

## 3.6- Baseline Report

### Baseline Documentation Reports General Outline

All items below must be provided in the documentation report. However, the volume and specificity of information required by the following list will vary depending on the terms of the easement and the conservation objectives at the site. The intent of this format is to allow flexibility in the documentation technique and to correlate the quantity and nature of the documentation to the terms of the easement.

#### INTRODUCTION

**I. Title Page:** Title of Easement and all names the Property is known by, date of Baseline Documentation Report (BDR), names and affiliation of field staff, and name of state lead agency.

**II. Ownership Information:** List the property owner's name(s), address and phone number contact information). Also include names and phone numbers of any land managers, caretakers or gatekeepers.

Succinctly describe the forest management and land conservation goals the land owner hopes to achieve. Sources for this information are the Forest Stewardship Plan, the FLP application and the land owner.

**III. Purpose of the Conservation Easement:** This sets the stage for the report, and summarizes the purpose of protecting the property (i.e., recite conservation values as stated in the easement document). Include a summary of reserved rights and restrictions. At a minimum, all FLP conservation easements will restrict development and subdivision for the purpose of protecting environmentally important forests from conversion to non forest use. List any additional restrictions found in the conservation easement.

The purpose of this section is to aid the state lead agency in monitoring the property by providing them with a quick summary of the terms of the conservation easement. Please note that this section is meant to be a summary of portions of the Deed of Conservation Easement, which is a legal document, and that this section may not fully describe the exact legal conditions of the conservation easement.

**IV. Purpose of Baseline Inventory.** State the purpose of the baseline inventory report: namely, to identify and document the condition of the natural resources and conservation interests associated with the property at the time the conservation easement is acquired. In the event that a controversy between the land owners arises with respect to the property's biological or physical resources, the baseline report may be used by the aforementioned parties to resolve such a dispute.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

**V. Property Location and Maps:**

- Directions to property from a well known landmark or agency office with the name of the county need to be included on the map.
- Vicinity map that displays regional land use and ownership patterns surrounding the property.
- Aerial photo, USGS quad, watershed.

- Acres of the conservation easement and of the entire ownership if different.
- Legal description of the property, property deed/book page and the recording date of the easement.
- Provide a general description of the landscape and surrounding area, including adjacent land use.

Create a primary map of the entire easement property and include:

- Property boundaries
- Topography
- Water bodies and water courses
- Roads and trails (if applicable)
- Fences, utility lines and dumps (if applicable)
- Lakes, ponds, dikes, impoundments and watercourses
- Existing structures and cemeteries (if applicable)
- Special use zones (areas cut out of easement and/or reserved for specific uses in the conservation easement)
- Adjacent property ownership
- Graphic scale, north arrow, and legend using a scale such as 1"=660'

Sources for this information are the approved land appraisal, USGS topographic quads, the Forest Legacy Information System (F.L.I.S.), county courthouses, and agency offices.

## **VI. Land Use and Management:**

Obtain information from the landowner on the history of the property and its past land use, if available. Describe current land use and forest practices if any. Write a summary of pertinent history of the property including changes in land uses. This information typically comes from the Forest Stewardship Plan and other existing management plans such as prescribed burning plans, and agricultural plans.

Provide an overview of land ownership and use patterns for the public and private property owners adjacent to the easement property and discuss the land uses and condition of these lands. This includes federal, state, local, private, corporate and non-corporate private land holders. A discussion of land uses should include past, present, and future land uses of these properties and should focus on those uses that are likely to affect the easement property. When possible, this section should also describe the level of interest each land owner has shown in protecting their lands with a conservation easement or other conservation tool.

## **VII. Forest Use:**

Measure the amount of forest cover and describe the forest use. If the conservation easement describes any restrictions related to forest use such as the size of clearcuts, measure and describe the current condition. If the conservation easement mandates the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), measure and describe streamside buffers, wetlands, and other relevant resources. Only measure resources specifically mentioned in the conservation easement.

**VII. Photo documentation:** This is a photographic record of the protected property that is periodically updated. This section should include photos that are easily replicable (from roads or permanent features, or using GPS waypoints). Concentrate on creating photo documentation of those areas which might show changes such as access areas, boundary encroachment, and building envelopes. Create as many photos from a single point to reduce monitoring costs.

- Photos should be numbered and an azimuth direction should be included to note the direction the photo was taken.
- Include a photograph index with descriptions.
- Photo documentation map (note location of all photopoints, preferably on a survey)
- Include GPS boundary on handheld unit to aid in location of photopoints.

**Signed Copy of Owner Acknowledgement of Condition (Property Condition Certification form):**  
This document acknowledges that the landowner agrees with the BDR and the condition of the property at the time an easement is placed on the property. Copies should be signed by the landowner and the state lead agency at closing.