



Programmatic Overview

Roger Yerdon

Training

- Annual ACEP 101 Training
 - 3-4 sessions across the state
 - Basic easement knowledge
 - Working lands easements vs. wetland easements
 - How can they help?



Outreach

- NRCS relies on multiple avenues for outreach

The screenshot shows the NRCS Nebraska website. The top navigation bar includes 'CONSERVATION BASICS', 'GETTING ASSISTANCE', 'PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES', and 'RESOURCES'. A sidebar menu on the left lists 'Programs', 'Easements', 'Watershed Programs', and 'Initiatives'. The 'Easements' option is highlighted with a blue border. The main content area displays three program cards: 'Agricultural Conservation Easement Program', 'Healthy Forests Reserve Program', and 'Agricultural Land Easements'. A large red 'no' symbol is overlaid on the 'Agricultural Conservation Easement Program' card. The browser's address bar shows the URL: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/nebraska/nebraska-nrcs-state-office.

Fact Sheets

Eligibility

Application Forms

Ranking Criteria

Compensation

Outreach

State Programs and Initiatives

NRCS has implemented a broad spectrum of initiatives that enable NRCS to more effectively address priority natural resource concerns by delivering systems of practices, primarily to the most vulnerable lands within geographic focus areas.

NRCS uses conservation initiatives to accelerate the benefits of voluntary conservation programs, such as cleaner water and air, healthier soil and enhanced wildlife habitat. These initiatives enhance the locally driven process to better address nationally and regionally important conservation goals that transcend localities. They build on locally led efforts and partnerships, and they're based on science. Through the initiatives, NRCS and its partners coordinate the delivery of assistance where it can have the most impact.



Nebraska Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)



Nebraska Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Nebraska Conservation Stewardship Program



Nebraska National Water Quality Initiative

Additional Documents

- [Ranking Criteria FY24 Inflation Reduction Act - ACEP \(168.99 KB\)](#)
- [Ranking Criteria FY23 Inflation Reduction Act - ACEP \(377.69 KB\)](#)

For more information:

[Roger Yerdon](#), NRCS Nebraska Easement Programs Manager

(402) 437-4026

Nebraska Additional Documents

- [Conservation Program Application Form 1200 \(449.81 KB\)](#)
- [Entity Application for an Agricultural Land Easement \(ALE\) Agreement \(313.79 KB\)](#)
- [PARCEL SHEET for ENTITY APPLICATION for an AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT \(ALE\) AGREEMENT \(454.29 KB\)](#)
- [ACEP Easement Team Staff Map 2024 \(702.63 KB\)](#)
- [NE-FY2024-ACEP-WRE-Geographical Area Rate Caps MAP \(227.46 KB\)](#)

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
Grand Island Area Office
703 S Webb Road, Suite C
Grand Island, NE 68803
308-392-3508

United States Department of Agriculture

www.NRCS.USDA.gov/Nebraska

August 17, 2023

Dear Landowner,

There is currently an open enrollment sign-up period for the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). A tentative cutoff is set for October 1st, 2023. To ensure eligible producers are aware of this opportunity we wanted to provide you with an overview of the program ahead of the sign-up deadline.

ACEP provides a variety of options for flood-prone cropland or wetland acres. The Wetland

Outreach



United States
Department of
Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

It's the Pits

Funding Available
to Remove
Irrigation Reuse
Pits



It's the pits when an irrigation reuse pit takes up valuable acres, is a hassle to farm around, and collects water that could otherwise provide wildlife habitat and recharge the Ogallala Aquifer. If you have an irrigation reuse pit that you'd like filled, there's financial assistance available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Eligible applicants may receive up to 100% cost-share with partner contributions to fill irrigation reuse pits.

Program Highlights Include:

- ✓ Technical and financial assistance for pit fills
- ✓ Partner funds for project costs above EQIP cost-share
- ✓ Remove impediment to farm around
- ✓ Can farm the area after the pit is filled
- ✓ Recharge the aquifer

Sign-up Deadline: November 17, 2024

For more information contact your local USDA Service Center



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

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Outreach



CONSERVATION PROGRAMS FOR FLOOD-PRONE ACRES

SCAN TO LEARN MORE
Are you experiencing low production or crop loss? Are your pivots getting stuck? Are you interested in wildlife habitat?
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USDA JOINT VENTURE
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



How Much Funding?

The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partnership can provide up to 85% cost-share for grazing infrastructure (perimeter fence, pivot bridges, livestock water) and pivot modifications and up to 100% reimbursement for restoration.



Compensation

- 90% of appraised land value for perpetual easements
- 75% of appraised land value on 30-year easements or Tribal Lands.



Easement Duration

- Perpetuity
- 30-year (max for Indian tribes)



What Is Eligible?

Wetlands in the Rainwater Basin or Loess Hills, containing at least ten acres.



Who Benefits?

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) restores and enhances wetlands for wildlife through the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Cost-share is also available for grazing infrastructure.

For more information, contact:
Kaycee Zuschlag | Area Easement Specialist | 308-392-3526

Outreach



LANDOWNER TESTIMONIAL

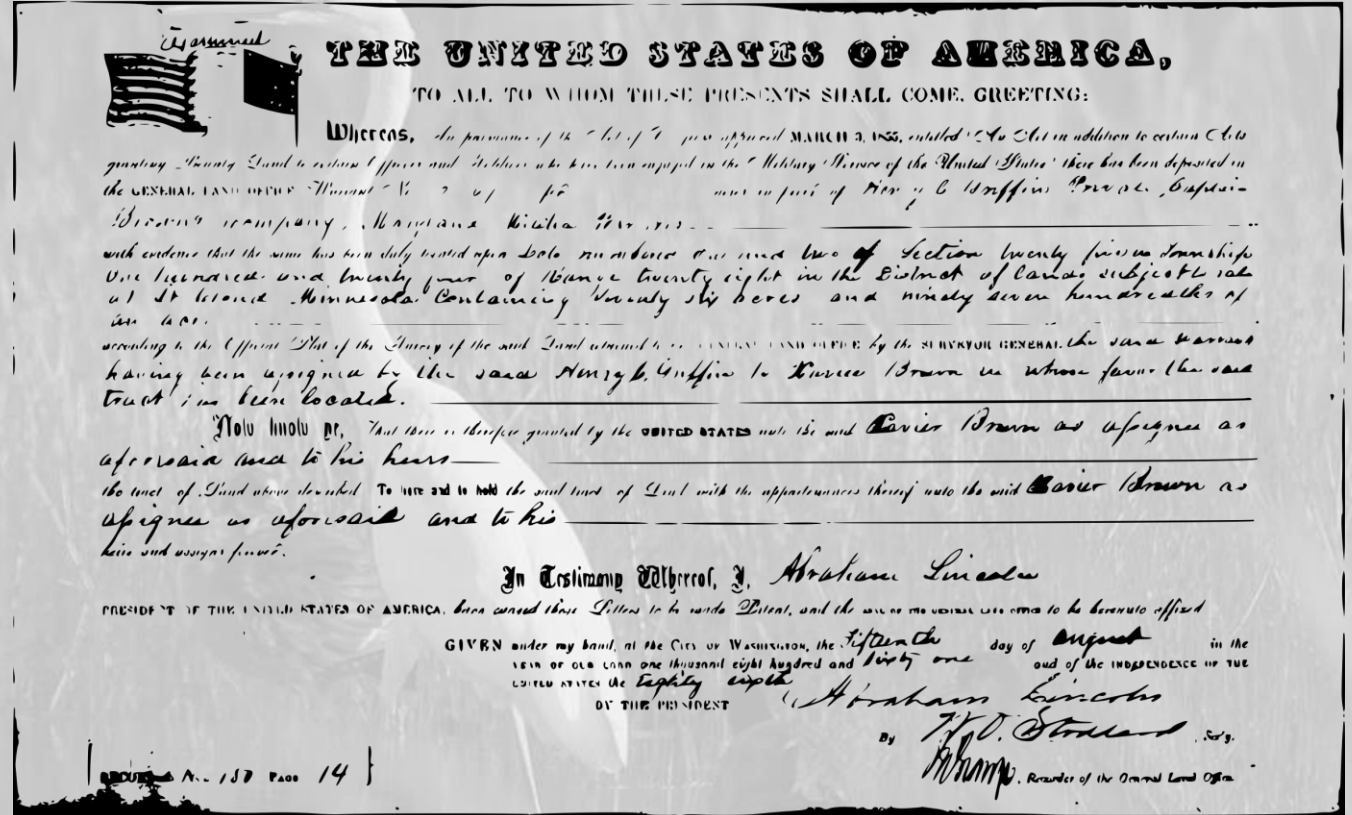
HANK MCGOWAN - FILLMORE COUNTY, NE

Application Process

- Multiple steps in the life of an easement
 - Application
 - Acquisition
 - Restoration
 - Monitoring, Management, and Enforcement

Application Process

- Required to Apply
 - NRCS-CPA-1200
 - Proof of Ownership (Deed)
 - Boundary Map
 - Egress/Ingress



Application Process

- Landowner
- Local NRCS Field Office Staff
- Area Easement Specialist
- Area Engineers and CETS
- Biologists
- State Office Easement Staff
- GIS Specialist
- Other Wildlife Organizations and Agencies
- Appraisers
- Realty Specialists
- Financial Mgmt
- Title Company
- Surveyors
- NEST Support
- Internal Controls
- Attorneys (OGC)

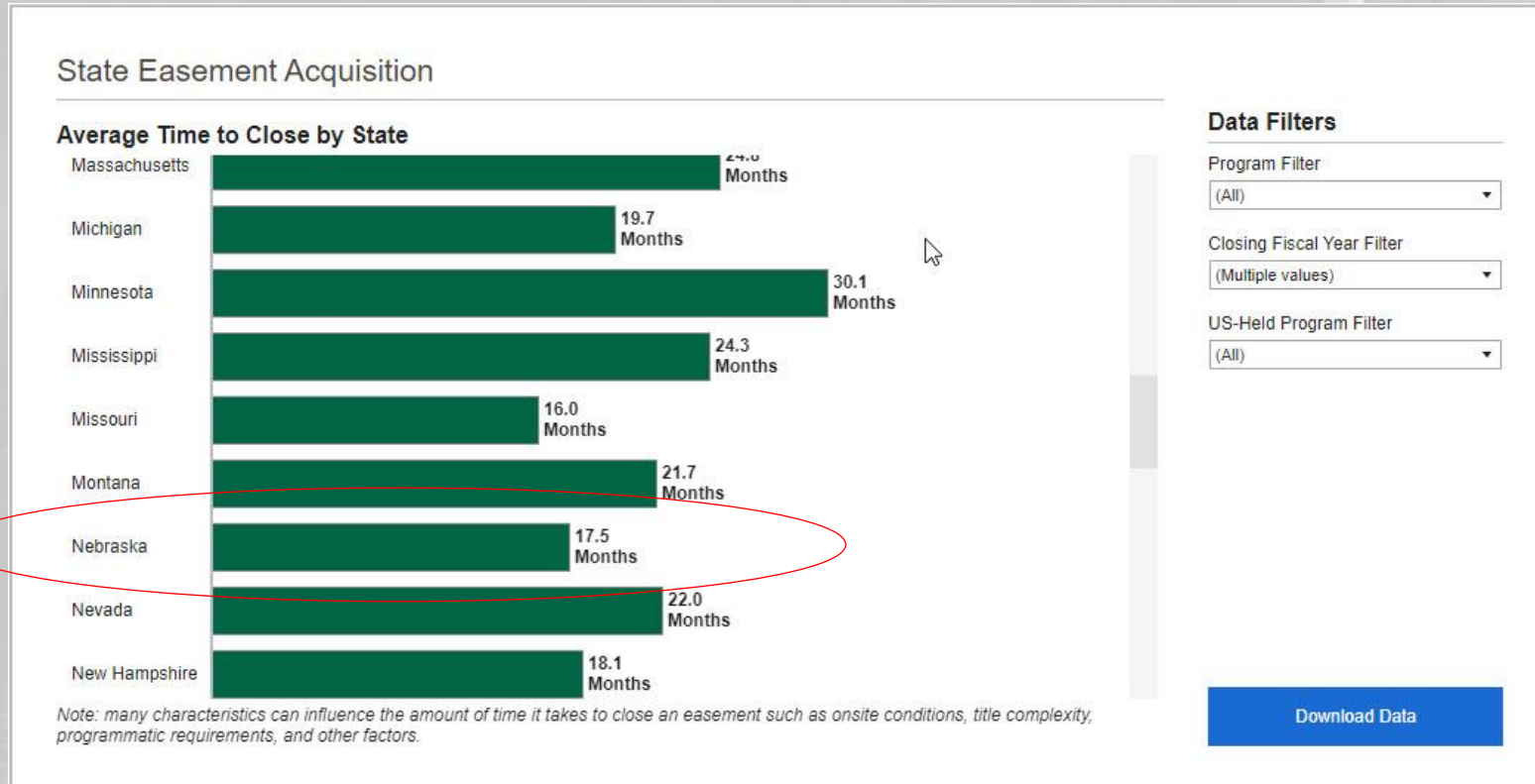
Timeline

- Application to Agreement ~1 year
 - Env. Database Search
 - Prelim Title Commitment
 - Appraisal
 - Appraisal Technical Review
 - Pre-Obligation Review
 - Offer Letter
 - Execute the APCE
 - Execute the Supplement



Timeline

- Agreement to Closing ~17 months



<https://www.farmers.gov/data/easements/overview>

Timeline

- Agreement to Closing ~17 months
 - County CE Application
 - Mineral Assessment Report
 - Survey
 - Title Commitment
 - Adjust funding
 - NRCS-LTP-23 & 27
 - Preliminary Title Opinion
 - Closing Instructions to the Title Co.
 - Pre-Payment IC Review
 - Documents to Title Co. for Closing
 - Payment
 - Notify FSA & NRCS GIS
 - NRCS-LTP-22
 - Final Title Opinion

Timeline

- Closing to Restored ~3 years
 - Restoration must begin within one year of the easement closing
 - Must be completed within three years of the easement closing.



Timeline

- Overall goal of moving an easement from an application to a recorded easement is reducing the timeline
 - Difficult due to the process
 - Partners play an important role in reaching this goal

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