



Vermont State NRCS Office

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE)	
Parcel Eligibility and Ranking Form	
Fiscal Year	
Landowner Name and Address	
Eligible entities names and addresses	
Parcel Location:	Locality (Town/Township):
County:	State:
Are all landowners of record AGI eligible? (Y/N)	
Are all landowners of record HEL eligible? (Y/N)	
Are all landowners of record WC eligible? (Y/N)	
NRCS employee confirming landowner eligibility:	
Name:	Signature:
Is the entity eligible? (Y/N)	
NRCS employee confirming entity eligibility:	
Name:	Signature:
Does the eligible entity have a written pending offer for the parcel? (Y/N)	
NRCS employee confirming written pending offer:	
Name:	Signature:
Does the land (enter a response for each):	
_____ Have 50-percent prime, unique, and important farmland? (Y/N)	
_____ Have historical or archeological resources? (Y/N)	
_____ Protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving land? (Y/N)	
_____ Have land that supports the policy of a State or local farm and ranch land protection program? (Y/N)	
Is the land eligible? (Y/N)	
NRCS employee confirming land eligibility:	
Name:	Signature:



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National Ranking Criteria (Must be 200 points Maximum)		
National Ranking Factors and Scaling	Maximum Points	Points
<p>Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland in the parcel to be protected</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 1 points for each 1% of Prime farmland and 0.5 point for each 1% percent Statewide important farmland. Assign 0 points for all other soil types. If there is a split in the total percentage, round down.</p> <p>Example: Parcel has 65% Prime + Statewide soils comprised of 30% prime (30 points) and 35% Statewide (17.5 points) = 48 points</p>	50	
<p>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)</p> <p>Instructions: Referencing the attached table, assign 0 points for any increase in pastureland, assign 5 points for a decrease from 0 to -100%, assign 10 points for a decrease from -100% to -200%, assign 15 points for a decrease from -200% to -300%, assign 20 points if a decrease of more than -300%</p>	20	
<p>of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland in the parcel to be protected (i.e. – open land)</p> <p>Instructions: Give 0.5 points for each 1% of open land in the parcel. If there is a split in the total percentage, round down.</p> <p>Example 1: Parcel has 90% open land = 40 points</p>	30	
<p>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)</p> <p>Instructions: Referencing the attached table, assign 0 points for a ratio of 1 or less, 10 points for ratio of 1 or more</p>	10	
<p>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)</p> <p>Instructions: Referencing the attached table, assign 0 points for a decrease (-) of 0 percent or less, 5 points for decreases of 0 to 3 percent, 10 points for decrease (-) of 3 to 6 percent, 15 points for a decrease (-) of 7 percent or more.</p>	10	
<p>Percent population growth in the county as documented by the United most recent United States Census (Census Bureau Home Page)</p> <p>Instructions: Referencing the attached table, assign 0 points for growth rate of less than the State growth rate, 2 points for growth rate of 1X to 25X the State growth rate, 5 points for growth rate of 25X to 50X the State growth rate, 10 points for growth rate of more than 50X the State growth rate</p>	10	



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<p>Population density (population per square mile) as documented by the most recent United States Census (Census Bureau Home Page)</p> <p>Instructions: Referencing the attached tables, assign 0 points for population density less than the State population density, 5 points for population density of 1X to 2X times the State population density, 10 points for population density of 2X or more</p>	<p>10</p>	
<p>Existence of a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established to address farm viability for future generations</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 0 points for no written plan, assign 10 points for an existing written plan or if the applicant is enrolled in a program to develop a written plan</p>	<p>10</p>	
<p>Proximity of the parcel to other protected land, including military installations, parks, National Forest, and conservation easements</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 0 points for less than 50 acres of other protected land within a mile of the boundaries of the parcel, 10 points for 51-100 acres of protected land within a mile of the boundaries of the parcel, 15 points for 101 acres or more of protected land within a mile of the boundaries of the parcel</p>	<p>15</p>	
<p>Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 5 points for less than 250 acres of agricultural land within a mile of the boundaries of the parcel, 10 points for 251-500 acres of protected land within a mile of the boundaries of the parcel, 15 points for 501 acres or more of protected land within a mile of the boundaries of the parcel</p>	<p>15</p>	
<p>Parcels ability to maximize the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 10 points if the parcel will be contiguous with another protected or conserved parcel(s) on one side, 15 points if the parcel will be contiguous with other protected or conserved parcels on 2 or more side, 0 points if the parcel is non-contiguous to any other protected or conserved parcels</p>	<p>15</p>	
<p>Currently enrolled in CRP in a contract that is set to expire within a year</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 3 points for Yes, 0 points for No</p>	<p>3</p>	
<p>The parcel is a grassland of special environmental significance that will benefit from the protection under the long-term easement</p> <p>Instructions: Assign 2 points if Yes, 0 points if No</p>	<p>2</p>	
<p>Total Points for National Ranking Factors</p>	<p>200</p>	



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State Ranking Criteria (Must be 200 points Maximum)		
State Ranking Factors and Scaling	Maximum Points	Points
<p>Geographic Location:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Project is in the Lake Champlain Basin and either of the three Priority Watersheds (St. Albans Bay, Mississquoi Bay, or South Lake) – 30 points 2) Project is in the Lake Champlain Basin but not one of the three Priority Watersheds – 20 points 3) All other geographic locations – 0 points and ineligible for RCPP <p>Instructions: Assign points as shown above for the geographic location of the project, maximum of 40 points, minimum of 0 points and ineligible to participate if not within the Lake Champlain Basin</p>	30	
<p>FOOTNOTED SOIL TYPES:</p> <p>Instructions: Referencing the list of “Prime and Important Farmlands” for the respective county of the application, what is the ratio of Prime and Statewide Important soil in the application to footnoted soils? Assign 30 points if the ratio is 10% or less, 20 points if the ratio is 10% to 25%, 10 points if the ratio is 25% to 40%, and 0 (zero) points if 40% or more.</p> <p>Example: Parcel has 65 acres of Prime + Statewide soils. Of those 65 acres, 45 of them are only Prime if Drained (a footnoted soil). 45 acres footnoted /65 acres total Prime + Statewide = 69% footnoted soil = assign 0 (zero) points</p>	30	
<p>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Soil – Farm uses cover crops on all annual cropland, or is in permanent hayland – 10 points 2) Soil – Farm has conservation practices in place to protect against soil erosion to bring soil erosion to (T) at the time of application – 10 points 3) Soil – Farm has conservation practices in place to promote soil health – example: soil health management system such as conservation tillage, cover crops, manure injection, crop rotation w/cover crop, or conversion of annual cropland to permanent hayland – 10 points <p>Instructions: Assign points as shown above for each condition, maximum of 30 points, minimum of 0 points</p>	30	
<p>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Water Quality – Water quality resource concerns are fully addressed across the parcel or the location/land use of the parcel precludes water quality from being a resource concern – 30 points 2) Water Quality – A water quality resource concern exists but there is evidence (conservation plan, NMP, receiving Technical Assistance) that the issue is being addressed – 15 points 3) Water Quality – A water quality resource concern exists but there is no action 	30	



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being taken to address it – 0 points		
Instructions: Assign points as shown above for each condition, maximum of 30 points, minimum of 0 points		
FARM OPERATIONS: 1) Parcel has adequate infrastructure for the existing operation type at the time of application (HUAs, adequate housing, etc.) – 10 points 2) Acquisition of the parcel will facilitate a farm transfer – 5 points 3) Farm produces more than 2 diversified products – 5 points	20	
Instructions: Assign points as shown above for each condition, maximum of 20 points, minimum of 0 points		
FRAGMENTATION OF LAND: 1) Land that contains over 25% prime or statewide important soil will be excluded (-15) 2) Land that is noncontiguous to an existing public road will be excluded for a future house, campsite, or development (-15) 3) Forest land is planned on being converted to field, pasture, or other agricultural uses (-10)	30	
Instructions: If the project proposes to exclude or convert land from the easement for any of these reasons subtract points from a starting level of 30		
OTHER RESOURCE BENEFITS: 1) Other resource concerns on the parcel are being addressed: wildlife habitat protection, air quality and greenhouse gas emission reductions, control of invasive plants, control of gulley erosion, etc.– 10 points 2) Improvement of natural values, such as the inclusion of special treatment areas, riparian buffers, presence of state or federal T&E species, or protection of clayplain forest – 10 points 3) Public recreation benefits – 5 points 4) Other benefits to the local economy such as on-farm sales of product, space to hold local events, production of value added products – 5 points	30	
Instructions: Assign points as shown above for each condition, maximum of 30 points, minimum of 0 points		
Total Points for State Ranking Factors	200	

NRCS Signature: _____

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)

County	Decrease in Percentage of Grassland, pasture, and rangeland
Addison	-159%
Bennington	-324%
Caledonia	-110%
Chittenden	-204%
Essex	-3617%
Franklin	-135%
Grand Isle	-215%
Lamoille	-329%
Orange	-226%
Orleans	-326%
Rutland	-26%
Washington	5%
Windham	-137%
Windsor	-276%

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)

County	Average Farm Size (Acres - 2012 Census)
Addison	256
Bennington	136
Caledonia	146
Chittenden	125
Essex	274
Franklin	253
Grand Isle	157
Lamoille	149
Orange	141
Orleans	204
Rutland	170
Washington	127
Windham	114
Windsor	132

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): 2007 to 2012

County	2007	2012	% Change
Addison	187,482	208,362	11.14%
Bennington	36,580	41,387	13.14%
Caledonia	81,946	81,828	-0.14%
Chittenden	83,382	73,583	-11.75%
Essex	26,732	25,491	-4.64%
Franklin	180,006	186,294	3.49%
Grand Isle	17,138	19,020	10.98%
Lamoille	49,749	52,093	4.71%
Orange	101,645	105,234	3.53%
Orleans	130,308	130,445	0.11%
Rutland	130,580	108,497	-16.91%
Washington	61,029	67,352	10.36%
Windham	50,746	50,765	0.04%
Windsor	95,972	101,362	5.62%

percent change = (2012-2007)/2007

Percent population growth in the county as documented by the United most recent United States Census (Census Bureau Home Page) - State Growth Rate = 0.05%

County	2010 Baseline Population	July 1 2015 US Census Projection	Growth Rate %	Growth Rate X
Addison	36,821	37,035	0.58%	1X to 25X
Bennington	37,125	36,317	-2.18%	0
Caledonia	31,227	30,780	-1.43%	0
Chittenden	156,545	161,382	3.09%	50X +
Essex	6,306	6,163	-2.27%	0
Franklin	47,746	48,799	2.21%	25X to 50X
Grand Isle	6,970	6,861	-1.56%	0
Lamoille	24,475	25,235	3.11%	50X +
Orange	28,936	28,899	-0.13%	0
Orleans	27,231	27,100	-0.48%	0
Rutland	61,642	59,736	-3.09%	0
Washington	59,534	58,612	-1.55%	0
Windham	44,513	43,386	-2.53%	0
Windsor	56,670	55,737	-1.65%	0

Growth rate = (2015-2010)/2010

625,741

626,042

Population Density (Population per square mile) as documented by the most recent US Census

County	Population Density per square mile	Density X
Addison	45.7	0
Bennington	54.2	0
Caledonia	47.3	0
Chittenden	256.2	2X +
Essex	9.2	0
Franklin	69.7	1X to 2X
Grand Isle	35.9	0
Lamoille	53.6	0
Orange	41.8	0
Orleans	37.7	0
Rutland	64.4	0
Washington	85.3	1X to 2X
Windham	55.2	0
Windsor	57.7	0

State Population Density = 65.3/square mile