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# News Release

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## Signup Deadline Announced for Alabama's Easement Programs

AUBURN, ALABAMA, September 4, 2024 – [Alabama State Conservationist, Ben Malone, with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#) announces that the Fiscal Year 2025 Farm Bill Easement signup deadline is **October 4, 2024**. The second sign-up deadline will be December 20, 2024 should any funds remain after the initial signup. Applicable programs include:

- [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements \(ACEP-WRE\)](#)
- [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easements \(ACEP-ALE\)](#)

This initial sign-up will include Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funded opportunities for all covered programs (ACEP-WRE, ACEP-ALE)

**ACEP-WRE:** easements provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity and provide opportunities for educational, scientific and limited recreational activities. Land eligible for wetland reserve easements include farmed or converted wetland that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS will prioritize applications based on the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

**ACEP-ALE:** Applications for the ACEP-ALE are accepted from eligible entities only. Eligible entities may submit proposals to NRCS to acquire a conservation easement on eligible agricultural land. NRCS does not accept applications for ACEP-ALE directly from producers. Producers will need to work with an eligible entity to pursue funding for an ACEP-ALE conservation easement. Some examples of eligible entities include Land Trusts and Land Conservancies. Land types that could be eligible for ACEP-ALE include cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and nonindustrial private forestland with prime and statewide important soils.

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Applications are accepted on a continuous basis; however, selecting applications for funding is completed periodically through batching periods with specific cutoff dates. All applications submitted to Alabama NRCS by October 4, 2024, will be considered in the first batching period. Applications received after this date will be held and considered for a second sign up deadline of December 20, 2024, pending the availability of funds. Conservation program applications are available at your local USDA Service Center and at our [Application and Forms web page](#).

NRCS provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment. More information on NRCS conservation programs can be found at <https://www.farmers.gov/> or <https://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov>.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).

For more information about Alabama NRCS and Programmatic initiatives, priorities and assessment/ranking criteria, visit online at [www.al.nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov). Additionally, visit your local USDA Service Center to determine eligibility; applicants are not eligible for USDA programs until they have ensured all Farm Bill eligibility requirements have been met. You can locate your local Service Center at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

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