

# 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

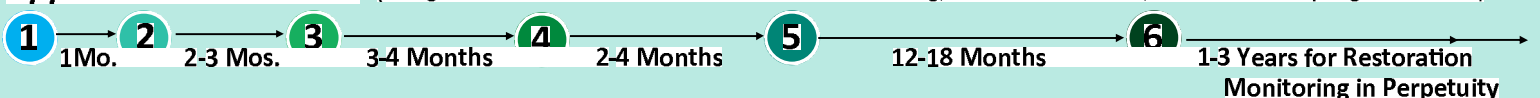
**4 Ranking & Agreement** NRCS will review and rank applications based on conservation and resource criteria like:

- 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.)





**NEW  
HAMPSHIRE**

**Conservation Districts**

**Belknap County Conservation District**

2 Airport Rd., Unit 1  
Gilford, NH 03249  
603-527-5580  
www.belknapccd.org

**Carroll County Conservation District**

P.O. Box 533  
Conway, NH 03818  
603-447-2771

**Cheshire County Conservation District**

11 Industrial Park Dr.  
Walpole, NH 03608  
603-756-2988  
www.cheshireconservation.org

**Coos County Conservation District**

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

**Grafton County Conservation District**

19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1  
Orford, NH 03777  
603-353-4651  
www.graftonccd.org

**Hillsborough County Conservation District**

#468, Rte. 13 South  
Milford, NH 03055  
603-673-2409  
www.hillsboroughccd.com

**Merrimack County Conservation District**

10 Ferry St., Suite 211  
Concord, NH 03301  
603-223-6023  
www.merrimackccd.org

**Rockingham County Conservation District**

110 North Rd.  
Brentwood, NH 03833  
603-679-2790  
www.rockinghamccd.org

**Strafford County Conservation District**

264 County Farm Rd.  
Dover, NH 03820  
603-749-3037  
www.straffordccd.org

**Sullivan County Conservation District**

95 County Farm Rd.  
Unity, NH 03743  
603-542-4891  
www.sullivancountynh.gov

**New Hampshire Association  
of Conservation Districts:**

**www.nhacd.org**



**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program**

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 search, 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 archeological 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 silvacultural production); or 2) riparian land that connects to other riparian land already under a conservation easement.
- ◆ 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.

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**NRCS Easement Team:**

Located at the State Office in Durham

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**NRCS New Hampshire Offices:**

**New Hampshire State Office**  
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Durham, NH 03824  
Richard P. Ellsmore, State Conservationist  
603-868-7581

**Concord Field Service Center**  
Serving Merrimack and Belknap Counties  
10 Ferry St., Suite 211  
Concord, NH 03301  
603-223-6023

**Conway Field Service Center**  
Serving Carroll and Belknap Counties  
73 Main St.  
Conway, NH 03818  
603-447-2771

**Epping Field Service Center**  
Serving Rockingham and  
Strafford Counties  
629 Calef Highway, Suite 203  
Epping, NH 03042  
603-679-1587

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