



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Eligibility & Ranking Form FY 2017

Executive Summary:

The purpose of the Agricultural Land Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) in Nevada is to protect and preserve critical croplands, pastureland, grassland and rangeland for future generations, by limiting the conversion to nonagricultural uses of the land. ACEP-ALE acquisition in Nevada is focused on agriculture's most valuable elements – soil quality, the availability of irrigation water and grazing land resources for sustained agriculture.

This plan is updated and reviewed annually with the Nevada State Technical Advisory Committee and the NRCS Programs staff. Review of this plan by the State Technical Committee was completed on 11/17/2016. The plan was amended 11/03/2016 as a result of Final Rule and regulations 7CFR Part 1468 published in the Federal Register, and agency policy guidance provided in CPM-440- Part 528. The plan and ranking includes consideration for the ACEP-ALE Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance (GSS) and eligibility for Sage Grouse Initiative funding as per instructions from National Headquarters regarding landscape initiatives.

Private agricultural lands in Nevada are largely utilized to produce forage crops such as alfalfa hay, pasture, rangelands, and/or have within their irrigated cropping systems, small grains, corn, one or two years of potatoes, garlic or onions. Cropland operations are vastly out-numbered by livestock operations in Nevada. This annual plan closely aligns with the National Goals for the program; to protect agricultural productivity by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land, the preservation of farmland for future generations, the protection of prime, unique, statewide or locally important soils, land containing historic or archaeological sites from conversion to nonagricultural uses, and grasslands of special environmental significance.

Development Overview:

From 2000 to 2010, the US Census Bureau reported that Nevada had a population increase of 35.1% making it one of the fastest population growth states in the USA during that time period. This rapid growth primarily was concentrated in the Las Vegas area (Clark County). Expansive growth in the Clark County area has severely depleted nearly all of the agricultural lands used for production of food and fiber.

Substantial population growth also occurred in Churchill, Washoe, Carson City, Elko, Douglas, Lyon and Nye Counties during this time period. These counties are productive agricultural areas and contain the majority of farms and ranches in production that are threatened by development. See appendix A for Census and NASS data.

In 2008 Nevada experienced a dramatic economic downturn. Housing and home construction have picked up considerably in the last 36 months after a period of years 2008-2011 that marked by a high percentage of foreclosures and residential property flooding the market and contributing to a marked decline in values. The economic downturn in Nevada has resulted in a reduction in tourism, gaming, and tax revenues. State and local governments continue to operate on severely restricted budgets. Unemployment rates are still in excess of the national average in some areas. Irrigated land values have increased approximately 8-12% with rangeland land values remaining steady. While home and residential construction has increased in some urbanized areas, there remains areas of unfinished subdivisions where construction was completely halted when the economy faltered in 2008.



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Historical Leveraging:

Historical participation and partnering efforts for the 2008 Farm Bill Farm and Ranchland Protection Program was primarily been contingent on Nevada Division of State Lands “Question 1 Program” which provided grants to local governments and NGO’s with farm and ranchland preservation interests. Currently, budgetary constraints have limited the State Comptroller from issuing additional bonds. The budgetary shortfall resulted in NGO’s requesting cancellation of all FY 10 FRPP agreements with NRCS.

State, local governments and farmland protection entities generally lack sufficient match and fund raising capability to take advantage of the USDA program for land preservation. There are some match sources available through agencies that have funds that may be available from mitigation accounts for the construction of transmission lines, hydrocarbon pipelines or industrial development.

Critical Wildlife Habitat Value:

The potential T&E listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse and the distinct bi-state population of this iconic bird has resulted in broader and more frequent news coverage, partnership development and political pressures to respond to this threat in a positive manner on the landscape. The Nevada Governor, the legislature and state agencies have stepped up and have fully endorsed the utilization of USDA conservation easement programs to protect the critical habitats of the Sage-grouse.

There remains a significant interest by individual landowners seeking conservation easements and local and county governments to protect “open space” or “green belts”. NRCS continues to partner with land preservation organizations to identify areas for potential ACEP-ALE conservation easements and seek sponsorship from a variety of sources both governmental and philanthropic.





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2017 Easement Plan Activities, Entity Performance & Estimated Funding:

Easement plan activities are designated to priority areas that have a potential for sustainable agricultural activity, and are threatened by development. Washoe, Carson City, Douglas, Lyon, Churchill, Humboldt, Lander, Eureka, White Pine, Lincoln, Nye, Esmeralda, Mineral, and Elko Counties. The total acres proposed for protection in FY 2017 is 3500 acres, including:

- 500 acres of prime, unique, statewide or locally important farmland
- 3000 acres of grasslands of special environmental significance
- 0 – 5 acres of historical and archaeological sites protected with FRPP funds

Approximate value of ranch and farmland per acre in areas targeted by this easement plan:

- \$18,000 in South Washoe and Carson City County
- \$15,000 in Douglas County
- \$8,500 in Lyon County
- \$6,000 in Churchill County
- \$2,200 in Humboldt County
- \$1,500 in Elko County

Est. average contribution: 50% land value per acre cropland enrolled in ACEP – ALE program.

Est. average contribution: 75% land value per acre rangeland/pastureland enrolled in ALE GSS.

Estimated FY 2017 ACEP-ALE funds needed for NV potential easement projects is \$3,000,000.00.

Current Participating Entities Performance:

Nevada Land Trust (formerly the Nevada Land Conservancy):

- Good standing (1 closed easement FY 2011)
- Up to date monitoring reports on closed easements
- (1) ACEP-ALE GSS enrollment in FY 2014

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:

- Good standing
- (1) ACEP-ALE GSS enrollment in FY 2014

The Nature Conservancy:

- Good standing
- (1) ACEP-ALE-GSS enrollment in FY 2015

Land Trust Entities may have additional resources to secure matching funds for 2016 ACEP agreements. The Nevada Division of Wildlife Resources has secured a Department of Navy funds commitment from the REPI challenge to protect Sage Grouse habitats throughout the Fallon Naval Air Station training range. The Nevada State Legislature in its 2015 session passed legislation for the creation of a state environmental credit system.



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Nevada ACEP-ALE Land Eligibility: In addition to the national program eligibility requirements, Nevada is adding the following eligibility considerations, since the availability of irrigation water or livestock water supplies is critical to successful agricultural operations in Nevada.

Any cropland or pastureland considered in an offer must be legally water righted or certificated under appropriate state or federal water law. Non-irrigated and/or grazing lands and/or incidental lands for operation may be included as part of an offer. Grasslands of special environmental significance do not require an irrigation component. Landowners enrolling parcels into ACEP and or ACEP-GSS components are required to offer parcels with existing water rights attached to the offer. Offers with a planned severance of water rights from lands enrolled in ACEP will not be determined eligible for enrollment.



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National ACEP – ALE Ranking Criteria

Ranking Tool National Criteria = 50% of the evaluation weight
Maximum 200 Points

National Criteria #1: Answer only 1a or 1b

Criteria 1a: Percent of prime, unique, and other important farmland in parcel to be protected. Zero points for 50% or less. Baseline of 15 points, plus 1 points for every percent above 50 percent. National mandate of zero points for 50% or less of “Eligibility Criteria.” **(Maximum 65)**

Prime Farmland Soils, are soils as defined in Secretary of Agriculture Memorandum No. 9500-2 dated March 10, 1982 and Soil Taxonomy, Agriculture Handbook 436. Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for uses including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water. In Nevada, only irrigated lands have been classified as Prime farmland soils.

Farmland of Statewide Importance was defined in 1976 and confirmed in 1983 by the State of Nevada, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as “all farmland with a full or partial irrigation water supply is farmland of statewide importance (Appendix A).”

General to all soils examinations in this soils section include only those lands currently producing food, forage or fiber crops will be evaluated for LE. All other land associated with farm or ranch support and structures such as feedlots, corals, parking and hay bale stack yards will not be examined, but may be included as part of an offer.

Percentage of some combination of prime, unique and/or farmland of statewide or local importance relative to the entire parcel of land being offered and/or contains historic or archaeological resources.* (NRCS will not accept parcels unless they meet the eligibility criteria set forth in sections 528.33 of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Manual) Include soils map with documentation.

1a. Percentage of soils as Prime, Unique or Statewide Importance:

Percent Soils	Points	Project Value
<50 % PUSI	0	
= 50 % PUSI	15 Points (Baseline) plus	
>50 % PUSI	1 pt. for every % increase of prime, unique, Statewide Important Soils over 50%	
Total Points		

Example: Offer of 100 acres of which 65 are prime, unique etc. and 35 that are not. Scoring example = 15 pts. + ((65% -50%)) = 15 pts. + (15) = 30 total points



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Criteria 1b: Geographic regions where the enrollment of particular grasslands may help achieve national, State, and regional conservation goals and objectives, or enhance existing government or private conservation efforts for Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance. **(Maximum 65)**

Protection of properties with Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance that support critical wildlife habitats are an integral component to NRCS funding for landscape initiatives that promote conservation efforts for species that are identified as threatened, endangered, candidate or species of concern at the federal, state or local level. Listing decisions of the USFWS will have long term impacts to the viability of agriculture and other resource based economic activities.

Focal species for Nevada include; Greater Sage-grouse, Bi-state Sage- grouse, Southwest Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Billed Cuckoo, Desert Tortoise, Columbia Spotted Frog, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, and potentially other species as approved by the NRCS Nevada State Biologist.

Other Species _____

Concurrence of State Biologist

1b. Habitat Values on the Offered Property (choose only one):

Habitat Values on the Offered Property (choose only one)	Points	Project Value
Nevada Department of Wildlife or USFWS designated Essential/Irreplaceable or Core habitats for any of the above named species.	65	
Nevada Department of Wildlife or USFWS designated Important or Priority habitats for any of the above named species.	32.5	
Nevada Department of Wildlife or USFWS designated Suitable or General habitats for any of the above named species.	15	
Habitat within or adjacent to Nevada Department of Wildlife or USFWS designated Suitable or General habitats for any of the above named species.	7.5	
Habitats outside of Nevada Department of Wildlife or USFWS designated Suitable or General habitats for any of the above named species.	0	
Total Points		

Attach map or other documentation to support the answer. Grasslands of special environmental significance may include irrigated pastures.



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National Criteria #2: Percent of cropland, rangeland, grassland, historic grassland, pastureland, or nonindustrial private forest land in the private land parcel to be protected. **(Maximum 5)**

2. Parcel percentage of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland to be protected:

Percentage crop, pastures, grass and rangelands	Points	Project Value
< 50%	0	
≥ 50% or < 75%	2.5	
≥ 75% to 100 %	5	
Total Points		

Note: Do not include lands that are ineligible due to legal access issues. This only includes headquarters and other landowner designated exclusion from the offered parcel.

National Criteria #3: Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture www.agcensus.usda.gov . **(Maximum 10)**

3. Ratio of total acres of land in Parcel offer to be protected to average farm size in the county:

County: _____ Average acre farm size: _____

Project Size Ratio	Points	Project Value
	Offer Size/Divided by average farm size	
1.0 or less	0	
1.0 to 1.99	5	
> 2.0	10	
Total Points		

National Criteria #4: Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture www.agcensus.usda.gov . **(Maximum 10)**

4. Percent decrease of farm/ranch land acres in county between last two USDA AG Censuses:

County Decrease	Points	Project Value
0% or less	0	
between 0 to 4.99%	5	
between 5 to 10%	10	
between 10-15%	5	
> 15%	0	
Total Points		



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National Criteria #5: Percent population growth in county as documented by the U.S. Census www.census.gov . (Maximum 10)

5. Percent population growth in the county as documented by the United States Census.

County Growth Rate % _____ Nevada Growth Rate % _____

County Growth Rate	Points	Project Value
< State Growth	0	
1-1.99 X State Growth Rate	5	
2-2.99 X State Growth Rate	10	
> 3 X State Growth Rate	5	
Total Points		

National Criteria #6: Population density (population per square mile) as documented by the most recent United States Census www.census.gov . (Maximum 10)

6. Population density (Pop. per square mile) documented by most recent U.S. Census:

County Population Density _____ State Population Density _____

County Population Density	Points	Project Value
< State Population Density	0	
1-1.99 X State Pop. Density	5	
2-2.99 X State Pop. Density	10	
> 3 X State Pop. Density	5	
Total Points		

National Criteria #7: Proximity of the parcel to other protected land, such as military installations; land owned in fee title by the United States or an Indian Tribe, State or Local government, or by a nongovernmental organization whose purpose is to protect agricultural use and related conservation values; or land that is already subject to an easement or deed restrictions that limits the conversion of the land to non-agricultural use. (Maximum 20)

7. Proximity (distance) of parcel to other protected land, State or Federal lands and or other existing Conservation Easements within 1 mile of protected lands.

Acres of Ag Land	Points	Project Value
< 249 acres	0	
250 – 499 acres	10	
> 500 acres	20	
Total Points		



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National Criteria #8: Parcel proximity to other agricultural operations and infrastructure. **(Maximum 20)**

8. Proximity of the parcel(s) to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure. Agricultural acreage located within a mile of the offered property.

Acreage of Ag Land	Points	Project Value
< 249 Acres	0	
250 – 499 Acres	10	
> 500 Acres	20	
Total Points		

National Criteria #9: Is there a farm or ranch succession plan, or similar plan, established to address farm viability for future generations? **(Maximum 5)**

9. Does the applicant have a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established addressing farm viability for future generations?

Farm or Ranch Succession Plan	Points	Project Value
Yes	0	
No	5	
Total Points		



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National Criteria #10: Maximizing the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use.
(Maximum 40)

10. Proximity to Non-Ag Zoning and Existing Conservation Easements: If an offered property is near or adjacent to property “zoned for development” and/or between 0 – 3 miles away from the nearest industrial, subdivision, urban development, or agriculture land parcels used for purposes other than grazing, the threat of conversion is increased. Properties having zoned development on two or more sides are at increased risk of isolation or “islanding” of agricultural land. To enhance protection and further reduce isolation and islanding, it is important that FRPP preserve and/or expand corridors of protected land. Points will be given if the offered property is located near other conservation easements or federally owned land which is not designated for disposal by the land use agency management plan for the area.

Agricultural zoning on all sides of property (or):	Points	Project Value
25% of the circumambient distance of offered property is border by federally protected land*(or) 1/4 mile proximity to existing conservation easement:	40	
Non-Agricultural zoning** on one side:	30	
Non-Agricultural zoning** on two sides:	20	
Non-Agricultural zoning** on three sides:	10	
Non-Agricultural zoning** on four sides:	0	
* Federally protected land is DOE, DOD, Forest Service and/or BLM land that is not designated for disposal in that agency’s most current or “working draft” land management plan.		
**Committed to urban development whether by Non-Ag zoning or by county or regional land use plan designation; as land for Non-Agricultural use.		
Choose Highest Total Points		

National Criteria #11: Is the land currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program and/or a Grassland Reserve Program Rental Contract that is scheduled to expire within one year? **(Maximum 5)**

11. Is the Parcel in a CRP or GRP rental contract that is set to expire within one year?

CRP or GRP Rental	Points	Project Value
Yes	5	
No	0	
Total Points		



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State ACEP – ALE Ranking Criteria

Ranking Tool State Criteria = 50% of the evaluation weight
Maximum 200 Points

State Criteria #1: History of Entity Easement Work: The eligible entity’s performance in managing and enforcing easements. Performance must be measured by the efficiency by which easement transactions are completed or percentage of parcels that have been monitored and the percentage of monitoring results that have been reported. **(Maximum 10)**

1. Participating entities’ histories of acquiring, managing, holding, and enforcing easements, including annual farmland protection expenditures, monetary donations received, accomplishments, and staff.

**In evaluating proposals, priority ranking should be given to those entities with a long- standing and successful history in acquiring and protecting farmland and that have extensive experience in managing and enforcing easements and adequate staff to manage stewardship responsibilities.

CE Performance	Points	Project Value
Does the CE currently hold/manage/monitor 1 or more conservation easements?	3	
If yes, did the CE acquire the easement(s) through an agreement or partial funding by a USDA agency?	2	
Total Points (answer all that apply)		

State Criteria #2: Leveraging: NRCS values landowners that provide some measure of investment in the acquisition of the conservation easement to protect the conservation values inherent on their personal property. Landowners enroll their lands in ACEP for several reasons and are often willing to donate a portion of the easement value. This question captures the landowner’s measure of commitment to obtaining a conservation easement for their property. **(Maximum 20)**

***ACEP-ALE maximum landowner donation = 25% of FMV of the conservation easement.

***ACEP-ALE GSS maximum landowner donation = 12.5% of FMV of the conservation easement.

Landowner Leverage	Points	Project Value
Is the landowner donating up to the maximum allowable contribution as defined by ACEP regulation for the FMV of the easement?	20	
Is the landowner providing some portion of the sponsoring entity, but less than the maximum allowable as defined by ACEP regulation for the FMV of the easement?	10	
The landowner is not donating a portion of the entity match requirement	0	
Total Points		



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State Criteria #3: Conservation Plan and HEL/WETLAND Compliance: (Maximum 5)

Higher priority placed on farms that already have a conservation plan or grazing management plan and Food Security Act conservation compliance requirements.

Conservation Plan & HEL/WL Compliance – choose only 1 response	Points	Project Value
Current Conservation Plan on file at the field office.	5	
Conservation Compliance Plan on file at the field office.	2	
Does not meet the above criteria.	0	
Total Points		

State Criteria #4: Multifunctional benefits and diversity of natural resources including; social, economic, historical and archaeological, environmental benefits, species protection, or climate change resiliency. (Maximum 105 points for questions 4a-4d)

4a. For the farm or ranchland to be eligible under the archaeological or historic resources provision, the applicant must provide documentation showing that historical or archaeological resources are located on the farm or ranchland. **(Maximum 20)** May include:

- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); or,
- Formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO); or,
- Formally listed in the State or Tribal Register of Historic Places.

If eligible historic or archaeological resources are located on the land, the following ranking criteria will apply:

Historic or Archaeological Resources	Points	Project Value
Listed in the National Registry Historical Preservation (NRHP)	20	
Eligible for listing in the NRHP	10	
Listed in the state or tribal register	5	
Limited or no cultural or historic resources on the property	0	
Total Points		



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4b. Water is a critical and limited resource for wildlife in Nevada where a wide range of wildlife species regularly utilize habitat along rivers, streams and drainage ways. Riparian and wetland values associated with private properties are critical to maintaining wildlife populations. Points will be awarded for the percent of riparian and or wetland acres that occur on the entire property offered for easement. **(Maximum 20)**

**** Formula = Riparian and Wetland Acreage/Total offered Acreage**

% Riparian & Wetland on property	Points	Project Value
Less than < 2%	0	
2 – 3%	2.5	
3.1 – 4%	5	
4.1 – 5%	7.5	
5.1 – 6%	10	
6.1 – 7%	12.5	
7.1 – 8%	15	
8.1 – 9%	17.5	
Greater than > 9%	20	
Total Points		

4c. Plant and Animal Biodiversity: Priority Habitats referenced in table are Sage-steppe, Grassland/Meadow habitat, Desert scrub, Aspen woodland, Mountain Chaparral, Riparian areas for GSS offerings. **(Maximum 65)**

Plant and Animal Biodiversity	Points	Project Value
a. Does the land offered contain critical sensitive habitat for T & E species classified as Desert scrub, Aspen woodland, Mountain Chaparral, riparian, wet meadow or wetland? Note: 1 Habitat type = 10 points, each additional habitat type = 5 points (max. 20 points)	20	
b. Does the land offered for ACEP-GSS support a known, documented population of T&E or at-risk plant/animal species? Note: 1 species = 10 points, each additional species = 5 points (max. 20 pt.)	20	
c. Does land offered for ACEP contain a plant composition that is dominated (75% or greater) by native perennial plants with no more than 30 percent woody Pinion/Juniper canopy cover? or	20	
d. Does land offered for ACEP contain a plant composition that has a mix of native, introduced beneficial perennial plants with no more than 30 percent woody Pinion/Juniper canopy cover?	10	
e. Does the land being offered for ACEP show little to no evidence of soil erosion concerns (active gullies, accelerated sheet and rill, wind or soil mass movement)? Yes = 10 points or No = 0	5	
Total Points		

***** Answer only c or d in above table**



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4d. Invasive Plants: Choose only (1) response in this Section. Zero to negative point values only.

Invasive Plants	Points	Project Value
1. Does the land being offered for ACEP have an invasive plant species, or noxious weeds on less than 7% of the land, with an implemented control plan?	-0	
2. Does the land being offered for ACEP have one or more invasive plant species, or noxious weeds that occur on 7 – 25 % of the offered acreage? Note: Noxious weeds listed on Nevada Department of Agriculture’s noxious weed abatement list. Invasive plants such as Cheatgrass, Medusahead, thistles, or Knapweeds.	-25	
3. Does the land being offered for ACEP have one or more invasive plant species, or noxious weeds that occur on greater than 25% of the offered acreage? Note: If one invasive plant is covers at least 15% of the offered land and another invasive covers an additional 10% or more, add the percentage of land affected by the infestations.	-50	
4. The invasive plants and noxious weeds have a serious negative impact on the native plant community composition on the offered land. 40% or greater of the offered acreage exhibits a moderate or extreme departure from the Ecological Site Description’s reference state for the site due to invasive plants? Use the range similarity index to evaluate the departure from the reference state.	-50	
Total Points		

State Criteria #5: Water Rights Tied to Land: Water rights are important for long term viability of the farming operation. Lands with full water rights have the highest resource value. Irrigated croplands, hay and pasture lands generally have water rights associated with the farming enterprise. There is not enough precipitation to successfully grow dryland crops without supplemental irrigation. Pasture productivity without irrigation is generally equivalent to prevailing ecological site descriptions without supplemental irrigation. **(Maximum 25)**

- Type of water rights (deeded), etc.: _____
- Crop, hay and/or pasture land acres: _____
- Acre ft./ac.: _____
- Acres with full water rights: _____

Water rights	Points	Project Value
90-100% of Cropland/Hay land and pasture have full water rights.	25	
75 - 89% of Cropland/Hay land and pasture have full water rights.	12.5	
50 -74% of Cropland/Hay land and pasture have full water rights.	6	
< 50% of Cropland/Hay land and pasture have full water rights.	0	
Total Points		



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State Criteria #6: Score in the land evaluation and site assessment system or equivalent measure for grassland enrollments. This score serves as non-soil based quality and a measure of agricultural viability, access to markets and infrastructure. **(Maximum 40)**

With a wide diversity of agricultural operations and property values in Nevada agricultural operations, the use of acreage size or a scaled sizing table is neither practical nor reasonable. Determination of viability of a farm or ranching operation is, however, obtainable. As used in Nevada’s ACEP-ALE, viability is defined as an agricultural business operation of sufficient size or diversity of operation, to withstand the market and climatic fluctuations found in Nevada and would be sustainable, if urban development pressures were not present.

To determine agricultural viability, all crop production is converted to Animal Unit per Year (AUs/Yr.) to reduce bias in size of operation, dollar value of crops or number of livestock. Rather it bases the viability on the amount of production capacity (AUMs) of the offered land. **** Use formula below for land type applicable, factoring in the location of the parcel.**

- Crop Hay land acres X equivalent AU = AU’s/YR _____
- Pasture land acres X equivalent AU = AU’s/YR _____
- Range land acres X equivalent AU = AU’s/YR _____

Potential AUs of Eligible land offered	Points	Project Value
0-99 AU’s / YR	10	
100-300 AU’s / YR	20	
300-500 AU’s / YR	30	
> 500 AU’s / YR	40	
Total Points		



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SUMMARY OF THE ACEP-ALE Ranking CRITERIA

SECTION	POINTS	PROJECT VALUE
NC 1a: Percentage of Soils (Prime, Unique, or Statewide Importance). <i>(apply points to either NC 1a or NC 1b)</i>	65	
NC 1b: Habitat values of Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance	65	
NC 2: Percent of Cropland, Pastureland and Rangeland in the parcel to be protected	5	
NC 3: Ratio of offered acreage to be protected to average farm size in the county	10	
NC 4: % Decrease in county acreage of farm/ranchland between last two USDA Ag Census	10	
NC 5: % Population growth of the county	10	
NC 6: % Population density in relation to state population density	10	
NC 7: Proximity of parcel to protected land	20	
NC 8: Proximity of parcel to other agricultural operations	20	
NC 9: Existence of farm or ranch succession plan, generational viability	5	
NC 10: Maximizing protection of contiguous AG acres	40	
NC 11: Land currently enrolled in CRP/GRP rental contract set to expired within 1 YR	5	
SC 1: History of Entity Easement Work	5	
SC 2: Landowner Leverage	20	
SC 3: Conservation Plan and HEL/Wetland Compliance	5	
SC 4a: Intrinsic Values - Historical or Archeological Values	20	
SC 4b: Intrinsic Values - % Riparian and Wetland	20	
SC 4c: Intrinsic Values - Plant and Animal Biodiversity	65	
SC 4d: Intrinsic Values - Invasive Plants	0 / -50	
SC 5: Water Rights tied to land being enrolled	25	
SC 6: Farm and Ranch Production Viability	40	
Total Available Points:	400	
TOTAL APPLICANT PROJECT SCORE:		



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ACEP – ALE Parcel Information Check List (write in or circle appropriate answers)

Fiscal Year:
Landowner Name and Address:
Cooperating Entity Name and Address:
State(s) in which the Offered Parcel is Located:
County or counties in which Parcel is Located:
Locality (Town/Township) in which the Parcel is Located & Nearest Town:
This application is for an Ag-Land Easement. Yes No
This application includes a waiver for a Grassland of Special Environmental Significance as referenced in CPM-528.43(B). Yes No
Is the Landowner AGI Eligible? Yes No
Is the Landowner HEL Compliant? Yes No
Is the Landowner WC Compliant? Yes No
Name of NRCS Employee Confirming Landowner Eligibility:
Signature of NRCS Employee Confirming Landowner Eligibility:
Is the Cooperating Entity Eligible? Yes No
This application includes a waiver for an eligible entity cash contribution requirement for projects of special significance in reference to CPM-528.43(C). Yes No
Name of NRCS Employee Confirming Entity Eligibility:
Signature of NRCS Employee Confirming Entity Eligibility:
Does Cooperating Entity have a Pending Offer for the Parcel? Yes No
Name of NRCS Employee Confirming Parcel Offer:
Signature of NRCS Employee Confirming Parcel Offer:
Does offered land have 50% prime, unique, and or statewide or locally important farmland? Yes No
Does the offered land have historic or archeological resources? Yes No
Does the offer include land that supports the objectives of a state or local farm and ranch land protection program? Yes No
Does the offer include land would protect grazing uses and related conservation values by being restored and protected? Yes No
Does the Land Meet Minimum Land Eligibility Criteria? Yes No
Name of NRCS Employee Confirming Land Eligibility:
Signature of NRCS Employee Confirming Land Eligibility:



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Eligibility & Ranking Form FY 2017

Instructions

1. All ACEP ALE offers including offers for Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance and applicants seeking an eligible entity cash contribution waiver for projects of special significance are ranked with this ranking tool.
2. Confirm all eligibility factors for applicant and parcel. If applicant or land does not meet all eligibility requirements, do not rank.
3. Complete eligibility and ranking factor questions. Circle or enter appropriate points in the fields provided on the form. Enter point totals from each section on page 14.
4. Enter the total cost (NRCS funds only) and the total acres to be included in the easement offer.
5. Make copies of the application form (signed by District Conservationist), conservation plan map, conservation plan, cost estimate and all ranking forms. Mail or deliver application package(s) to:

USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service
1365 Corporate Blvd
Reno, NV 89502-7102
Attention: Gary Roeder, Asst. State Conservationist – Programs

All FY 2016 applications must be received by COB on the batching period deadline to be considered for funds. The first batching period deadline for accepting FY 2016 ACEP-ALE-GSS applications will be on **May 15, 2016.**



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)
Eligibility & Ranking Form FY 2016

Habitat Priority Instructions

Question National Criteria 1b. Map Reference
Nevada Department of Wildlife Sage-grouse habitat categorization map page 18.

Noxious Weeds

Nevada Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed List

http://agri.nv.gov/nwac/PLANT_NoxWeedList.htm

Non-contiguous or block areas containing invasive plants and noxious weeds could be separated out, so that it can be ranked independently from the remaining acreage. The area not impacted by invasive plants and noxious weeds must be of functional parcel size and not be negatively impacted or fragmented by the excluded block.

Structural Exclusions

All buildings, corrals, and residences need to be excluded from the area being offered for easement enrollment. If there are any other areas where the landowner would like to build any future structures, or the of option building, then those areas should be excluded also if it won't impact the easement conservation values.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Eligibility & Ranking Form FY 2016

