



OPEN SPACE BOND CONSERVATION EASEMENT CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Presented by

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BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Advisory Boards for Land Conservation Easements

Two Boards oversee the Process

- **Land Conservation Advisory Board (LCAB)**
 - Eligible Funding Recipients: Nonprofit land trusts
 - Focus Areas: wildlands, viewsheds, farmland, forestland, stream/riparian, and/or public benefit
- **Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)**
 - Eligible Funding Recipients: County-led Farmland Preservation Program
 - Focus Areas: farm and forestland



Evaluation System

Two Tiered Evaluation:

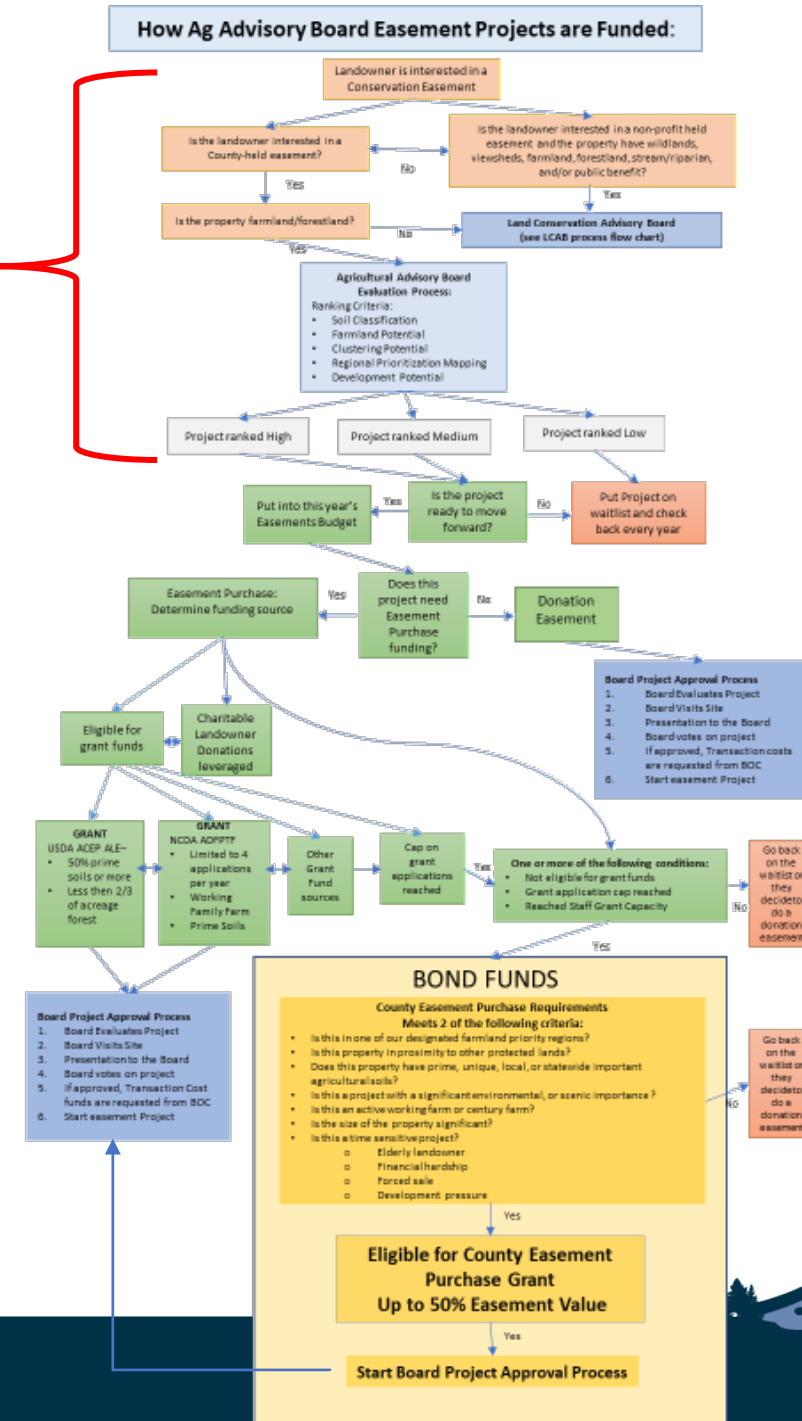
1. Rank land using criteria
2. Determine funding source and amount the project is eligible for
 - Grant Funds, General Fund, Bond Funds,
 - Easement purchase and/or transaction costs



Flow Chart for Conservation Easement Funding

Ranking criteria

Funding source and amount



AAB Project Evaluation Ranking System

A. Land evaluation (35%)

1. Farmland Soils Assessment (50 pts)
 - Prime Soils
 - Unique Soils
 - Local and Statewide Important Soils
2. Forestland Soils Assessment (50 pts)
 - High Index Soils
 - Medium Index Soils
 - Low Index Soils

B. Site Assessment (65%)

1. Clustering Potential (100 pts)
 - Tract Size (50 pts)
 - Contiguous Land Preservation (40 pts)
 - Proximity to ag preservation district (10 pts)
2. Farmland Potential (100 pts)
 - Priority ranking score (30 pts)
 - % of tract in ag (20 pts)
 - Land stewardship (30 pts)
 - Historic/scenic/env qualities (15 pts)
 - Century family farm (5 pts)
3. Development Pressure(100 pts)
 - Proximity to public water/sewer (50 pts)
 - Proximity to planned development (30 pts)
 - Ag threat and viability map score (20 pts)

Ranking points total is a weighted sum



AAB Easement Purchase Criteria

BOND FUNDS

County Easement Purchase Requirements Meets 2 of the following criteria:

- Is this in one of our designated farmland priority regions?
- Is this property in proximity to other protected lands?
- Does this property have prime, unique, local, or statewide important agricultural soils?
- Is this a project with a significant environmental, or scenic importance ?
- Is this an active working farm or century farm?
- Is the size of the property significant?
- Is this a time sensitive project?
 - Elderly landowner
 - Financial hardship
 - Forced sale
 - Development pressure

Yes

**Eligible for County Easement
Purchase Grant
Up to 50% Easement Value**

Yes

Start AAB Project Approval Process

AAB Board Project Approval Process

1. Board evaluates project
2. Board visits site
3. Presentation to the board by staff and landowners
4. Board votes on the project
5. If approved, transaction costs are request from BOC
6. Start easement project



LCAB Project Evaluation Ranking System

A. Land Trust Partner Evaluation – (meets criteria or does not)

- Applicants Organization track record
- Long-term protection of county's investment
- Evidence of collaboration among conservation organizations
- Previous project completion
- Value of project
- Integrity of easement

B. Conservation Value of the Project – 100 points

- Scenic viewshed protection - 10 pts
- Natural Areas Protection/biological values – 10 pts
- Water Quality Protection/Restoration – 10 pts
- Farmland Preservation – 10 pts
- Public Benefit – 10 pts
- Historic/Cultural Resource Protection – 10 pts
- Funding Leverage – 15 pts
- Value added to the project – 15 pts



BOND FUNDS

County Easement Purchase Requirements Must meet at least 2 of the following conditions:

- Is this in an LCAB priority region?
- Is this a project with significant environmental and/or scenic importance
- Are there significant recreational opportunities, water quality or open space benefits of the project?
- Is this a time sensitive project?
 - Elderly landowner
 - Financial hardship
 - Forced sale
 - Development pressure

Yes

**Eligible for County Easement
Purchase Grant
25- 50% Easement Value**

Yes

Start LCAB Project Approval Process

LCAB Board Project Approval Process

1. Board evaluates project
2. Board visits site
3. Presentation to the board by staff and landowners
4. Board votes on the project
5. If approved, transaction costs are request from BOC
6. Start easement project

LCAB Easement Purchase Criteria



Next Steps

- January
 - Public Input Session for Open Space Bond – January 24th
- February
 - Review of Conservation Easement criteria at BOC's regular meeting
 - Joint LCAB and Recreation Services Board meeting to review Passive Recreation public input and draft criteria
 - Recreation Services board meeting to review Greenways public input and draft criteria
 - Present draft Passive Recreation and Greenway criteria at BOC Briefing
- March
 - Board review of final Passive Recreation and Greenway Criteria





Questions?

