

FARMLAND PROTECTION WITH NRCS ACEP-ALE

How do we protect farmland?

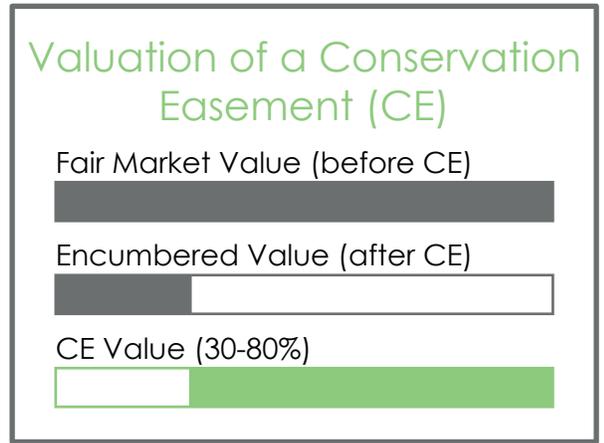
By using **conservation easements**, which are agreements between a landowner and a land trust (such as Athens Land Trust) that permanently limits use of the land in order to protect a property's natural and agricultural resources.

Landowner retains ownership of property

Conservation Easements can be donated, sold outright or through a bargain sale

Conservation Easements are:

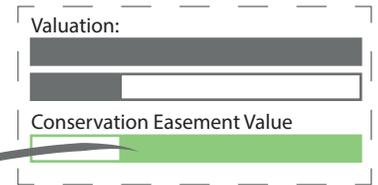
- flexible
- permanent
- private
- voluntary



ACEP-ALE

ACEP: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
ALE: Agricultural Land Easement

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program which helps pay farmers cash for CEs on agriculture land for permanent protection
- Assures the future of the nation's food supply by preventing irreversible conversion of farmland to development
- Requires local matching funds



NRCS + Local Match = **75% of CE value as cash to landowner**

Benefits:

- Farmers remain the landowner and continue to manage their land effectively
- Recieve federal and state tax benefits
- Ensures viable farmland is not irreversibly changed or developed

Farmland protection is only possible with local support!

Local funding matches most successfully come from:

- SPLOST/local budgets
- Third party funders

Who can Participate?

- ▶ Privately-owned farm with at least \$1,000 worth of annual production
- ▶ Must meet one of the following four criteria:
 - ▶ Contains 50% prime, unique, statewide or important farmland
 - ▶ Contains historical or archeological resources
 - ▶ Protects grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving land
 - ▶ Furthers a state or local farmland protection policy
- ▶ Must go through ranking at state and national levels

Application and Next Steps:

- ▶ Submit application to NRCS (through Athens Land Trust or land trust partner)
- ▶ Develop conservation easement with land trust and NRCS
- ▶ Total time from application to closing: 18-24 months

Land protected by agricultural land easements provides additional public benefits, including environmental quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat and protection of open space.

Why we protect farmland?



Farm Heritage

Farmers pass down knowledge and traditions to future stewards of our land and resources



Economic Prosperity

Georgia's multibillion-dollar agriculture industry is a national food and fiber leader



Wildlife/Biodiversity

Clean water, air and soil means healthy wildlife and local communities



Food Security

Our high quality soils are critical to feeding our growing population

Why Work With Us?

Athens Land Trust is a certified entity that helps farmers apply for ACEP-ALE. We work one-on-one with landowners to ensure their land continues to be used in a way that serves their needs.



Athens Land Trust

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United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service