

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Evaluation and Ranking Form

Complete all information applicable in the green cells - 1000 Points Maximum

Landowner is interested in: Permanent WRE Easement 30-Year WRE Easement

Name: _____ Race/Gender: _____ County: _____ Application Date: _____

Total Acres in each of the following two tables must be the same, and will determine the total acres offered.

NEST Land Categories and Preliminary Plan

Land Eligibility Categories

Existing To Be Restored

Upland		
Forested		
Emergent		
Riparian		

Farmed or Converted Wetlands 528.105 C2i		Irrigated	
		Non-Irrigated	
Former or Degraded Wetlands 528.105 C2ii			
Lands Substantially Altered 528.105 C2iii			
Croplands or Grasslands 528.105 D			
Riparian Areas 528.105 E			
Lands in CRP 528.105 F			
Wetlands Restored / Protected 528.105 G			
Hydric Soils and Problematic Soils 528.105 H			
Adjacent Lands 528.105 I			
Lands Planted to Trees Through CRP 528.106 (2)			

Total Acres Offered

Total Easement Evaluation Score

If T&E points were assigned during evaluation, list the species impacted:

NOTE: This Evaluation Score Sheet MUST be signed by a NRCS WRE Team Member and the Landowner.

NRCS CERTIFICATION

I certify that land offered for this application meets eligibility criteria stated in section 528.105 of the Conservation Program Manual (Tile 440-528-M, First Ed., Amend. 95, March 2015), and that none of the offered acres are ineligible as described in Section 528.105 of the manual.

NRCS WRE Team Member: _____ Date: _____

LANDOWNER ATTESTATION

The undersigned Applicant agrees to participate in the ACEP - WRE program. If the offer is accepted by NRCS into the program an "Agreement for the Purchase of Conservation Easement" will be issued. Once the agreement is signed the applicant's intention is considered enrolled and initiates the easement acquisition process.

The undersigned Landowner acknowledges penalties could be assessed if the easement, including legal access to the easement cannot be conveyed. Except for reasons beyond the control of the Landowner, as determined by NRCS, if the Landowner fails to convey the easement, the Landowner will be in default and shall pay the United States the amount of costs incurred by the United States for survey and all other actions taken in furtherance of the "Agreement for the Purchase of Conservation Easement".

NRCS may, at its discretion and without liability, terminate the "Agreement for the Purchase of Conservation Easement" at any time due to the lack of availability of funds, inability to clear title, sale of the land, risk of hazardous substance contamination, or other reason.

Landowner: _____ Date: _____

Summary of Points

A. Easement Duration		<input type="text"/>
1. Permanent	_____	
2. 30 Year	_____	
B. Hydrology Restoration		<input type="text"/>
1. Hydrology Restoration and Enhancement	_____	
2. Hydrology Restoration Diversity	_____	
C. Water Quality		<input type="text"/>
1. Riparian Corridor	_____	
2. Floodwater Attenuation	_____	
D. Location Significance		<input type="text"/>
1. Proximity	_____	
2. Size of Protected Lands	_____	
E. Wildlife Habitat		<input type="text"/>
1. Contiguous Forest	_____	
2. Forest Bird Conservation Areas	_____	
3. Declining, Threatened, and Endangered Species	_____	
F. Operation and Maintenance		<input type="text"/>
G. Cost Factors		<input type="text"/>
Reduction of NRCS Restoration Cost		
Total Easement Points		<input type="text"/>

WRE Ranking Criteria

I. Ecological Factors

A. Easement Duration

Permanent Easement 20
 30 Year Easement 0

B. Hydrology Restoration

1 Hydrology Restoration and Enhancement Potential

Percent of Proposed Easement Area in Farmed or converted Wetlands (including: Cropland, Pastureland, and Hayland) and Degraded Forestland Wetlands on Which Hydrology Will Be Restored: (Total percent must equal 100)

Restoration Area - Acres of Farmed Wetlands or Converted Wetlands to be restored (including: Cropland, Pastureland, and Hayland) Also includes Lands planted to Trees w/ C RP

Acreege

Percent

- a. Percent of restorable lands with plans to impound water seasonally for moist soil management or create emergent marsh and to extend the flooding season. **Total area of restored hydrology in this category cannot exceed 30% of the Restoration Area**
- b. Percent of restorable lands that have been leveled or smoothed by cultivation with plans to block all ditches, breach all flood prevention levees and restore roughness with swales, depressions, mounds, etc.
- c. Percent of restorable lands farmed under natural conditions without leveling, flood prevention levees, or draining, and still possessing natural topography, with no plans to increase hydrology.
- d. Percent of restorable lands leveled and smoothed by cultivation with plans to block all ditches and breach all flood prevention levees but NOT to restore roughness or impound water.
- e. Forested wetlands degraded by drainage with plans to restore the area's former surface and/or subsurface hydrology.
- f. No measures taken to improve hydrology.

Total percent in a and b _____ x 3.0 _____ points
 Total percent in c and d _____ x 2.5 _____ points
 Total percent in e _____ x 2.0 _____ points
 Total percent in f _____ x 0.0 _____ points

Total Points _____

2 Hydrology Restoration Diversity

Check the different wetland types that will exist after restoration. To be counted, a wetland type must make up at least 2% of the easement area. Definitions to be used are shown in exhibit A.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Managed shallow water or moist soil management areas	1 type	<u>100</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermittent unmanaged flooding	2 types	<u>150</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent shallow water < 3'	3 types	<u>200</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent deep water 3' +	4 types	<u>250</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Saturated wetlands		

C. Water Quality

1 Riparian Corridor

The proposed easement area contains a perennial or intermittent stream, or oxbow lake. An area at least 100 feet wide, or to the easement boundary if less than 100 feet, will be established to woody vegetation or allowed to under-go natural succession. This width will be measured laterally from the stream or lake, starting at the top of bank, on all sides that lie within the easement. The riparian area:

Will form a continuous riparian corridor connected to wetlands, forest, or other areas of permanent vegetation adjacent to the easement boundary, and the part within the easement will be:

<input type="checkbox"/>	One quarter mile or more in unbroken length	<u>100</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than one quarter mile in unbroken length	<u>75</u>

Is not connected to an area of wetlands, forest, or other areas of permanent vegetation adjacent to the easement boundary, and the part within the easement will be:

<input type="checkbox"/>	One quarter mile or more in unbroken length	<u>50</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than one quarter mile in unbroken length	<u>25</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	A perennial or intermittent stream, or oxbow lake, is NOT	<u>0</u>

Perennial and intermittent streams will be defined as solid or 3-dot lines, including ox-bow lakes, shown on USGS topographic maps that are physically present on the proposed easement. Re-routed reaches on the proposed easement may be considered if shown to replace an otherwise eligible reach.

2 Floodwater Attenuation

Expected acres of hydrology to be created or enhanced that will trap sediment and extend the hydro-period for at least one month longer than current conditions. To trap sediment, the site must receive surface runoff that contains sediment from adjacent lands or out of bank flow during flooded periods.

<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 200	<u>100</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	150-200	<u>80</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	100-149	<u>60</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	50-99	<u>40</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	10-49	<u>20</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	< 10	<u>0</u>

D. Location Significance

1 Proximity

Proximity of the area to one of the following permanently protected areas: National Wildlife Refuges, Wildlife Management Areas, National Forest, WRP easements, ACEP -WRE easements, FSA easements, other areas owned by or under easement to federal agencies, state agencies, or conservation organizations. The protected area includes the proposed easement.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjoins the defined area	<u>40</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Within 1/4 mile of defined area	<u>35</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	From 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the defined area	<u>30</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	From 1/2 to 1 mile of the defined area	<u>20</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	From 1 mile to 2 miles of the defined area	<u>10</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	>2 miles from the defined area	<u>0</u>

2 Size of Protected Area

The acreage of the permanently protected defined area referenced above is:

<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 20,000 acres	<u>40</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	20,000 - 10,000 acres	<u>35</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	10,000 - 5,000 acres	<u>30</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	5,000 - 1,000 acres	<u>20</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	< 1,000 acres	<u>10</u>

E. Wildlife Habitat

1 Declining, Threatened and Endangered Species - Contiguous Forest

The proposed easement area will become a part of an area that is forested or will be forested that may or may not be under any type of easement or government ownership.

The area can be measured cumulatively from different adjacent locations.

ACEP-WRE acres to be forested on this proposed site and any adjacent closed WRP/ACEP-WRE easement will be considered. Also, consider existing features and, to the extent possible, planned hydrology features.

Moist soil units are considered open areas for purposes of determining fragmentation.

Include natural oxbow lakes and any unmanaged water surfaces less than 600 feet wide as part of the contiguous area.

Stop measuring in a particular direction when the measured width falls below 300 feet for a distance of 300 feet.

Acres in contiguous forest

<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 5000	<u>100</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	3001-5000	<u>75</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	1001-3000	<u>50</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	500-1000	<u>25</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 500	<u>0</u>

2 Forest Bird Conservation Areas

Location of the proposed easement in relation to areas included in the LMVJV Forest Breeding Bird Decision Model for Restoration, the Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Areas or the LMVJV Forest Wetland Restoration Focus Areas

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Any of the proposed Easement is within an area | <u>20</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None of the proposed Easement is within an area | <u>0</u> |

3 Declining, Threatened and Endangered Species

Points are cumulative for the following three questions

- | | | | |
|----------|--|--------------------------|--------------------|
| a | The proposed easement abuts an identified reach of a stream containing federally designated aquatic species | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>5</u> |
| b | The proposed easement is within an identified watershed or recharge zone containing federally designated aquatic species | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 species <u>8</u> |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 species <u>5</u> |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 species <u>3</u> |
| c | The proposed easement is within the identified range of the federally endangered Indiana bat or pondberry or the proposed northern long-eared bat. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>5</u> |

F. Operation and Maintenance

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No structures present or any structures to be constructed lie outside the Mississippi River levee AND are not being installed on Lufe or Bonn soil series (weak structured, high sodium soils). | <u>5</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Any structures to be constructed lie inside the Mississippi River levee and are not protected by any existing structure OR some of the structures will be installed on Lufe or Bonn soil series | <u>0</u> |

II. Economic Factors

G. Reduction of NRCS Restoration Costs

Funds to cover these costs will be withheld from the easement payment unless a signed agreement is provided prior to closing showing that those funds are being provided by a cooperating agency or organization. NRCS will perform actual restoration through its normal ACEP-WRE procedures.

Vegetative - Acres to be planted x \$310/ac.= _____

Hydrology - Acres in Easement x \$290/ac.= _____

Total Restoration Cost _____

Percent of total restoration cost to be paid by non-NRCS funds

(Extra points) Permanent			(Extra points) 30 Year					
Percentage	Dollars	Points	Mandatory 25%	Dollars	Additional % (NTE 25%)	Dollars	Total Dollars	Points
NTE 25%			25.00%		<input type="text"/>			

25 x Percentage % = points
 (Express percentage as a decimal. Round points up to the next whole number)

LANDOWNER SIGNATURE REQUIRED TO RECEIVE POINTS IN A CATEGORY I.E.

Landowner agrees to cover the amount of restoration costs indicated by that represented in the estimated figures above or to arrange for those costs to be covered by a cooperating agency or organization. If this is a 30-year easement, the mandatory 25% cost share of the actual restoration cost agreed to by the NRCS and the landowner will not change without agreement from both parties involved. The additional percentage agreed to above will not change.

Landowner _____

Date _____