for listed species.	YES	35
	NO	0
18. Parcel is partially or wholly within an area zoned as agricultural use or open space.	YES	20
	NO	0
19. Does one or more eligible landowner(s) meet the definition as a historically underserved group? (CPM 440.528.190) socially disadvantaged, limited resource landowners, beginning farmer or ranchers, or veteran landowners. (Documentation must be provided to receive these points).	YES	30
	NO	0
20. Parcel contains historical or archaeological resources that will be protected by easement as described in 440.528.33. Cultural resource must be recognized by SHPO, National or State Historic Register.	YES	20
	NO	0
21. Project is partially or wholly within the boundaries Washington Source Water Protection Activities (SWPA) priority area for NRCS programs.	Yes	30
	No	0



United States Department of Agriculture

FY24 Application Packets

Alexandra James

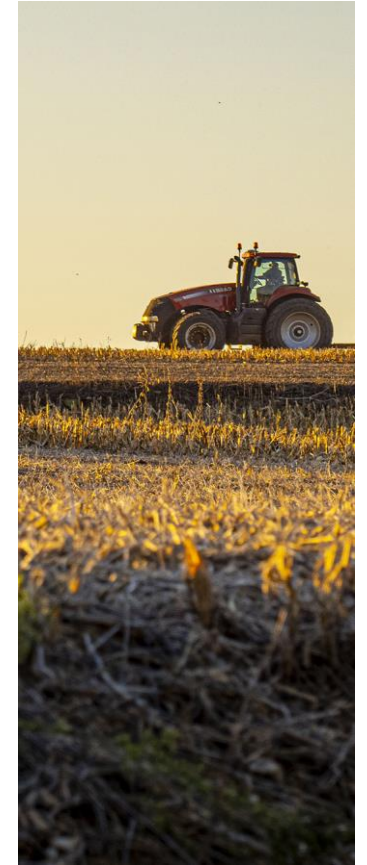


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FY24 ALE Application Packets

- All ALE transactions require the use of Program Agreements and Parcel Contracts.
- Entities must have an active and valid Program Agreement established before individual Parcel Contracts may be established.
- NRCS-WA developed three application types for FY24:
 1. Entity Application
 2. General Parcel Application
 3. GSS Parcel Application



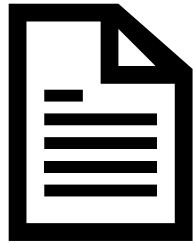
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What Applications are Required?

No Program Agreement

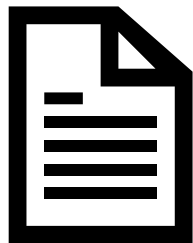


FY24 Entity Application



FY24 Parcel Application

Valid & Active Program Agreement



FY24 Parcel Application



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Entity Application

- Used to establish a Program Agreement.
- Collects required information to determine entity eligibility for ACEP-ALE & ACEP-ALE Buy-Protect-Sell.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) FY 2024 Washington NRCS Entity Application Packet

Information, policy, and regulation disclosed in this packet is subject to change pending the authorization of the 2023 Farm Bill and updates to the Federal Register rules and regulations. Please check the Washington NRCS ACEP-ALE webpage for updated information related to the 2023 Farm Bill and Federal Register rules and regulations prior to submitting a completed application package.

Entity applications for ACEP-ALE should be developed in accordance with the following format and guidance. A completed entity application includes all requested information detailed in this packet. Please submit completed applications to:

EMAIL:
To: NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov
Entity Name_FY24 Entity Application_1 of X

BOX ELECTRONIC UPLOAD:
PREFERRED
Request Box invitation via email at
NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov

**Entity applications are accepted on a continuous basis.
However, applications must be received by 5:00 PM PST on the FY 2024
application batching date for an entity seeking ALE parcel funding in FY 2024.**

The following application packet collects required information for eligible entities interested in applying for easement funding under ACEP-ALE Classic, ACEP-ALE Buy-Protect-Sell (ACEP-ALE BPS), or ACEP-ALE Grasslands of Special Significance (ACEP-ALE GSS/GSS-SGI). Please answer all questions contained within and provide all supporting documentation requested to ensure the application packet is complete (unless otherwise noted). The narratives and supporting documentation may be inserted under the applicable question or provided as an exhibit or attachment to the application packet. NRCS strongly suggests that the order and format of this packet is followed to ensure consistency and equality among all applicants. The appendices to this packet should not be included in the application submission.

ACEP-ALE Applicants

NRCS requires the use of Program Agreements and Parcel Contracts for ALE projects. New parcels may only be enrolled using ACEP-ALE Parcel Contracts associated with an active, valid ACEP-ALE Program Agreement executed in FY 2019 or later.

If the entity has an existing and valid Program Agreement covering ACEP-ALE executed in FY 2019 or later, the entity is not required to submit this Entity Application. To apply for a Parcel Contract, the entity is only required to submit a Parcel Application. The Parcel Application is available on the Washington NRCS ACEP-ALE webpage. If there is not an existing Program Agreement, or if there is an existing Program Agreement for a program other than ACEP-ALE, the entity is required to submit an Entity Application. Any eligible entity may submit an Entity Application to enter a new ACEP-ALE Program Agreement to avail themselves of the updated items contained in the 04/2021 ALE-agreement version.



Entity Application

Application Contents:

1. Introduction Letter

2. Application Checklist

- Outlines Required Forms & Information needed for a complete application. Provides naming convention for required documents.

3. Entity Questionnaire

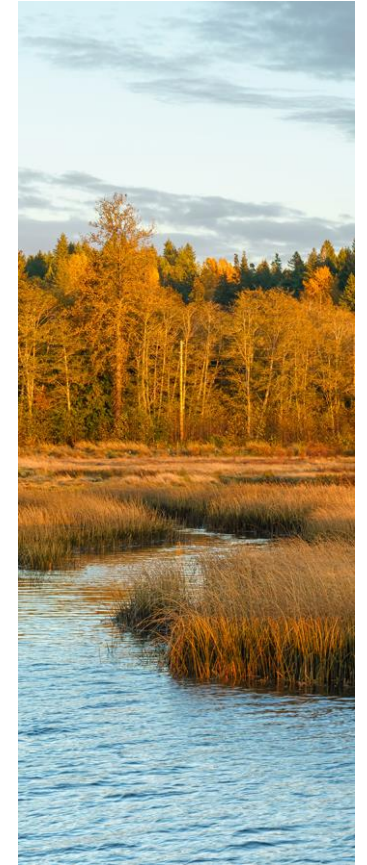
- Consists of 19 questions across 6 pages that are a mixture of multiple choice and short answer.

4. Application Submission Instructions

- **NEW!** Two options to submit applications: 1. Email or 2. Box File Upload

5. Appendices

- Definitions; Cost-share Requirements; Description of Application Forms



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Parcel Application

- Used to establish a Parcel Contract.
- **General Parcel Application** used for ACEP-ALE Classic or ACEP-ALE Buy-Protect-Sell
- **GSS Parcel Application** used for ACEP-ALE Grassland of Special Environmental Significance (GSS) and GSS Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI).

**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) –
Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)**

FY 2024 Washington NRCS Parcel Application Packet for:

ACEP-ALE Classic
OR
ACEP-ALE Buy-Protect-Sell

Information, policy, and regulation disclosed in this packet is subject to change pending the authorization of the 2023 Farm Bill and updates to the Federal Register rules and regulations. Please check the Washington NRCS ACEP-ALE webpage for updated information related to the 2023 Farm Bill and Federal Register rules and regulations prior to submitting a completed application package.

Parcel applications for ACEP-ALE should be developed in accordance with the following format and guidance. A complete parcel application includes all requested information detailed in this packet. Please submit completed applications to:

EMAIL:
To: NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov
Subject: Entity Name_FY24 Parcel Application_1 of X

BOX ELECTRONIC UPLOAD:
REFERRED
Request Box invitation via email at NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov

Parcel applications are accepted on a continuous basis. However, applications must be received by 5:00 PM PST on the FY 2024 application batching date to be considered for funding in FY 2024.

The following application packet collects required information on proposed parcels from eligible entities interested in applying for easement funding under ACEP-ALE Agricultural Land Easements (ALE). If you are interested in applying for ACEP-ALE Parcel Application, if you are applying for Easement Team for application materials.

Entities submitting parcel applications must Application to establish eligibility with NR Conservation Program Manual 440.528.32 website at <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov> ALE Entity Application for more information.

Applicants should answer all questions on documentation requested to ensure the narratives and supporting documentation an exhibit or attachment to the application this packet is followed to ensure consistent application packet should not be included.

**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) –
Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)**

FY 2024 Washington NRCS Parcel Application Packet for:

ACEP-ALE GSS AND ACEP-ALE GSS-SGI

Information, policy, and regulation disclosed in this packet is subject to change pending the authorization of the 2023 Farm Bill and updates to the Federal Register rules and regulations. Please check the Washington NRCS ACEP-ALE webpage for updated information related to the 2023 Farm Bill and Federal Register rules and regulations prior to submitting a completed application package.

Parcel applications for ACEP-ALE should be developed in accordance with the following format and guidance. A complete parcel application includes all requested information detailed in this packet. Please submit completed applications to:

EMAIL:
To: NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov
Subject: Entity Name_FY24 Parcel Application_1 of X

BOX ELECTRONIC UPLOAD:
REFERRED
Request Box invitation via email at NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov

Parcel Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. However, applications must be received by 5:00 PM PST on the FY 2024 application batching date to be considered for funding in FY 2024.

The following application packet collects required information on proposed parcels from eligible entities interested in applying for easement funding under ACEP-ALE Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance (GSS) and ACEP-ALE GSS Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI). If you are interested in applying for ACEP-ALE Classic or ACEP-ALE Buy-Protect-Sell, please complete the ACEP-ALE General Parcel Application.

Parcels that qualify for GSS are eligible to receive up to 75% Federal share from NRCS. Parcels offered for enrollment under GSS must select the GSS designation on the CPA-41A form and meet all GSS criteria. The GSS component of the program emphasizes support of grazing operations, maintenance and improvement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grasslands and shrublands under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development, and other non-grazing uses. GSS easements require specific deed restrictions in the NRCS Minimum Deed Terms to ensure that the GSS attributes are protected. Please review these deed restrictions with the landowner before applying.

Easements under ACEP-ALE GSS can support the Sage Grouse Initiative by keeping working lands working as intact range. Parcels that lie within one of the Sage Grouse core areas may, as a grassland of special environmental significance, qualify for a 75% percent cost-share contribution from NRCS.

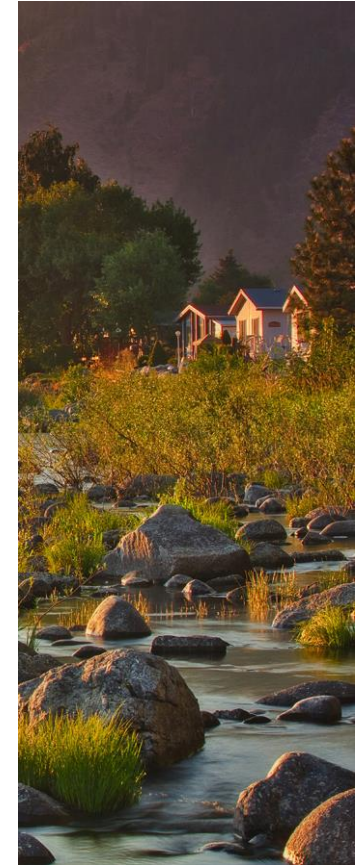
Parcels must demonstrate that at least 51% of the proposed easement boundary lies within the NRCS designated GSS or GSS-SGI priority areas. Additional ranking points may be granted for additional GSS easement boundary percentage thresholds. Maps and shapefiles of these areas are accessible on the Washington NRCS ACEP-ALE webpage.

Entities submitting parcel applications must be eligible themselves. Entities must submit an Entity Application to establish eligibility with NRCS. Entity eligibility requirements are detailed in the NRCS

Parcel Application - General

Application Contents:

1. Introduction Letter
2. Application Checklist
 - Outlines Required [and supplemental] Forms & Information needed for a complete application. Provides naming convention for required documents.
3. Parcel Questionnaire
 - Consists of 77-87 questions that are a mixture of multiple choice and short answer.
 - Land Eligibility section – 4 categories
 - Buy-Protect-Sell section – 7 questions
4. Application Submission Instructions
 - **NEW!** Two options to submit applications: 1. Email or 2. Box File Upload
5. Appendices
 - Definitions; Cost-share Requirements; Description of Application Forms; Web Soil Survey Instructions; WLFW Maps; SWPA Map; Ag Census Data; Title Exceptions Guide; Map Requirements



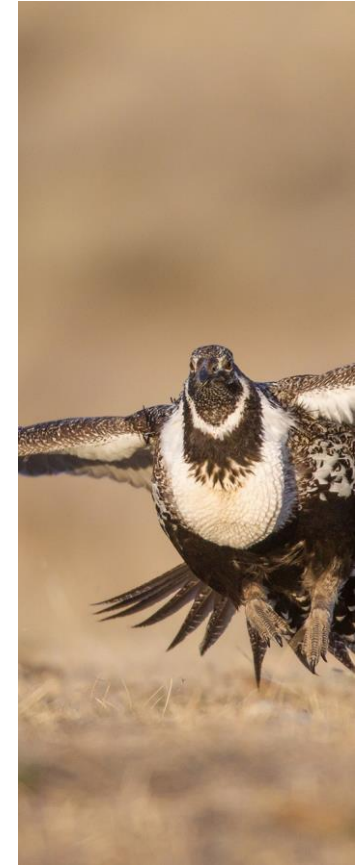
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Parcel Application – GSS/GSS-SGI

Application Contents:

1. Introduction Letter
2. Application Checklist
 - Outlines Required [and supplemental] Forms & Information needed for a complete application. Provides naming convention for required documents.
3. Parcel Questionnaire
 - Consists of 85 questions that are a mixture of multiple choice and short answer.
 - Land Eligibility section – GSS specific.
4. Application Submission Instructions
 - **NEW!** Two options to submit applications: 1. Email or 2. Box File Upload
5. Appendices
 - Definitions; Cost-share Requirements; Description of Application Forms; Web Soil Survey Instructions; SWPA Map; GSS & SGI Maps; Ag Census Data; Title Exceptions Guide; Map Requirements



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Parcel Application – Form CPA-41A

TIPS & TRICKS:

- CPA-41A is the standard national application form.
- Application questionnaire expands on information collected in this form.
- Important items to note:
 - Select correct enrollment and transaction types
 - Select correct land eligibility category
 - Ensure all attachments are included. These are listed on your application checklist too.
 - Provide accurate easement acreage, to the best of your ability. If enrolling entire parcel, ensure acreages match FSA records and acreages across all application materials.
 - Provide best estimate of easement value.
 - Overestimate, within reason, to avoid future contract modifications. Easy to return excess funds, hard to obtain more funds.

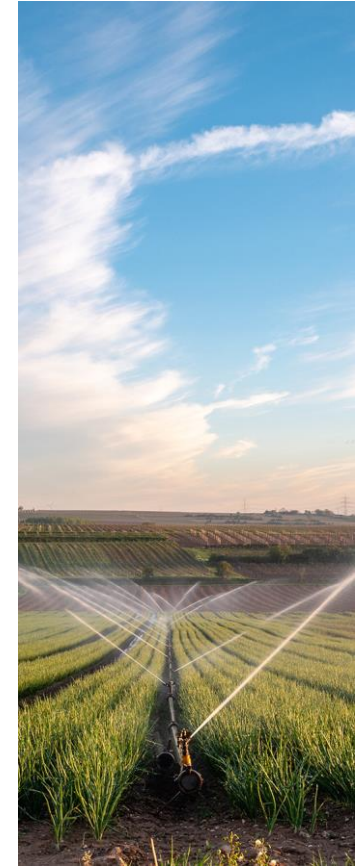
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-41A
02/2020

PARCEL SHEET for
ENTITY APPLICATION for an AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT (ALE) AGREEMENT

Section A: Agreement and Entity Information			
1. This is a parcel sheet for an Entity application for an agricultural land easement ¹ under the: (Select only one) <input type="radio"/> Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE) <input type="radio"/> 2014 Farm Bill Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Agreement – ACEP-ALE			
2. Associated ALE-Agreement Type: (Select Only One) (all eligible entity types) <input type="radio"/> Cooperative Agreement <input type="radio"/> Grant Agreement (certified entities only) <input type="radio"/> Program Agreement (all eligible entity types)	3. Enrollment Type: (Select only one) <input type="radio"/> General ALE <input type="radio"/> Grassland of Special Environmental Significance (GSS)		
	4. Transaction Type: (Select only one) <input type="radio"/> Standard ALE Transaction <input type="radio"/> Pre-closing Buy-Protect-Sell Transaction* <input type="radio"/> Post-closing Buy-Protect-Sell Transaction* <small>*ALE cooperative or grant agreements may only have 1 associated parcel sheet for a buy-protect-sell transaction and must include all information required by the buy-protect-sell supplement to the application.</small>		
5. Application Date:	6. State:	7. Is this a substitute parcel? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
8. Name – Applicant Eligible Entity:			
9. Email – Applicant Eligible Entity:		10. Telephone – Applicant Eligible Entity:	
11. Attached to ACEP Entity Application Number:		12. ACEP Parcel Number: <small>AGENCY USE</small>	

Section B: Landowner ² Information			
1. What evidence of ownership are you providing? (Select all that apply) Attach the property deed or written purchase agreement to this parcel sheet.			<input type="checkbox"/> Property Deed <input type="checkbox"/> Current Written Purchase Agreement
2. Name – Parcel Landowner – Primary Contact (must be a landowner listed on attached ownership document)		3. Tax ID Number – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact)	
<small>(Landowner identified here will serve as primary landowner contact and signatory to this application; signature of application by other listed landowners is optional)</small>			
4. Telephone – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact):		5. Address – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact):	
6. Email – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact):		7. Identify all other landowners of record as stated on the most current evidence of ownership document. Enter the legal name as listed on the evidence of ownership document and the tax identification number of each individual or legal entity (Corporation, Limited Liability Company, Partnership, Trust, etc.) that is a landowner. Attach additional sheets as needed.	
Enter Name of Individual or Legal Entity	Check Appropriate Box		Enter Tax ID Number
	Individual	Legal Entity	
Landowner Name:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	TAX ID:
Landowner Name:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	TAX ID:
Landowner Name:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	TAX ID:
Landowner Name:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	TAX ID:



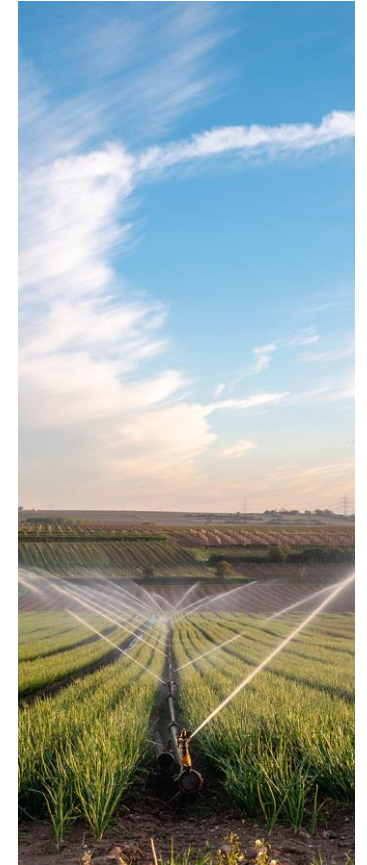
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FY24 ALE Application Packets

Application Tips:

- Read the Introduction Letter.
- Use the Application Checklist.
- Follow the naming conventions.
- Check in with FSA regarding farm records.
- Ensure signature authorities are correct and consistent on all documentation.
- Be brief and concise in your answers.
- Read the certification statement.
- Submit complete application following instructions.



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FY24 ALE Application Packets

Parcel Application Tips:

- Complete the correct application (General or GSS).
- Include CPA-1270 [supplemental form] – allows NRCS and RCO to talk to each other regarding your application.
- For Questions 9-11 under Agricultural Operation – refer to NASS appendix and use provided link to access data.
- For Questions 12-13 under Agricultural Operation – use provided link to access census data.
- **General Application** – Only complete questions for one Land Eligibility category.



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Accessing Applications

NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Webpage

Application Forms & Documents for Entities

- [Landowner Eligibility Matrix \(439.92 KB\)](#)
- [FY23 ACEP-ALE Kickoff Workshop Slide Deck \(3.13 MB\)](#)
- [FY24 ACEP-ALE GSS Parcel Application \(2.48 MB\)](#)
- [FY24 ACEP-ALE General Parcel Application \(3.2 MB\)](#)
- [FY24 ACEP-ALE Entity Application \(926.34 KB\)](#)
- [FSA-211 Power of Attorney \(4 MB\)](#)
- [NRCS-CPA-1270 \(235.92 KB\)](#)
- [CPA-41Entity Application for an Agricultural Land Easement \(ALE\) Agreement \(328.99 KB\)](#)
- [Parcel Sheet for Entity application for an Agricultural Land Easement agreement NRCS-CPA-41A \(475.57 KB\)](#)
- [NRCS-CPA-41A BPS Supplement \(539.45 KB\)](#)
- [SF-1199 Direct Deposit Form \(1.78 MB\)](#)
- [February 2022 Minimum Deed Terms \(334.96 KB\)](#)

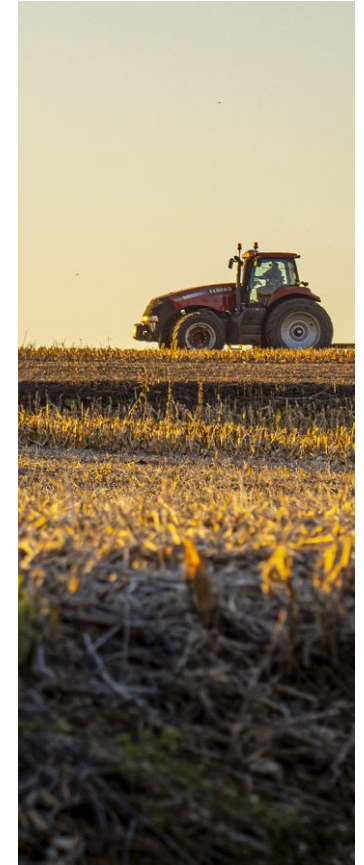


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Submitting Applications

- Locate the application submission instructions section in the application.
- Two options to submit:
 - Email to NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov
 - Electronic Upload via Box – preferred
- Tips
 - Submit by application deadline – **December 15**
 - Double-check for completeness
 - Inform NRCS
 - Follow instructions
 - Ask for help



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United States Department of Agriculture

Session III: Successful Application Tips & Tricks

Bobby Burken, Kathy Wanner,
Alexandra James & Kaitlin Davies



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Application Map Requirements

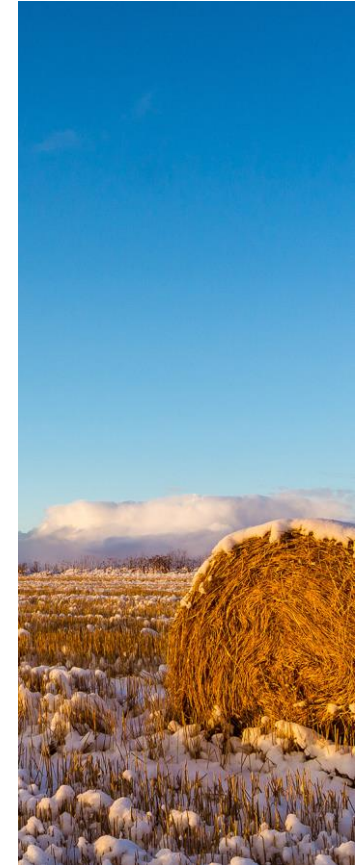
Bobby Burken



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Map Requirements: Past & Present

- **Historically:**
 - Maps were required to be submitted with applications.
 - Map requirements were very minimal.
- **Currently and into the future:**
 - Maps are still required to be submitted with applications, but...
 - Applicant map requirements are now aligned with the Easement Acquisition Branch (EAB) map requirements. Map requirements listed in Appendix 9 of application packet.
 - Mitigates redundancy (i.e., applicant provides NRCS-WA with a proposed easement boundary map and NRCS-WA recreates that map to meet EAB standards for submittal).
 - Providing clear map requirements reduces need for NRCS-WA to request more information edits to the applicant provided map.
- **Why the change?**
 - Change in national requirements with the EAB caused us to rethink applicant requirements to streamline application process.



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Map Requirements & Example

Map Title Block

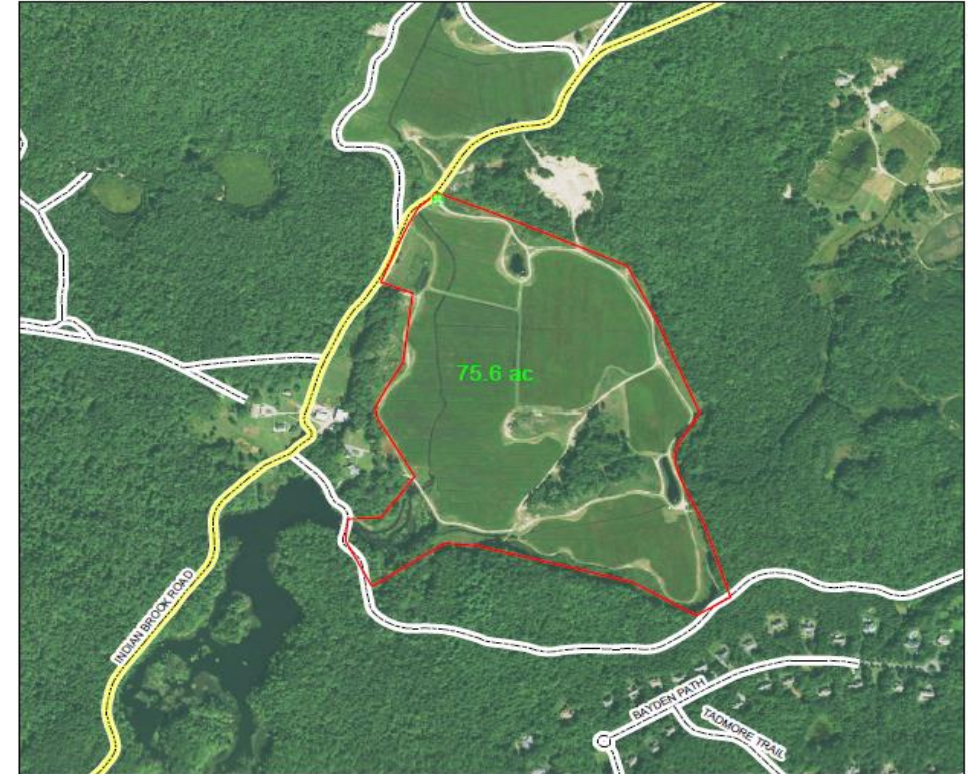
- Title: Proposed ACEP-ALE Easement Boundary Map
- Parcel Application Number placeholder for current fiscal year
- Customer(s): Landowner Name(s), as listed on vesting deed
- Acres: Estimated Acres (must match the CPA-41a application and supported by ownership deed)
- County and State of easement offer area
- Lat/Long for Easement Boundary location
- Section, Township, Range
- Date the map was prepared

Map and Map Legend

- Clear boundary lines showing all acres to be enrolled/surveyed
 - Merged internal boundary lines
 - Make the easement area transparent and use thick red colored border
- Include the Access Route showing the entire route from the public road to the proposed easement boundary
 - Include label of private, state, or federally owned land the access crosses, if applicable
 - Reference access easement record number in legend, if applicable
- Map Scale
- Information needed to locate the planning area (e.g. geographic coordinates, public land survey coordinates, address, etc.)
 - Section, Township, Range layer to match with Ownership document, if applicable
- North arrow
- Map symbol legend on the map or as an attachment include appropriate interpretations, such as roads, streams, boundary, or recorded access.
- If map contains more than 1 parcel, include the distance between parcels
- If application contains more than 1 parcel, and more than 1 mile apart, provide separate maps with acres of the individual parcel

Customer(s): <client name>
 Acres: <easement acres>
 County and State: <county, state>

Assisted By: <planner name>
 Lat., Long.: <latitude and longitude> Decimal Degrees
 Section, Township, Range: <plss data>



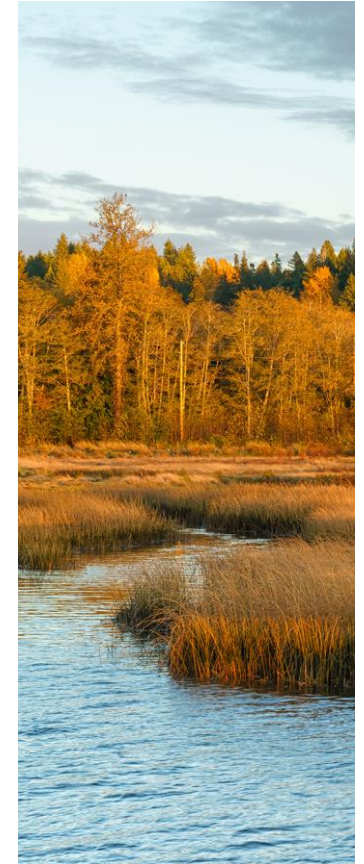
Legend

- █ Proposed ACEP-ALE Easement Boundary - 75.6 acres,
- █ Brook Bogs -Deed Access Bk 4559 Pg 480
- Washington Public Roads
- █ - Ingress/Egress Access Point



Map Requirements: Items of Note

- Washington NRCS utilizes the entity supplied conservation maps as Exhibits to the Parcel Contract, Due Diligence Contracts procured by NRCS, and submittal of support documentation for NRCS Internal Controls pre-obligation and pre-closing reviews. It is imperative that the maps are consistent, clear, and professional in order to provide quality and expedited customer service.
- Please pay special attention to:
 - Title and title block
 - Consistent parcel names between the map and other documents
 - Easement boundary to include ingress, egress, and building envelopes
 - Acreages



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United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Title Exceptions

Kathy Wanner



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NRCS Title Exceptions

[Link to NRCS Title Exception Guide.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Title Exception Guide for NRCS Conservation Easement Programs

Title Exception Guide for NRCS Conservation Easement Programs

Following is a general guide of how common title exceptions should be handled for NRCS conservation easement programs. The following is only intended as a guide and does not supersede any advice from the USDA Office of the General Counsel (OGC) or instructions from NRCS or otherwise take into account special circumstances that may result in handling a particular exception in a different manner as each transaction is case-specific. Any exceptions not determined to be acceptable must be removed or subordinated. For some complex transactions, obtaining a revised title commitment that details the additional requirements needed for the title company to address unacceptable exceptions is recommended in order to facilitate their removal.

Description of Title Exception	Non-NRCS-Held Easements	NRCS-Held Easements
General or Preprinted Exceptions. (i.e., parties in possession, unrecorded easements, and encumbrances not of record; matters that an accurate survey would disclose; unrecorded liens for services and materials by mechanics and materialmen)	Generally acceptable if such exceptions deemed acceptable through the completion of Certificate of Inspection and Possession and Certificate of Use and Consent processes. Execution of owners' affidavit or surveyor affidavit may be needed have the title company remove the exception or to fully document the rationale for accepting the exception.	Generally acceptable if such exceptions deemed acceptable through the completion of Certificate of Inspection and Possession and Certificate of Use and Consent processes. Execution of owners' affidavit or surveyor affidavit may be needed have the title company remove the exception or to fully document the rationale for accepting the exception.
Lack of Right of Access	Generally must be removed unless alternative access has been approved by NRCS (440-CPM Part 528, Subpart G, Section 528.62B).	Must be removed.
Access Subject to Terms and Conditions of xxx	Generally must be removed; review referenced document to determine whether conditions of access are acceptable to United States.	Generally must be removed; review referenced document to determine whether conditions of access are acceptable to United States.
Taxes for Current Year, Due But Not Yet Payable	Generally acceptable.	Acceptable, unless OGC requests to place taxes in escrow until payable.
Outstanding Taxes for a Previous Year or Rights of Purchaser at Tax Sale	Must be removed.	Must be removed.
Liens and Judgments	Must be removed.	Must be removed.
Lis Pendens	Must be removed.	Must be removed.



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RCO as Your Match Funder

Alexandra James



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Program Resources & Tools

- [Mapping the Easement Process using RCO and NRCS Funding \(138.72 KB\)](#)
- [ACEP-ALE Criteria Guidelines \(3.68 MB\)](#)
- [5 Steps to ALE \(858.5 KB\)](#)
- [WA ACEP ALE Farm Bill Fact Sheet \(1.23 MB\)](#)
- [Ensuring the Future of Agriculture \(8.95 MB\)](#)
- [Buy Protect Sell Additional WA Criteria \(30.27 KB\)](#)
- [Eligible Entity Certification \(2.98 MB\)](#)
- [Entity Held Easement Monitoring Reporting Form \(230.62 KB\)](#)
- [NRCS Title Exception Guide \(229.35 KB\)](#)
- [Impervious Surfaces Waiver Request \(963.25 KB\)](#)



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Agricultural Land Easement Funding Timeline

Year 1 (even-numbered year)

Task	Responsible Entity	Notes
Jan. Landowner Outreach & Project Solicitation	Land Trust	
Site Visit & Project Selection	Land Trust	
Board Resolution to pursue Easement	Land Trust	
Feb. Landowner & Entity FSA Due Diligence	Landowner/Land Trust	Work with local USDA-FSA Service Center. Related Resource: Landowner Eligibility Checklist
Read WWRP-Farmland Manual & resources	Landowner/Land Trust	Available here . Related Resource: LRCO Farmland Website
Begin WWRP-Farmland application in PRISM	Land Trust	RCO opens PRISM to applicants. Related Resource: PRISM Login
March Attend RCO Webinar	Land Trust	
Meet with RCO Grants Manager	Land Trust/RCO	
April Project site visit with RCO Grants Manager	Land Trust/RCO	
Complete WWRP-Farmland application in PRISM	Land Trust	
May Submit WWRP-Farmland application in PRISM	Land Trust	Applications are typically due on May 1. RCO recommends submitting applications prior to application deadline. Related Resource: Presentation Tips
Develop WWRP-Farmland Project Presentation	Land Trust	
June Preliminary WWRP-Farmland Project Presentation	Land Trust	Presented to RCO Technical Review Committee
July Correct applications as advised by RCO	Land Trust	
Aug. Re-submit WWRP-Farmland application in PRISM	Land Trust	Complete all changes requested by RCO Technical Review Committee and resubmit application by technical completion deadline as specified by RCO.
Final WWRP-Farmland Project Presentation	Land Trust	Presented to RCO Evaluation Committee
Sept. WWRP-Farmland project evaluation and ranking	RCO	
WWRP-Farmland ranked project list shared with applicants	RCO	Preliminary ranked list of projects shared with applicants and posted to RCO website.
USDA FSA Eligibility	Landowner	Advise landowners to meet with FSA manager to complete eligibility. FSA Adjusted Gross Income forms may not be filed earlier than Oct.
Oct. RCO Board approves preliminary WWRP-Farmland ranked project list	RCO	Generally, occurs in the fall.
Review ACEP-ALE Manual & resources	Landowner/Land Trust	Understand program benefits, limitations, and expectations. Related Resource: NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Website
Attend NRCS FY ACEP-ALE Kickoff Workshop	Land Trust	Information on new FY guidance and program requirements.
Nov. RCO Board submits WWRP-Farmland ranked project list to Governor	RCO	Generally, occurs in the fall.
Read ACEP-ALE funding announcement	Land Trust	Posted to NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Webpage.
Begin ACEP-ALE application	Land Trust	Posted to NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Webpage.
Projects preliminary approved by Governor	Congress	
Dec. Submit ACEP-ALE application to NRCS	Land Trust	A signed grant agreement from RCO is not needed to apply for ACEP-ALE. Applicants will need to provide estimates for match funds at time of application. Applicants will provide proof of match on NRCS form CPA-230 during acquisition process, if selected for Federal funding.

Agricultural Land Easement Funding Timeline

Year 2 (odd-numbered year)

Task	Responsible Entity	Notes
Feb. Legislature approves WWRP-Farmland projects	Congress	
Attend NRCS ACEP-ALE midway application Q&A	Land Trust	
NRCS State Office ranks ACEP-ALE applications	NRCS	Ranking worksheet posted to NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Webpage
March Capital budget revealed for biennium	Congress	Land Trust will have a sense of whether the project will be funded through WWRP-Farmland Program based on the release of this information.
Estimated ACEP-ALE awards announced via pre-approval letters to land trust	NRCS	
Project site visit	Landowner/NRCS	Site visit occurs, weather permitting to complete pre-acquisition due diligence (HEL compliance; Environmental review; Hazardous Materials Checklist; etc.). Land Trust staff may attend.
April Issue & Sign Program Agreement for ACEP-ALE	Land Trust/NRCS	Only for entities that do not have an established Program Agreement.
Conduct Internal Controls Review for individual Parcel Contracts	NRCS	Reviews may take up to 30 days per NRCS policy
May Proof of matching funds submitted to RCO	Land Trust	Land Trust completes Certification of Applicant Match form provided by RCO.
Submit Parcel Contract packages to NRCS National Headquarters for second Internal Controls Review	NRCS	Individual Parcel Contracts are subject to national-level pre-obligation IC review. Reviews may take up to 30 days per NRCS policy.
June Capital Budget approved	Congress	
WWRP-Farmland grant awards approved by RCO Funding Board	RCO	
Execute pre-agreement documents for WWRP-Farmland grant	Land Trust/RCO	RCO agreements are written for a length of 2.5 to 3 years.
Issue & Sign Parcel Contract for ACEP-ALE	Land Trust/NRCS	NRCS will accept USDA OneSpan signature or wet signature only.
End of State Fiscal Year - June 30	RCO	
July Issue & Sign grant agreement for WWRP-Farmland grant	RCO	Preferred that this occurs before NRCS agreement executed.
Catch-up on previous tasks if delayed	Land Trust/RCO/NRCS	
Aug. Begin WWRP-Farmland project due diligence	Land Trust	In accordance with the WWRP-Farmland grant agreement.
Begin ACEP-ALE project due diligence	Land Trust	In accordance with the ACEP-ALE grant agreement (e.g. Baseline Documentation Report; Appraisals; etc.). If ordered now, appraisal will not expire with NRCS. Begin clearing title exceptions, including any mortgage liens through subordination.
Sept. On-going project implementation	Land Trust/RCO/NRCS	Set up monthly call with NRCS.
End of Federal Fiscal Year - September 30	NRCS	
Oct. FSA & AGI Eligibility	Landowner	FSA eligibility must occur annually until easement closes.
On-going project implementation	Land Trust/RCO/NRCS	
Nov. On-going project implementation	Land Trust/RCO/NRCS	Posted to NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Webpage.
Dec. On-going project implementation	Land Trust/RCO/NRCS	Posted to NRCS-WA ACEP-ALE Webpage.



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- **Helpful Tips:**

- **Impervious Surfaces Definition**

- WWRP Farmland Grant Manual 10F – “When the NRCS provides matching funds to a WWRP Farmland Preservation Category easement, the director may use the definition of impervious surface used by NRCS as long as it does not exceed the maximum amount as described in the table above. Exception: the director may approve a higher percentage of land as impervious surface on an individual project basis.”

- **Technical Appraisal**

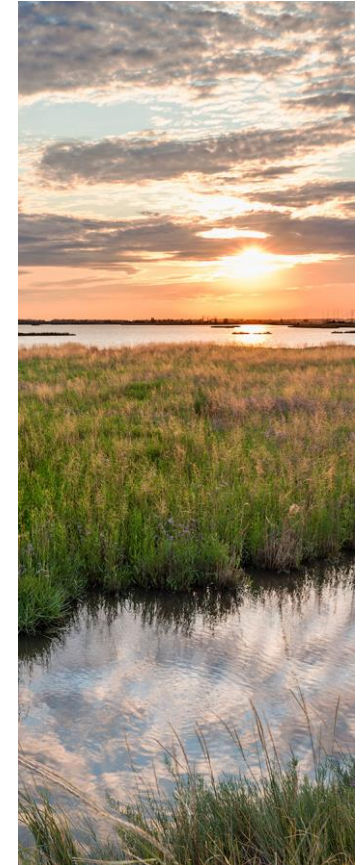
- Acquisition due diligence item contracted and obtained by NRCS, not the land trust or landowner.
 - This report may be shared with RCO.

- **Appraisal Expirations**

- An appraisal does not expire if its effective date is within 6 months of signing the NRCS Parcel Contract (6 mo prior or 6 mo after)

- **CPA-1270 Form**

- Recommended to submit with application. Enables RCO and NRCS staff to talk to each other about the same parcel/project.



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Establishing USDA Eligibility through the Farm Service Agency

Kaitlin Davies

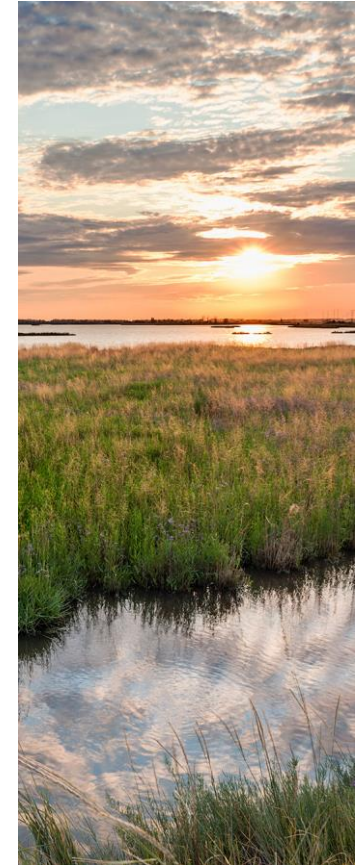


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Establishing Farm Records

- Farm Records are required to be established for all FSA and NRCS programs
- One farm consists of:
 - 1 operator
 - 1+ owners (multiple owners can be included on one farm if they agree in writing)
 - Other tenants as applicable
- Supporting documentation must be provided
 - Deeds or similar documents that identify ownership
 - Current leases



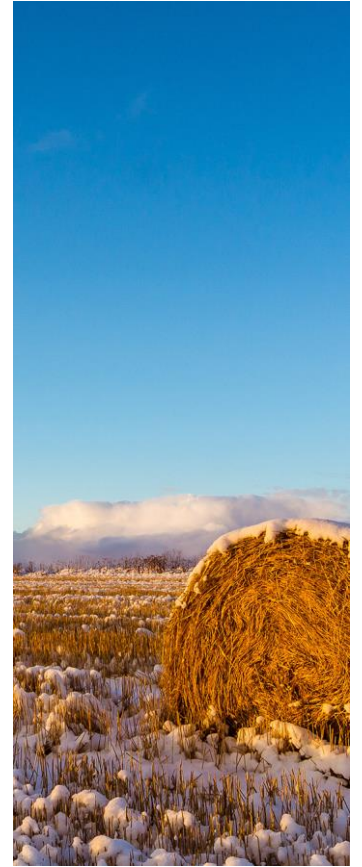
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Establishing Farm Records

- Farm records must be updated anytime there is a change in the structure of the operation
 - New owner(s)
 - New operator
 - Adding new properties or removing properties that are no longer part of the farming operation
 - Farming practices change (break out new farm ground)
 - Changes to the physical ground (new building, easement, farm road)



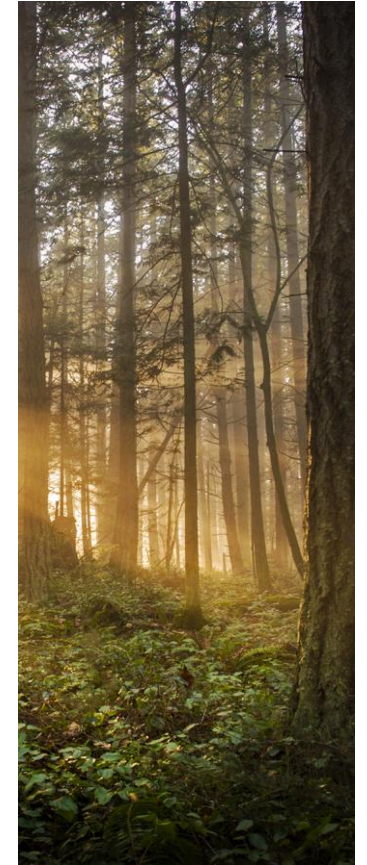
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Producer Eligibility

- All producers and entities must meet basic eligibility to receive FSA or NRCS benefits
- Eligibility documents that must be submitted:
 - CCC-902 – Farm Operating Plan
 - CCC-901 – Entity member information (not required for individuals)
 - CCC-941 – Adjusted Gross Income Certification – completed annually for most programs after Oct. 1.
 - AD-1026 – Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance Certification



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Producer Eligibility

- FSA and NRCS participants are subject to:
 - Direct Attribution
 - Substantive Change
 - Foreign Person Rules
 - AGI Limitations
 - Program Payment Limitations



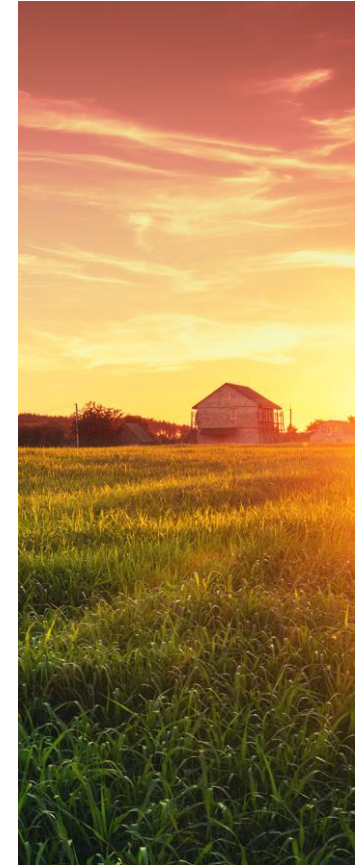
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Producer Eligibility

- All farm records and producer eligibility paperwork must be on file and loaded into the system by COB on the application deadline - **Eligibility documents and supporting documentation have specific deadlines established by each applicable program for payments are being requested**
- If paperwork is not provided to FSA or is not properly completed in time for the staff to load the information into the system, you could be ineligible for program participation
 - It usually takes a few tries for the paperwork to be completely correct!
- Applies to both FSA and NRCS programs



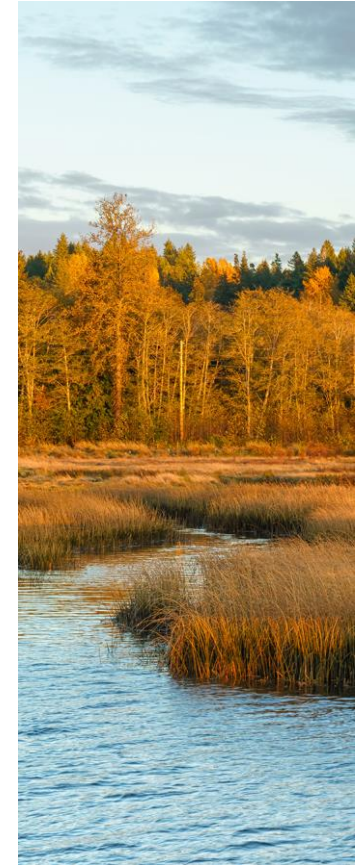
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How To Establish Your Record

- 1) Contact your local FSA office
 - Don't wait until the application deadline!
 - Use the Service Center Locator tool at [Farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov)
- 2) Ensure your farm records are up to date
- 3) File an Acreage Report after your plant
 - Required for most FSA programs, but is a great time to check in on your record
- 4) Sign up for GovDelivery Bulletins
 - Stay up to date with ongoing signups and upcoming programs
- 5) Check out the fsa.usda.gov or [Farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov) for additional resources and factsheets on FSA and other USDA programs.



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Closing Remarks & Q&A

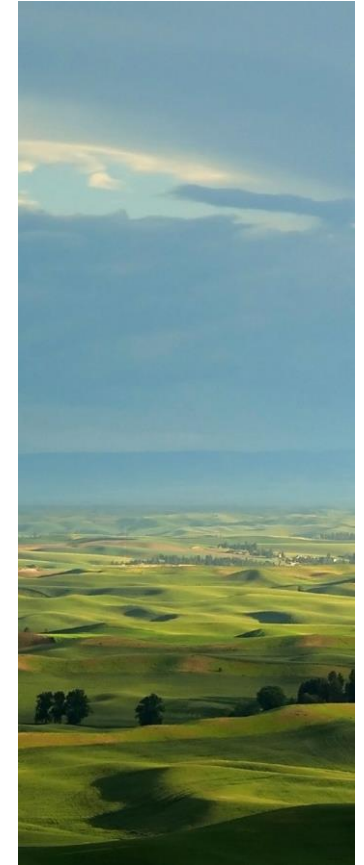
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Closing Remarks

- Submitting questions to NRCS
 - NRCS.WA.Easements@usda.gov
- How to sign up for NRCS newsletter and updates
 - Visit www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov
 - Scroll down to “Subscribe to our Newsletter”
 - Select topics of interest (e.g., “News Release”)
- 1:1 application assistance
 - WALT and RCPP Easement Liaison available to assist with questions about the ALE application process and materials.
 - Email Vanessa (Vanessa@walandtrusts.org) and Alex (Alexandra.james@usda.gov)

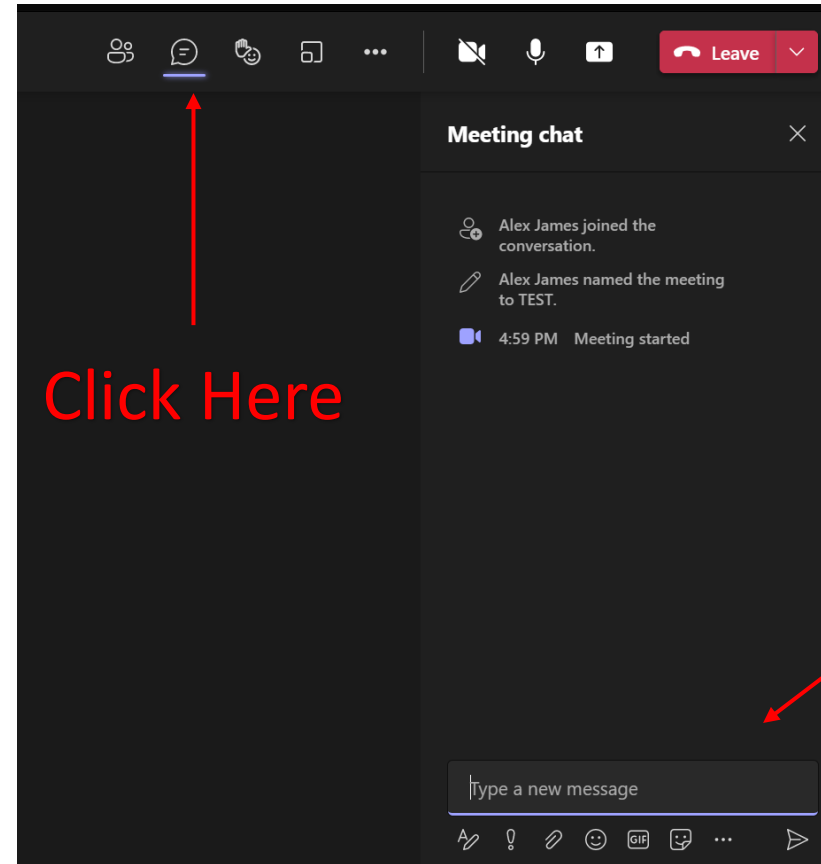


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Q & A

- Ask questions via Chat feature.
- Questions will be answered in order.
- Remaining questions will be answered and emailed to participants.



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Thank You!



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