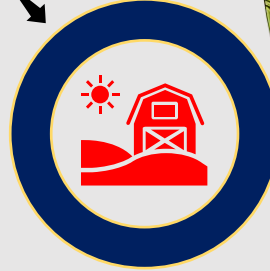


Agricultural Conservation Easement Lifecycle

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Application: Grantees, such as land trusts and County SWCDs, represent landowners and apply to the ADFPTF for conservation easement funding.



Site Visits and Ranking: Site visits by NCDA&CS staff are conducted to verify application information. Applications are ranked based on specific criteria.

Contract Award: Depending on the amount of funding allocated to the ADFPTF by the NC General Assembly, contracts for funding are awarded based on ranking. In the years that demand is higher than funding, grantees are limited to four contract awards each.



Part A: Easement Restriction Acknowledgement Form: Landowners formally commit to the restrictions for which they are compensated in the contract.



Due Deliverables Work Begins: As soon as the contract award notifications are announced, grantees are responsible for engaging qualified contractors to complete the due diligence documentation.

Survey: The survey establishes the boundary of the easement and any farmstead building envelopes as well as any additional information required by NCDA&CS. The surveyor is contracted by the grantee and is approved by NCDA&CS before recording with the county.



Title Review: Legal counsel for the grantee present necessary Title Review work to NCDA&CS Legal for preliminary approval. The title work review identifies any existing easements, deeds of trust, etc. and establishes clear title.

Part B: Grantee submits an appraisal for the easement property. A certified appraiser who is qualified to value agricultural land for conservation easements is engaged via contract by the grantee shortly after notification of contract award. The appraisal is valid for one year. (Not applicable for projects using Present-Use Value Conservation Easement Program.)



Land Management Documents Due: A baseline documentation report of the easement property is submitted for approval. This is an in-depth report of the conditions on the ground at the time of the recording of the easement and can include a forest management plan and conservation plan in some situations. An Environmental Audit of the property is also submitted for approval. This audit identified any potential environmental hazards such as underground tanks or hazardous materials stored on the property.



Final Legal Documents Due: All legal documents needed for the recording of the conservation easement must be approved. This includes the draft conservation easement.



Easement Recorded: Once all the due diligence documents including the legal documents and the conservation easement itself have been approved, a date for the recordation of the deed of conservation easement can be made. As an official legal document, the easement will be signed by the landowner and the easement holder with the closing agent and filed with the county register of deeds.



Monitoring: Yearly on-site visits by the grantee ensure the terms and conditions of the conservation easement are upheld. NCDA&CS staff and other funding partners join these visits every 3rd year.