



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**USDA- NRCS**

# Agricultural Conservation Easement Program



**FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION**  
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

## What is a Conservation Easement?

- An interest in real property.
- Established by an agreement between a landowner and eligible entity or United States.
- Constitutes a servitude upon the land and runs with the land when the property is sold.
- Easement contains permanent property restrictions for the use or development.
- Ensures conservation values of the agricultural lands are protected and preserved into the future.



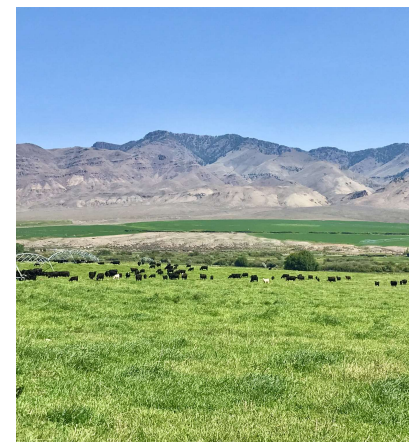
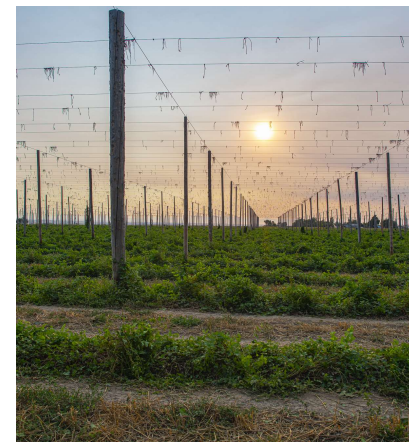
## ACEP – Conservation Easements

- Agricultural Land Easements (**ALE**)
  - ❖ Helps private and tribal landowners, land trusts, and other entities such as state and local governments protect croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land.
- Wetland Reserve Easements (**WRE**)
  - ❖ Helps private and tribal landowners protect, restore and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.



## ACEP - Conservation Benefits

- Protects prime farmland and grasslands from loss and development.
- Provides habitat for terrestrial wildlife, wetland dependent wildlife, and migratory waterfowl.
- Improves water quality; reduces flooding; recharges groundwater.
- Biological Diversity.
- Resilience to Climate Change.



## ACEP - Landowner Benefits

- Landowner compensation for permanent protection from land development.
- Proceeds from Conservation Easement can be invested in the farm or ranch operation.
- Landowner retains the right to transfer property ownership.
- Keeps working farms and ranchland in agriculture and protects wetlands.



## Eligible Landowners

Owners of privately held land including land held by American Indian tribes.

Owners must hold clear title of the land.

Must meet Adjusted Gross Income limitations.

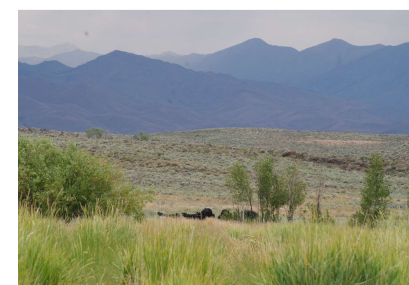
Compliant with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act.

# Agricultural Land Easement

- Landowner partners with a Land Trust or other eligible entity to participate.
- NRCS contributes up to 50% of the Fair Market Value of an Agricultural Land Easement, as determined by an appraisal.
- Permanent easement held by the eligible entity, recorded on your deed, and stays in effect even if ownership changes.



*"A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust, to limit certain activities and to steward the land in a particular way, leading to greater conservation benefits for the soil, water, species, climate, and food."*



## ALE – Eligible Lands

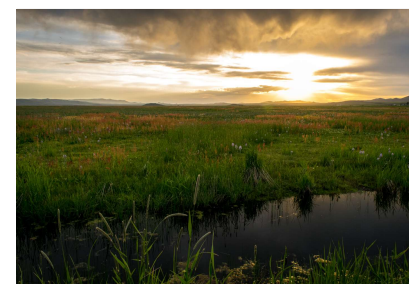
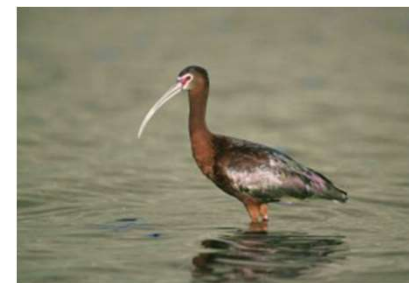
- Private or Tribal land that is agricultural land, including a farm or ranch.
- Has prime, unique, or other productive soils.
- Contains historical or archaeological resources.
- Protects grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving eligible land.
- Protection would further State or local policy consistent with the purposes of ACEP.
- Grassland of Special Environmental Significance.





## Wetland Reserve Easement

- Landowner works directly with NRCS to participate in the program.
- Easement is recorded on your deed and stays in effect even if ownership changes.
- NRCS retains a right to develop and implement a Wetland Reserve Plan of Operations (WRPO).
- NRCS pays 100 percent of the easement value for the purchase of a permanent easement.



## WRE – Eligible Lands

- Private or Tribal land.
- Land may be farmed, converted wetlands, or previously degraded due to agricultural uses.
- High-priority given to lands with potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and wildlife.
- Successful restoration of land and wetland functions.



# Idaho USDA-NRCS



## ACEP Contacts

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