



MANAGEMENT PLANS

Some easements may require one or more management plans to be prepared and implemented on the property. These management plans must be prepared and periodically updated by the appropriate professionals and adhere to the required elements as stated in the easement. The cost of the plans is the responsibility of the landowner. Copies of the plans should be made available to ESLC and any co-grantees for stewardship purposes. The plans outlined below are the most common required by easement programs, though there may be other plans required depending on the particular program and nature of the property being preserved.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN: Multiple easement programs require properties with 5 or more contiguous acres of forest to be managed by a Forest Stewardship Plan. Typically these plans are prepared and periodically updated by a state forester at the landowner's expense. A private forester may also prepare the plan so long as the forester is qualified under state regulations. The priorities for the plan are identified by the specific program objectives and the landowner's goals. These priorities guide all activities within the forest including but not limited to thinning, chemical control, commercial harvest, access, invasive species management, and wildlife management. Typically the easement will require the plan to be prepared within a year of the recordation of the easement and updated periodically thereafter. If the landowner already has a plan in place, it will need to be updated to include the priorities identified in the easement. Typical plan objectives include water quality and soil conservation, wildlife habitat, timber management, and old growth forest. Usually the program requires that the landowner be in full compliance with the plan within 6 years. In all cases however, the plan must be followed if the landowner undertakes any active management of the forest.

SOIL CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY PLAN: Many purchased easement programs, including all agricultural easement programs in Maryland, require a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan to be prepared and fully implemented (often called simply the farm Conservation Plan or Farm Plan). These plans help insure that the property is managed to reduce soil erosion and water pollution, and are prepared through the local Farm Services Agency (FSA) by the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) agent. Typically these plans and their implementation are optional, but *in the context of certain easement programs they are mandatory and must be fully implemented*. There is no cost for preparing the plan, but implementation of the plan will carry some cost. However, much of this cost is covered through cost share agreements with FSA and NRCS.

CONSERVATION RESERVE AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP): A requirement of all easements held by ESLC is a riparian buffer along all perennial streams. Typically this buffer is at least 100 feet wide and must be planted in native plants or allowed to naturally revegetate. Many of the areas with a required buffer would qualify for the CREP

program. The CREP program regulations, however, disallow enrollment or re-enrollment of CREP buffers when required by an easement. **Before completing an easement with required buffers, it is suggested that the landowner enroll the required buffer area in the CREP program in order to take advantage of a single 10 or 15 year contract though the CREP contract will not be eligible for re-enrollment.** This will allow the landowner to have some payment for the retired acreage as well as cost share the installation of the buffer. The payments will end after the last year of the contract, but the buffer must always remain in place and managed as open space just as if it were still in a contract.

Anticipated Plans:

Forest Stewardship ___
Suggested Contact _____

Soil Conservation and Water Quality ___
Suggested Contact _____

CREP ___
Suggested Contact _____