



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM - AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENTS ACEP-ALE FY2026

Welcome

Acting ACEP-ALE Co-Coordiators since April

- Angi Dietrich, Easement Specialist
- Tim Redder, RCPP Program Coordinator

No timeframe for new Coordinator



Agenda

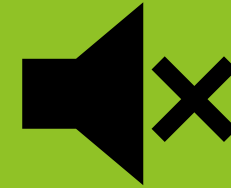
9:30 AM - Introductions/Opening Comments (Tim Redder)

9:35 AM – Fiscal Year 2026 Sign Up Timeline Overview (Tim Redder)

9:40 AM – Application Packets (Revised Checklist, Forms and Common Errors) (Angi Dietrich)

10:00 AM – Misc. Items/Reminders (Tim Redder)

10:15 AM – Questions / Answers



Please keep yourself on Mute during the presentation.

Questions can be entered via the chat feature or verbally asked at the end of the presentation.



Sign Up Timeline (FY2026) TENTATIVE

- January 15, 2026 - Application submittal deadline (Entities)
- January 30, 2026 - Application completeness review (NRCS)
- February 13, 2026 - All required corrections complete and returned to NRCS (Entities)
- April 3, 2026 - Completed Environmental Due Diligence Forms submitted to State Office (NRCS Field Office)
- April 24, 2026 - Ranking selections and funding preapprovals
- June 26, 2026 - Obligation deadline for parcel contract awards



High Points

- Shutdown has impacted timelines, unfortunately.
- Funding will be very competitive.
- Complete applications is a priority.
- Coordinate with your local NRCS District Conservationist ASAP so the site inspections can be completed when ground is visible and not snow covered.
- Entities will be notified of selections once State Conservationist approves.

Deferred Applications

- ▶ Deferral Letters will be going out to entities that had applications not selected with in the next 1-2 weeks.
 - ▶ Please keep an eye out for the letters if you have an application you would like to move forward.
- ▶ If you have an application that was not selected and deferred to the next fiscal year, we will need updated documents.
 - ▶ Any documents that were updated by NHQ or Michigan will need to be completed and submitted.
 - ▶ Any documents that expired will need to be completed and submitted, such as a purchase agreement between the entity and landowner.
 - ▶ Any documents that need to be updated due to time frames or possible changes occurring on site will need to be completed and submitted, such as NRCS due diligence documents.
- ▶ Please submit all documents, updated or original, with the original application, as a packet by the application deadline.
- ▶ If any changes in the proposed boundary have occurred or a landowner change has occurred, this is no longer a deferred application and will need to be submitted with all new documents.

Revised ACEP ALE Documents in FY2026

- Michigan FY 2026 ACEP ALE Pre-application Eligibility Tool
- Michigan FY 2026 ACEP ALE Application Checklist
- Michigan ACEP-ALE Application Data Sheet (Updated for FY 2026)
- Fiscal Year 2026 ACEP-ALE Michigan Ranking Form - COMING SOON
- Current Forms available at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/agricultural-conservation-easement-program/michigan/agricultural-conservation>

Michigan FY 2026 ACEP ALE Pre-application Eligibility Tool

3. Does the parcel have a Certified Wetland Determination and a Certified Highly Erodible Land Determination on file with FSA?

6. Does this parcel meet one of the following criteria: (Select One)
- ☐ a. Contains at least 50% prime, unique, statewide, or locally important soil
 - ☐ b. Contains historical or archaeological resources
 - ☐ c. Protects grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring or conserving eligible land
 - ☐ d. Further a State or Local policy consistent with the purposes of ACEP

7. Does the entity submitting the application for ACEP-ALE funding have funds available AT TIME OF APPLICATION equal to 50% of the purchase price when accompanied by a landowner donation?

Michigan FY 2026 ACEP ALE Application Checklist

1. Ensure all land within proposed boundary is associated with an FSA Farm and Tract Number and has a Certified Wetland Determination and Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) Determination on file with FSA.
 - a. If there is not a Certified Wetland Determination on file, the landowner will need to file an NRCS-CPA-38 with their local NRCS Field Office.
 - b. If there is not a Certified Highly Erodible Lands Determination on file, the landowner will need to file an AD-1026 with FSA.
2. Ensure all landowners listed on the deed have Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification (CCC-941 form), HEL and Wetland Certification (AD-1026), and a CCC-902 form on file with FSA for the current program year (2026).
 - a. If landowner is an entity or trust, all members must meet FSA eligibility requirements.
 - b. If landowner is an entity or trust, signature authority documentation must be included in the application packet.

7. Aerial Map which shows location and includes Section, Township and Range, Roads, Acreage and Ingress/Egress to easement. (If survey has been completed, please provide a copy of the land survey and shapefile as well.).

9. **Entity will need to coordinate with NRCS District Conservationist to ensure that NRCS Field Office is aware of the ALE application and will need to complete a site visit along with the Hazardous Materials Landowner Interview, Hazardous Materials Field Inspection Checklist, and Landowner Disclosure Worksheet.**
 - a. Forms completed in a previous fiscal year for a deferred application that is being resubmitted will need to be updated with new inspection performed.

Michigan ACEP-ALE Application Data Sheet (Updated for FY 2026)

Has this application passed the <u>Pre-Application Assessment Tool</u> ?		☐ YES	☐ NO
Entity Data:			
Entity Name:		UEI Number:	
<u>Data Sheet Completed By:</u>			
Name:		Title:	
Phone:		Email:	
Signature:		Date:	



Common Application Errors

- Applications mailed ON deadline instead of RECEIVED by deadline
- Incomplete/Incorrect Application Documents
- Land and Landowner Eligibility
- NRCS-CPA-41 vs NRCS-CPA-41a



Incomplete/Incorrect Application Documents

- Please ensure all application documents are filled out in entirety.
- Please ensure all acreage matches across all application documents - INCLUDING soils information from Web Soil Survey
- Please ensure all applications have all signatures needed. Signatures must be valid (wet signature or certified e-signature) and all on one copy of the document.

Common Errors that create Incomplete Application Documents - NRCS-CPA-41A

- Not including all landowners listed on the deed/title commitment in Section B (Landowner Information) on the NRCS-CPA-41A

Section B: Landowner ⁱⁱ Information			
1. What evidence of ownership are you providing? (Select all that apply) <i>Attach the property deed or written purchase agreement to this parcel sheet.</i>		☐ Property Deed ☐ Current Written Purchase Agreement	
2. Name – Parcel Landowner – Primary Contact (must be a landowner listed on attached ownership document) <i>(Landowner identified here will serve as primary landowner contact and signatory to this application; signature of application by other listed landowners is optional)</i>		3. Tax ID Number – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact) 	
5. Address – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact): 		4. Telephone – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact): 	
		6. Email – Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact): 	
7. Identify all other landowners of record as stated on the most current evidence of ownership document. <i>Enter the legal name as listed on the evidence of ownership document and the tax identification number of each individual or legal entity (Corporation, Limited Liability Company, Partnership, Trust, etc.) that is a landowner. Attach additional sheets as needed.</i>			
Enter Name of Individual or Legal Entity	Check Appropriate Box		Enter Tax ID Number
	Individual	Legal Entity	
Landowner Name:	☐	☐	TAX ID:
Landowner Name:	☐	☐	TAX ID:
Landowner Name:	☐	☐	TAX ID:
Landowner Name:	☐	☐	TAX ID:



Common Errors that create Incomplete Application Documents - NRCS-CPA-41A

- Values under Section D (Easement Value) do not calculate correctly or Section D is not complete.

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NRCS-CPA-41A
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Section D: Easement Value and Compensation Costs and Non-Federal Share Information	
These values may be estimates, subject to the final values being determined by an NRCS-approved appraisal report or easement valuation methodology.	
1. Easement Value and Compensation Costs	
A. Estimated Fair Market Value of the ALE	\$
B. Estimated Eligible Entity Cash Contribution* - for payment of easement compensation to the landowner (excluding Landowner Donations)	\$
C. Requested Federal Share for the ALE • General ALE: Federal Share cannot exceed 50% of Item A • ACEP-ALE-GSS: Federal Share cannot exceed 75% of Item A	\$
D. Estimated Purchase Price ^{xi} of the ALE (D = B + C)	\$
E. Estimated Landowner Donation toward easement value ^{xii} (generally, E = A - D)	\$
F. Remaining Non-Federal Share needed to meet minimum requirement • General ALE: (F = C - (B+E)) • ACEP-ALE-GSS: (F = (A-C) - (B+E)) (If Item (F) ≤ \$0, enter \$0 here, do not complete Boxes 2 and 3, proceed directly to Box 4. If Item (F) > \$0, enter the amount of Item (F) here and complete Boxes 2, 3, and 4 as instructed below)	\$

4. Total Non-Federal Share: (Box 1, Items (B+E), plus total amounts in Boxes 2 and 3, if entered) • General ALE: Total Non-Federal Share (Item (I) below) must be equal to or greater than the Federal Share (Item (C) above); (I ≥ C) • ACEP-ALE-GSS: Total Non-Federal Share (Item (I) below) must be equal to or greater than the difference between the Estimated Fair Market Value of the ALE (Item (A) above) minus the Federal Share (Item (C) above); I ≥ (A-C)	
I. Total Non-Federal Share: (I = (B+E) + if entered (G + H))	\$
5. Eligible entity intends to provide at least 10 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement in the form of a cash contribution for payment of easement compensation to the landowner (Box 1, Item (B) above)? If no, eligible entity must provide evidence as requested by NRCS of its ability to steward and monitor the parcel	☐ Yes ☐ No



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Common Errors that create Incomplete Application Documents - NRCS-CPA-41A

- Information under Section E (Roles, Contributions, and Distributions) missing. Eligible Entity, and ALL co-holders/third party right holders must be listed.

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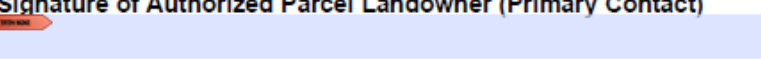
Section E: Roles, Contributions, and Distributions			
(Provide the name and corresponding role of each legal entity that will be identified in the agricultural land easement deed, attach additional pages as needed)			
1. Name of Entity (See signature sections below for Entity signature requirements)	2. Role of Entity • Identify each entity as one of the following: - Eligible Entity - Co-holder - Third-Party Right Holder	3. Contribution: Estimated Entity Cash Contribution • May be provided by any legal entity role identified in this Section • Total must equal Box 1, Item (B) above	4. Distribution: Estimated Federal Share to be paid to an Eligible Entity • Federal share may only be paid to an Eligible Entity • Total must equal Box 1, Item (C) above
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$



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Common Errors that create Incomplete Application Documents - NRCS-CPA-41A

- Boxes on right side of signature sections not marked. This is a certification/acknowledgment section that must be complete.

APPLICANT ELIGIBLE ENTITY CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURES: <i>Applicant Eligible Entity identified in Section A must complete the following section</i>		Check Each Box
I certify that the Applicant Eligible Entity has the resources necessary to acquire monitor, manage, and enforce the easement being applied for and acknowledge that additional documentation to substantiate this may be required to receive Federal cost-share assistance.		☐
I have received and reviewed a copy of the required ALE-Agreement and associated attachments and understand that the terms of the agricultural land easement deed must address the provisions required as a condition of participation in ACEP-ALE as identified in the ALE-agreement.		☐
Signature of Applicant Eligible Entity Authorized Representative 	Date 	
PARCEL LANDOWNER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SIGNATURES: <i>Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact) identified in Section B, Box 2, must complete the following section</i>		Check Each Box
I, Landowner, am aware that the United States has requirements that must be addressed in the agricultural land easement deed as a condition of providing Federal funds for the acquisition of the easement. I have received a copy of the United States required deed terms and conditions.		☐
<i>Initial this box if the Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact) identified in Section B2 is a legal entity:</i> I am authorized to sign this application and agree to provide the documents necessary to prove this authority as requested by NRCS.		☐
Signature of Authorized Parcel Landowner (Primary Contact) 	Date 	

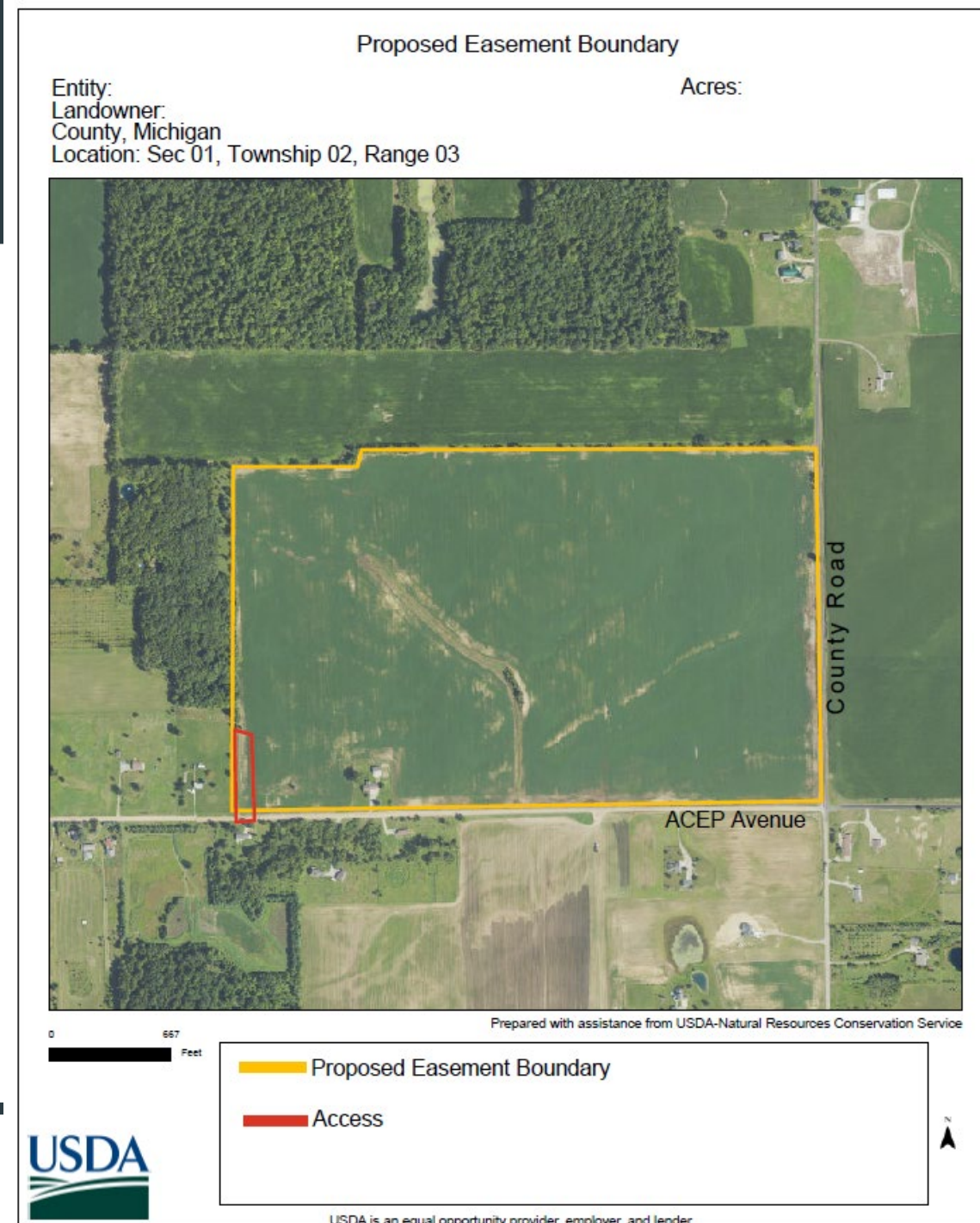
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Common Errors that create Incomplete Application Documents - Aerial Map

- ▶ Aerial Map MUST include the proposed easement boundary, location (Section, Township and Range, show roads with labels, state the total application acreage, and clearly show the location of the access to the easement (ingress/egress or road frontage entry must be marked).



Common Errors that create Incomplete Application Documents - Application Data Sheet

- ▶ Acres of Prime Soils, Unique Soils and Soils of Local Importance comes from Web Soil Survey Report
- ▶ Easement Fair Market Value, Entity Contribution Amount, ACEP-ALE Dollars Requested and Landowner Contribution must match sections D & E on NRCS-CPA-41A.

Parcel Data:			
County:		Township Name:	
		Township:	
		Range:	
		Section:	
Total Parcel Size (Acres):		Acres of Prime Soils	
		Acres Unique Soils:	
Acres of Soils of Local Importance			
Cropland Acres:		Cropland Type (corn, orchard, etc.):	
		CRP Acres:	
Livestock Type (beef, dairy, etc.):		Hayland Acre:	
		Pasture Acres:	
Forestland Acres:		Forested Wetland Acres:	
		Non-Forested Wetland Acres:	
Incidental Land Acres:		Grassland Acres:	
		Percent Impervious Surface:	
Historic or Archaeological Resource(s) Present:		YES	NO
List Historic or Archaeological Resource(s):			
Easement Fair Market Value:		Entity Contribution Amount:	
ACEP-ALE Dollars Requested:		Landowner Contribution:	

Landowner Eligibility

- ▶ Ensure all landowners listed on the deed have Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification (CCC-941 form), HEL and Wetland Certification (AD-1026), and a CCC-902 form on file with FSA for the current program year (2026).
 - ▶ If landowner is an entity or trust, all members must meet FSA eligibility requirements.
 - ▶ If landowner is an entity or trust, signature authority documentation must be included in the application packet.

Land Eligibility

- ▶ Ensure all land within proposed boundary is associated with an FSA Farm and Tract Number and has a Certified Wetland Determination and Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) Determination on file with FSA.
 - ▶ If there is not a Certified Wetland Determination on file, the landowner will need to file an NRCS-CPA-38 with their local NRCS Field Office.
 - ▶ If there is not a Certified Highly Erodible Lands Determination on file, the landowner will need to file an AD-1026 with FSA.

NRCS-CPA-41 vs. NRCS-CPA-41A - When do I need to include an NRCS-CPA-41 with my parcel application?

- ▶ NRCS-CPA-41 is the entity application for an ALE Agreement with NRCS
- ▶ NRCS-CPA-41A is the parcel sheet or parcel application for an ALE Agreement with NRCS

When do I need to include an NRCS-CPA-41 with my parcel application packet?

The only time you will need to include an NRCS-CPA-41 Entity Application with your NRCS-CPA-41A and supporting documentation is when your entity no longer has an active Program Agreement with NRCS and you are in need of a new Program Agreement to apply another parcel for ALE.

Final tips & takeaways to ensure a complete application

- ▶ Utilize the required checklist while putting the application packet together for final submittal.
- ▶ Have a colleague double check the application documents for completion and accuracy before you submit to NRCS.
- ▶ Create and utilize a shapefile to ensure consistent acreage across all documents.
- ▶ Have your landowner work closely with their local NRCS Service Center and FSA Service Center to ensure eligibility for both land and landowner.



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Reminders - Monitoring

- ▶ Please don't forget that ALL closed easements must have a Monitoring Report submitted to NRCS annually.
 - ▶ You may use your own form but will need to ensure they are completed and accurate.
 - ▶ Submit all Monitoring Reports to the NRCS Easement Program Specialist via email (angela.dietrich@usda.gov) - If your entity has set up a share site that you have shared with NRCS, you do not need to email the forms.
 - ▶ NRCS monitoring is completed by the fiscal year, not calendar year. If you complete monitoring on 10/01/2025, it is considered a 2026 Monitoring Report.



Misc. & Wrap Up

- Work to address preliminary title clouds (minerals, ingress/egress, mortgage subordinations, leases, etc.)
- Deeds need to be your final version when submitting for NRCS review, especially if you have co-holder(s) requiring language.
- NRCS Internal Controls (IC) reviews are still required prior to parcel contract signing and preclosing (allow min 30 days each).
- Regular communication/updates helps us keep track of where you are in the process.



Misc. & Wrap Up

- Loss of staff at all levels has affected some of the processes.
- MDARD is still requiring PA116s to be listed as a coholder. Legislation pending could impact this.
- Please be diligent in completing annual, required monitoring of existing FRPP & ALE easements and providing NRCS a copy.

QUESTIONS?

