



N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
N.C. ADFP Trust Fund
Baseline Documentation Report Requirements and Checklist



Baseline documentation reports (BDRs) are important in establishing the condition and characteristics of the land parcel at the time of easement closing and serve as the basis for easement management and monitoring. BDRs also help document how the characteristics of the land support the purposes of the conservation easement and help to justify the expenditure of public funds.

BDRs include narrations, pictures, and maps to provide a complete understanding of a given parcel. It is recognized no two land parcels are the same, and there is an expected level of variation in the contents of BDRs. However, the following requirements, where applicable, are considered a minimum that should be found in all BDRs.

***Note:** *Maps required for each section are emphasized with italics.*

- I. Title Page:** Include the title of the easement as stated in the ADFP Trust Fund contract, (e.g., Rocky Ridge Farm Easement), ADFP Trust Fund tracking number, NCDA&CS contract number, date of the BDR and date of certification, and name, title, and affiliation of the BDR author(s).
- II. Table of Contents:** Include all section headers, maps, and photographic documentation, with page numbers.
- III. Purpose of the Conservation Easement:** Briefly summarize the purposes as found in the easement document.
- IV. Landowner Contact Information:** Names, addresses, email, and phone numbers, etc. of landowners. May also include names, email, and phone numbers of any land managers, gatekeepers, etc. as appropriate.
- V. Property Background:**
 - a. Include a paragraph summarizing the property, including the following information:
 - i. Total parcel acreage and easement acreage (if different).
 - ii. General location in the county.
 - iii. Inclusion in a Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) or Enhanced Voluntary District (EVAD) (if applicable).
 - iv. History of the parcel, if available, including farming operation and land uses.
 - v. Current land uses.
 - vi. USDA-NRCS Hazardous Materials Field Inspection Checklist and Landowner Interview.

- vii. Any other significant features identified by the grantee or landowner.
- b. *Aerial or satellite imagery of the property with the easement boundary map overlay. Include callouts of significant features, including farmsteads and building envelopes, and legal access (ingress/egress) from a publicly maintained road. The features in the map must be tied to the N.C. State Plane Coordinate System (NAD 83) Grid (georeferenced).*
- c. Location and Physical Setting – General description of the landscape and farming operations in the general area, including adjacent land.
 - i. *Include imagery of area within 5 miles of the easement property, showing the specific location of the parcel. Include all other easements and protected lands in proximity (if applicable).*

VI. Impervious Surfaces and Existing Human Modifications: List each permanent structure and other impervious surfaces, showing length/width measurement. Include a calculation of the total extent of impervious structures, the maximum allowable impervious surface area within the easement (2% of total acreage) converted to square feet and acres, and remaining allowable surface area within the easement converted to square feet and acres.

- a. *Map with labels for all human modifications to the property with the following labeled:*
 - i. *structures, roads, trails, dikes and impoundments, wells, fences, utility lines and corridors, cemeteries, trash piles/dumps, etc. within the easement area.*

The following is an example of adequate documentation for impervious structures:

The farmstead envelope consists of several farm-related structures and the primary residence. The residence is a 1,970 square feet brick ranch. The creamery building has been restored from the original store building. Two open-sided barns are located within this area.

Photo points 1-7, 15-18, 33, 34. Modifications in this area include the following:

- Barns (2)
- Well (1)
- Creamery Building
- Residence
- Silage storage areas (2)
- Concrete Pad

The dimensions and approximate impervious surface for each of these areas are listed in the table below:

Impervious surface item	Photo point	Dimensions	Impervious surface (sq. ft.)	Impervious surface (acres)
Barn 1, storage shed	17	40' x 35'	1,400	0.032
Barn 2	18	12' x 24'	288	0.007
Well	1	10' x 6'	60	0.001
Creamer building	2	50' X 40'	2,000	0.046
Residence	34A		2,240	0.051
Silo storage areas	5	80' x 200'	16,000	0.367
Concrete pad	16	27' x 24'	648	0.015
Total			22,636	0.519

The easement allows for a maximum impervious surface area of 2% or 85,987.20 sq. ft. (1.97 acres). Based on the above approximations, a remaining 63,351.44 sq. ft. (1.45 acres) of impervious surface is allowed under the easement.

VII. Existing Land Use and Management:

- a. Include the landowner’s objectives for the management of the parcel and current agricultural practices.
- b. Statements on the general condition and management of the following key areas:
 - i. Pasture and cropland – acreage and percent of land use in the easement (if applicable). Include a summary of the existing conservation plan and practices and the adequacy in achieving management goals.
 - 1. Include a copy of the current USDA-NRCS or local Soil and Water Conservation District conservation plan (required for crop or pasture land).
 - ii. Forest and woodlands – acreage and percent of land use in the easement (if applicable). Include current forestry management plan and practices (e.g., managed for maximum timber production or let stand as a natural area for wildlife habitat).

1. Include a copy of the current forestry management plan developed by the NC Forest Service or a registered private forester (required for 20 or more acres of forestry).
- iii. Other significant land uses – acreage and percent of land use in the easement of each (if applicable). Provide general descriptions of uses (e.g., irrigation pond, canals, etc.).

VIII. Land Parcel Topography and Soil Types:

- a. **Topography:** Short paragraph summarizing the general topography of the easement area, highlighting any extremes.
 - i. *Contour map (overlay of an aerial/satellite view, if possible) of the property, or the best available map showing the property’s elevation profile.*
- b. **Soils:** The protection of the soil resource base and the sustainable production of food and fiber are essential purposes of conservation easements. Therefore, explaining the soil resources on the easement property is very important. The BDR should include a discussion of all soil types within the land parcel, including a description of each. All soil types and descriptions are available through USDA-NRCS. The following is provided as an example:

There are six soil units mapped on the parcel, as shown on the General Soils Map. Four of the six soils are classified as prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance.

The soil types are as follows: (Note: Only one soil type is shown as an example. All soils shown on the soils map should be listed.)

Georgeville silty clay loam, 2-6% slopes.

GeB2 — Georgeville silty clay loam, 2-6% slopes. Georgeville soils are very deep, well-drained, and moderately permeable. Parent material for the soil is weathered fine-grained metavolcanic rocks. It is a moderately eroded soil found on uplands with elevations ranging from 300-750 feet. It is a well-drained soil with moderate available water capacity. Georgeville is considered a prime farmland soil.

- c. Utilize the following table format to list all soils found within the easement area:

Soil Type	Name	Acreage	% of Total	Prime or Statewide Importance? Y/N
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- i. Accompanying USDA-NRCS soils map (available through USDA Web Soil Survey) with appropriate labels.*

IX. Descriptions of the Property's Natural Features:

- a. **Wildlife and Natural Communities:** List and describe all wildlife habitat and natural communities of significance found within the easement area (e.g., common wildlife, rare and endangered species, etc.).

- i. Accompanying map of wildlife and natural communities.*

- b. **Forest/Woodland:** General description of forest types within the easement area (e.g., hardwood, pine, ornamental, etc.).

- i. Accompanying stand map or reference map with labeled stands (if applicable).*

- c. **Aquatic Features:** List and description of all significant aquatic features (streams water bodies, wetlands, major waterways, etc.). Provide a brief narrative regarding how the easement positively impacts those features.

- i. Accompanying labeled aquatic map (overlay of an aerial/satellite view, if possible).*

X. Archeological and Historical Features: List and description of all historical features of significance, including cemeteries (if applicable).

- a. *Labeled map of archeological and historical features on the property (if applicable).*

XI. Photographic Documentation: Provide a photographic record of the protected property. This section must include photos that are easily replicable from roads, permanent features, or using GPS waypoints. Photographs are recommended to include timestamps and latitude and longitude.

- a. Photographs must be taken at regular intervals along the property line that capture the property in its entirety, including photos from each property corner.
- b. Photographs of each permanent structure within each building envelope or farmstead area.
- c. If not included above, all other impervious surfaces in the easement.
- d. Photographs of any other human modifications to the property (including roads, ditches, dams, etc.).
- e. General landscape pictures that are representative of the easement area.
- f. Photographic index with descriptions of each photo (photos must have descriptions next to them).

- g. Photographic documentation map with photos numbered. Include a compass direction to note the direction the photo was taken.*

XII. Additional Maps: Accompanying descriptions are optional:

- a. U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) U.S. Topo or 7.5-minute quadrangle topo map.*
- b. General hydrology map.*

XIII. Signature Page (Acknowledgement of Property Condition Form): Signatures of acknowledgment that the landowner(s) agree with the BDR and the condition of the property at the time the easement is placed on the property. A final review, with any applicable updates, of the BDR must be approved 30 business days before closing. **No edits are permitted within five (5) business days before closing.** The BDR must be signed at closing by an authorized signatory of the grantee organization and all landowners listed in the easement.

Baseline Documentation Report Checklist

Introduction and Contacts

	Title Page: Include the title of the easement as stated in the ADFP Trust Fund contract, (e.g., Rocky Ridge Farm Easement), ADFP Trust Fund tracking number, NCDA&CS contract number, date of the BDR and date of certification, and name, title, and affiliation of the BDR author(s).
	Table of Contents: Include all section headers, maps, and photographic documentation, with page numbers.
	Purpose of the Conservation Easement: Briefly summarize the purposes as found in the easement document.
	Landowner Contact Information: Names, addresses, email, and phone numbers, etc. of landowners. May also include names, email, and phone numbers of any land managers, gatekeepers, etc. as appropriate.

Property Background

	Total parcel acreage and easement acreage (if different).
	General location in the county.
	Inclusion in a Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) or Enhanced Voluntary District (EVAD) (if applicable).
	History of the parcel, if available, including farming operation and land uses.
	Current land uses.
	USDA-NRCS Hazardous Materials Field Inspection Checklist and Landowner Interview.
	Any other significant features identified by the grantee or landowner.
	Map: Aerial or satellite imagery of the property with the easement boundary map overlay. Include callouts of significant features, including farmsteads and building envelopes, and legal access (ingress/egress) from a publicly maintained road. The features in the map must be tied to the N.C. State Plane Coordinate System (NAD 83) Grid (georeferenced).
	Location and Physical Setting – General description of the landscape and farming operations in the general area, including adjacent land.
	Map: Imagery of area within 5 miles of the easement property, showing the specific location of the parcel. Include all other easements and protected lands in proximity (if applicable).

Impervious Surfaces and Existing Human Modifications

	List of each permanent structure and other impervious surfaces, showing length/width measurement.
	Map: All human modifications to the property with the following labeled: structures, roads, trails, dikes and impoundments, wells, fences, utility lines and corridors, cemeteries, trash piles/dumps, etc. within the easement area.
	Calculation of the total extent of impervious structures.

	Calculation of the maximum allowable impervious surface area within the easement (2% of total acreage) converted to square feet and acres.
	Calculation of the remaining allowable surface area within the easement converted to square feet and acres.

Existing Land Use and Management

	Landowner’s objectives for the management of the parcel and current agricultural practices.
	Statement on the general condition and management of pasture and cropland. Include acreage and percent of land use in the easement (if applicable). Include a summary of the existing conservation plan and practices and the adequacy in achieving management goals.
	Include a copy of the current USDA-NRCS or local Soil and Water Conservation District conservation plan (required for crop or pasture land).
	Statement on the general condition and management of forest and woodlands. Include acreage and percent of land use in the easement (if applicable). Include current forestry management plan and practices (e.g., managed for maximum timber production or let stand as a natural area for wildlife habitat).
	Include a copy of the current forestry management plan developed by the NC Forest Service or a registered private forester (required for 20 or more acres of forestry).
	Statement on the general condition and management of other significant land uses. Include acreage and percent of land use in the easement of each (if applicable). Provide general descriptions of uses (e.g., irrigation pond, canals, etc.).

Land Parcel Topography and Soil Types

	A short paragraph summarizing the general topography of the easement area, highlighting any extremes.
	Map: Contour map (overlay of an aerial/satellite view, if possible) of the property, or the best available map showing the property’s elevation profile.
	Discussion of all soil types within the land parcel, including a description of each.
	Table of all soils found within the easement area. Include soil type, name, acreage, percent of total soils in the easement, and designation as prime or statewide importance.
	Map: USDA-NRCS soils map (available through USDA Web Soil Survey) with appropriate labels that match figures in the table.

Description of the Property’s Natural Features

	List and describe all wildlife habitat and natural communities of significance found within the easement area (e.g., common wildlife, rare and endangered species, etc.).
	Map: Wildlife and natural communities.
	General description of forest types within the easement area (e.g., hardwood, pine, ornamental, etc.).

	Map: Stand or reference map with labeled stands.
	List and description of all significant aquatic features (streams water bodies, wetlands, major waterways, etc.). Provide a brief narrative regarding how the easement positively impacts those features.
	Map: Aquatic map (overlay of an aerial/satellite view, if possible).

Archeological and Historical Features

	List and description of all historical features of significance, including cemeteries (if applicable).
	Map: Archeological and historical features on the property (if applicable).

Photographic Documentation

	All photos are easily replicable from roads, permanent features, or GPS waypoints. Photographs are recommended to include timestamps and latitude and longitude.
	Photographs at regular intervals along the property line that capture the property in its entirety, including photos from each property corner.
	Photographs of each permanent structure within each building envelope or farmstead area.
	All other impervious surfaces in the easement if not included above.
	Photographs of any other human modifications to the property (including roads, ditches, dams, etc.).
	General landscape pictures that are representative of the easement area.
	Photographic index with descriptions of each photo (photos must have descriptions next to them).
	Map: Documentation map with photos numbered. Include a compass direction to note the direction the photo was taken.

Additional Maps

	Map: USGS US Topo or 7.5-minute quadrangle topo map.
	Map: General hydrology map.

Signature Page

	A final review, with any applicable updates, of the BDR must be approved 30 business days before closing.
	No edits are permitted within five (5) business days before closing.
	Signature of authorized signatory of grantee organization at closing.
	Signature(s) of all landowners listed in the easement at closing.