

6 Steps to Conservation Easements



Do you own farmland, forest, or wetlands and want to protect and/or restore them?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help you protect your land.

1 Land & Project Pre-screening Contact our Easement Professionals for a **free evaluation and consultation.** Starting with a map and deed of your property, we'll see if one of our conservation easement programs meets your goals and explain the process and available financial assistance.

2 Application & Eligibility We'll walk you through the application and the landowner or entity eligibility process, including, but not limited to:

- The program application: CPA-1200
- Necessary eligibility forms
- DUNS and SAM registration (may be required)

3 Field Visit & Land Eligibility We'll visit your property and meet with you to determine if your land is eligible for an NRCS conservation easement. NRCS reviews the application, verifies landowner and parcel eligibility, orders an environmental records search, reviews the hazardous materials checklist with the landowner, and when a wetlands

4 Ranking & Agreement NRCS will review and rank applications based on conservation and resource criteria like:

- Natural resource features
- Land conversion pressure from population growth
- Infrastructure factors and proximity to other protected land

5 Acquisition & Closing NRCS will help guide the landowner or entity through the acquisition and closing process. The easement purchase price is determined, a boundary survey is done to determine final easement acres, a title search and review is completed to ensure clear title, final deed language is reviewed and approved, and the easement is closed and recorded.

6 Monitoring & Restoration After the easement is in place, monitoring occurs to ensure compliance; for a wetlands easement, restoration and habitat enhancement is initiated. For both types of easements, a monitoring report is submitted annually by the easement holder in perpetuity.

Approximate Timeline: (Congressional actions can affect timelines including, but not limited to, the release of program funds.)



NRCS, Easements Team

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10 Ferry Street, Suite 211
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 223-6023

CONWAY FIELD OFFICE SERVING BELKNAP AND CARROLL COUNTIES

73 Main Street, PO Box 533
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(603) 447-2771

EPPING FIELD OFFICE SERVING ROCKINGHAM AND STRAFFORD COUNTIES

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4 Mayberry Lane
Lancaster, NH 03584
(603) 788-4651

MILFORD FIELD OFFICE SERVING HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

468 Route 13 South
Milford, NH 03055
(603) 673-2409

ORFORD FIELD OFFICE SERVING GRAFTON COUNTY

19 Archertown Road, Suite A
Orford, NH 03777
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11 Industrial Park Drive
Walpole, NH 03608
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The 2014 Farm Bill combined the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), into two types of easements: Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE).

Agricultural Land Easements (ALE):

- NRCS will pay a maximum of 50% of the appraised easement value, and will not hold the easement.
- A sponsoring entity must submit the application package to NRCS (including the landowner application and eligibility forms, parcel, and entity workbooks), hold the easement, and match a minimum of 50% of the NRCS contribution (or 25% of the appraised easement value).
- The entity is also responsible for obtaining a title each, boundary survey, appraisal, baseline documentation, and negotiating the deed language between NRCS and the landowner. The 2015 NRCS minimum deed terms are posted on the NH web page.
- Funds are obligated to the sponsoring entity through a Cooperative Agreement. The 2015 Cooperative Agreement template is posted on the NH NRCS web page.
- The sponsoring entity (typically a Land Trust or Conservation Commission) must have a DUNS number and have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) at the time of fund obligation. These rules do not apply to the landowner if they are an entity (such as an LLC, Corporation, Trust).
- Land Eligibility Criteria:
 - 1) minimum 50% prime, unique, statewide, or locally important soils; or 2) historical or archaeological significance; or 3) furthers a state or local initiative. All parcels are limited to a maximum of 66% forestland, however, active sugar bush can be considered cropland. The entity match must be demonstrated at the time of application.

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE):

- There is no entity sponsorship required, the agreement is directly between NRCS and the landowner, the easement is held by NRCS, and the land must have been owned by the applicant for a minimum of 2 years prior to filing an application.
- A minimum of 50% of the land must be: 1) former or degraded wetland (previously drained, filled, or altered for agricultural or silvicultural production); or 2) riparian land that directly wetlands and those wetlands are currently protected or will be protected under the same WRE transaction.
- NRCS is continually accepting applications on form CPA-1200. They will be processed and ranked as they are received. Eligible applications meeting the minimum ranking threshold will be tentatively selected for funding and funded monthly as available funds allow.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



N.H. Conservation District Offices:

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64 Court Street
Laconia, NH 03246
(603) 527-5880

CARROLL COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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(603) 901-3003

CHESHIRE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

11 Industrial Park Drive
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COÖS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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MERRIMACK COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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ROCKINGHAM COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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STRAFFORD COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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SULLIVAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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