

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSERVATION LANDS TO BE ENROLLED IN THE USE VALUE APPRAISAL PROGRAM

### Eligibility:

In 1997, the General assembly amended the Use Value Appraisal Program to allow any land (exclusive of any house site) owned by some 501(c)(3) organizations to be eligible for enrollment with out having to manage for wood products.

Applicant organizations need to demonstrate that they are a “qualified organization”<sup>4</sup> by submitting Vermont Tax Forms #6301 and #6306.05 and all required documentation to the Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review and also demonstrate that they have held that status for at least five years. They must also submit documentation that land protection is a major goal of their organization.

Once found eligible, the “qualifying organization” must submit a Conservation Management Plan and three (3) copies of a Conservation Management Map to the Director of Forests for approval by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

### Conservation Management Plan Requirements and Standards:

The property must be managed according to a Conservation Management Plan approved by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Updated conservation management plans are due by April 1, 10 years from the first year of enrollment. (Example: Application plan date = fall of 1999. First year of enrollment is 2000).

The Conservation Management Plan should be based upon resource inventories, surveys, and assessments to support the management goals and activities. The plan should include the following:

- Who conducted the inventory and when
- How the inventory was done (methodology)
- All ecological and historical features of the property and current conditions of the features.

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<sup>4</sup>“Qualified Organization” is: (A) an organization qualifying under section 501 (c)(3) of the internal revenue Service Code of 1986, as amended, which is not a private foundation as defined in section 509 (a) of the Code, and which has been certified by the commissioner of taxes as being principally engaged in the preservation of undeveloped land for the purposes expressed in section 6031 of this title. (B) an organization qualifying under section 501 (c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, provided such organization is controlled exclusively by an organization or organizations described in subdivision (2) (A) of this section.

**A) Plan information for the entire parcel:**

- Applicant organization and address
- Contact Person name and address
- Name and location of property
- Acreage and towns in which property is owned
- Orthophoto Number shall be listed along with series if used in preparation of either the map or conservation management plan
- Grand List Description shall be included as it appears in the application form

**B) The Conservation Management Plan shall include the following:**

- Management data and descriptions of the resources to be protected or conserved
- Management Schedule (if activities are planned)
- Conservation Management Map

**C) Attributes that should be addressed in the Conservation Management Plan (if present):**

- 1) Agricultural/Open Land – Provide description of the type of activity and delineate location on parcel map.
  - Hayland
  - Cropland
  - Pastureland
  - Christmas Tree production
  - Maple sugaring – Must have management data and stand descriptions for all forest stands to be managed for maple sugar production which meets FPR standards for UVA forest management plans.
- 2) Forest Land
  - Managed – Must have management data and stand descriptions for all forest stands to be managed for timber production, a management schedule and meet minimum FPR standards for UVA forest management plans and stands delineated on parcel map.
  - Unmanaged – Provide forest stand descriptions and delineate on parcel map of all forest stands not necessarily managed for timber.
- 3) Significant Wildlife Habitat – Provide descriptions of the types of habitats and delineate on parcel map of those habitats if considered being of regional or of statewide significance.
  - Forested
  - Non-forested (wetlands, open land, site IV land)

- 4) Areas with Special Ecological Values – Fragile areas and rare and irreplaceable natural areas managed under protective/conservation management strategy: requires data that meets minimum standards for forest management plans under ESTAs and should be delineated on parcel map.
  - Natural Communities of Statewide significance
  - Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species
  - Riparian Areas
  - Vernal Pools with amphibian breeding habitat
  - Forested Wetlands
  - Old Forests
- 5) Areas with significant historical value – Must be substantiated and delineated on parcel map.
- 6) Outstanding resource waters – Must be substantiated and delineated on parcel map.
- 7) Public water supply protection areas – Must be substantiated and delineated on parcel map.
- 8) Access to public waters – Must be substantiated and delineated on parcel map.

**D) Management Schedule:** A ten-year work schedule will be submitted with the management plan and will be updated every ten years. The work schedule should include all activities planned to protect/manage attributes found on parcel. These include: research activities, invasive species control, trail, road or parking area construction, erosion containment, ecological restoration measures, and vegetation management for wildlife habitat. Public access and management issues including the types of public activities that will be allowed on the parcel and when, or if public access will be restricted, why and how. The ten-year work schedule should also include steps for monitoring the condition of the ecological and historical resources.

If forest land or maple sugaring areas are to be managed, the work schedule should include all prescribed commercial harvesting cuttings, non-commercial treatments and any other treatments necessary to comply with the FPR standards for UVA forest management plans. All supportive data derived from inventory such as stand diagnosis and prescription forms and basal area computation sheets can be attached to the summary sheet for further documentation. Give a single year date for each treatment. Policy allows  $\pm$  three years on single year dates to allow for issues such as changing markets, weather conditions or insect defoliations.

**F) Management Map:** The following standards apply to Conservation Management Maps:

- 1) The map must be orthophoto based. Four Vermont Coordinate system coordinates must be indicated on the map. Digital data for creating your own maps are available through Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) ([www.vcgi.org](http://www.vcgi.org)). For a list of UVA map preparers, contact your County Forester. Maps of parcels larger than 1000 acres or appearing on more than four orthophotos are exempt from the 1:5,000 map scale providing that the alternative scale used is not less than 1:20,000, is consistent with available aerial photography scales and that excluded areas (with the exception of power lines) in parcels mapped at alternate scales are mapped at 1: 5,000 as an additional inset.

- 2) The map must include the following:
  - owner's name
  - town in which the parcel is located
  - name of draftsman
  - acreage of parcel
  - orthophoto number and series year
  - four Vermont coordinate system coordinates (NAD 83 preferred)
  - north arrow
  - scale of 1:5,000 (unless exempt)
  - locus map to indicate parcel's location
  - lands greater than 1 mile access distance
  - SPAN
  - date of preparation or revision
- 3) The map must show the boundaries of the entire parcel, the boundaries of the portion of the parcel to be included in the program, and the boundaries of the portion of the parcel to be excluded from the program. These areas must be clearly labeled so the acreage of each area can be listed in the chart. The map must show the location of all buildings and must show the agricultural and open land to be enrolled.
- 4) The map shall include significant physical features such as roads, primary internal trails, streams, ponds, wetlands and power lines, cultural resources if present. For landlocked parcels, established rights-of-way and/or preferred access routes shall be shown.
- 5) All forest stands (including significant wildlife habitats, special places and sensitive sites, ESTAs, miscellaneous treatment areas, open and non-productive lands) that have special treatment in the written plan must be delineated by a number that corresponds to a description in the Conservation Management Plan.
- 6) Excluded areas must also be shown on the map as actual acres and cannot be prorated.