

SAHC PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Project name: _____

Location: _____

Acreeage: _____

Project Type: _____

Minimum Qualifications Test:

SAHC will evaluate for acceptance projects that contain, at a minimum, all of the following:

- 1. Yield significant public benefit within the meaning of IRC §170(h); *and*
- 2. Be located in SAHC's operating region; *and*
- 3. Further SAHC's Mission, Vision and Goals.

In addition, the project must protect at least one of the following values:

- 1. Significant biodiversity or natural heritage site; *or*
- 2. Water quality/aquatic habitat; *or*
- 3. Habitat protection on a landscape scale; *or*
- 4. Significant scenic value; *or*
- 5. Significant agricultural value

If a project passes SAHC's Minimum Qualifications Test, it will be evaluated by SAHC staff for approval and ranking by weighing against each other the items addressed in this worksheet under "Considerations Favoring a Land Protection Proposal" and "Considerations Weighing Against a Land Protection Proposal."

CONSIDERATIONS FAVORING A LAND PROTECTION PROPOSAL

General:

- _____ The property is or is likely to be threatened by development in the near future
- _____ The property is adjacent to land that is already protected
- _____ A unique window of opportunity exists for protecting the property

The Highlands of Roan Priority Focus Area:

- _____ The project is an established priority in the Highlands of Roan.
- _____ The project otherwise furthers the goal of protecting the Highlands of Roan.
 - _____ The project protects high elevation scenery or unique natural communities
 - _____ Special Priority: Protects cliffs/outcrops
 - _____ Special Priority: Protects seepage/spring areas with rare species
 - _____ The project protects known individuals, populations or habitat for one or more species that are unique to the Highlands of Roan

Other SAHC Priority Focus Areas:

- _____ The project furthers the goal of protecting an established SAHC priority focus area, Name of focus area:
- _____ The project furthers the goal of connecting two or more SAHC priority focus areas, or connecting an SAHC priority focus area with other protected land

Scenic value:

- _____ The project protects land that is significantly visible to the general public. (Describe in the summary section below as "foreground," "middle ground," or "distant.")
 - _____ Visible from a location in the Highlands of Roan
 - _____ Visible from the Appalachian Trail or another long trail
 - _____ Visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway or another scenic byway within SAHC's priority focus areas
 - _____ Visible from a recreational trail of regional or local importance
 - _____ Visible from a significant stretch of a public road of regional or local importance
 - _____ Visible from a public stream, river, or lake

Biodiversity/Natural Heritage:

- ___ Project area includes or is an integral part of a significantly species-rich area
- ___ The project would protect:
 - ___ known endangered, threatened, or rare species
 - ___ habitat that could support endangered, threatened, or rare species
 - ___ exemplary or critical habitat for native species
 - ___ special use habitat (e.g., nesting or roosting areas, etc.)
 - ___ special or rare plant or animal populations or communities
 - ___ wildlife corridors
 - ___ a buffer area contributing to the integrity of adjacent or nearby valuable wildlife habitat
 - ___ a buffer area contributing to the integrity of adjacent or nearby special or rare plant or animal communities or populations
 - ___ potential or verified refuge areas for plant or animal populations during times of temporary disturbances of nearby habitat
 - ___ endemic species

Water Quality

- ___ The project would protect a TN Scenic River, a NC Natural and Scenic River or a Federal Wild and Scenic River, or waters with a supplemental water quality classification of one or more of the following: Future Water Supply, High Quality Waters, Outstanding Resource Waters, Trout Waters, or Unique Wetlands; AND
- ___ The project would permanently protect all wetlands, streams, and springs on the property from anthropogenic sedimentation, erosion or siltation.
- ___ The project would result in protections that would cause or enable significant water quality restoration
- ___ The project would result in the protection of significant water systems (e.g. wetlands, streams and/or rivers)
- ___ The project would protect floodplain that could otherwise be developed

Other Project Considerations:

- ___ The project would protect significant cultural or historical values
- ___ The project area could likely be transferred to a government agency or other conservation entity
- ___ The project likely presents an opportunity for partnerships in staffing or financial resources
- ___ The project would protect significant recreational values
- ___ The project would protect significant educational values
- ___ The project would protect special or rare natural features

Farmland Component to the Property? _____ *If yes, please continue below.*

Physical Characteristics of Property

- ___ The property contains prime soils. ___% ___ acres
- ___ The property contains state important soils. ___% ___ acres
- ___ The property contains locally important soils. ___% ___ acres
- ___ The property contains open land (non-forested). ___% ___ acres
- ___ The property has usable land with relatively gentle slopes (tractor accessible). ___% ___ acres

Agricultural Operation

- ___ The property is engaged in active agricultural production. ___% ___ acres
- ___ The operation is an important part of the critical mass of a viable, intact farming community.
- ___ The property is within 1 mile of any other protected agricultural land, either permanently protected or for at least 20-30 years through an easement or deed restriction.
- ___ The operation produces a new or innovative crop with potential for success.
- ___ The operators appear to be successful and financially stable with a likelihood of continued operation.
- ___ The purchase of a conservation easement would help keep this property in a farming family.
- ___ It is likely that this property will be transferred to, and operated by, the next generation in the family or another farmer

- _____ This property has capital improvements for agricultural operations -- dairy facilities, handling facilities for livestock, water distribution systems and fencing or other handling or processing facilities installed or improved within the last 15 years
- _____ This property qualifies or could qualify for Present Use Value Tax status.
- _____ The farm is large enough to be economically viable

Agricultural Stewardship

- _____ The property currently meets NRCS soil loss tolerance for the identified soil types. (This information is available from local NRCS offices if the farm is enrolled in their conservation planning program.)
- _____ The farm has an NRCS conservation plan.
- _____ The farmer actively manages noxious weeds.
- _____ The farmer has taken steps to improve water quality on the farm.
 - _____ excludes livestock from waterways
 - _____ manages dairy manure with a pit and spreader
 - _____ uses a pesticide containment mixing station
 - _____ uses a feed/waste structure during winter months
- _____ Treatable erosion problems are reasonably managed.
- _____ The farm is enrolled in a county Voluntary Agricultural District program.

Strategic Agricultural Importance

- _____ The property is of sufficient size that its agricultural integrity is likely to remain intact even if adjacent properties are developed
- _____ The land is an important part of the critical mass of a viable, intact farming community.
- _____ The property is adjacent or contiguous to other open farmland or other preserved areas
- _____ The property is situated such that its conversion to nonagricultural use would adversely affect adjacent or nearby properties in agricultural use.
- _____ The project furthers the goal of protecting an established SAHC Farmland Program project area.
 - _____ Sandymush
 - _____ Bethel
 - _____ Fairview
 - _____ Spring Creek
- _____

CONSIDERATIONS WEIGHING AGAINST A LAND PROTECTION PROPOSAL

Biodiversity/Natural Heritage:

- _____ The project area is dominated by invasive species
- _____ The project area is dominated by a monoculture
- _____ The project area consists of a small, isolated tract with no known endangered, threatened, or rare species
- _____ The property includes identified special habitat that will not be protected
- _____ The property includes road construction that will prevent or hamper wildlife movements
- _____ The project will permit fencing that could prevent or hamper wildlife movement
- _____ The project area does not include special or rare plant communities/populations
- _____ The project area is too small to maintain the integrity of its more important resources in the event of development on surrounding lands.

Water Quality

- _____ Activities associated with the project will degrade water quality at or downstream from the project area
 - _____ The Grantor plans to build a road that will cross or run next to a stream
 - _____ The Grantor plans to pond, alter, or significantly divert the flow of a stream
 - _____ The Grantor plans to build a structure or otherwise disturb the ground near a stream so as to adversely impact to the stream
 - _____ The Grantor plans a use that may or will require chemical or nutrient applications that will adversely impact stream ecology
 - _____ The Grantor plans to disturb a streambed for non-restoration purposes
 - _____ The project area is downstream from a stream segment that is unprotected, damaged, or likely to be damaged in the future

_____ Water quality directly downstream from a stream segment on the property is compromised by offsite uses, and little likelihood exists of improving it

Scenic value:

- _____ The project area is not visible from a publicly accessible area
- _____ The project area is not part of a special view (mediocre forest potential, non-traditional architecture, etc.)
- _____ A use on or associated with the project area worsens a public vista (prominent ridge top development, etc.)

Agricultural

- _____ The property is an isolated farm, not occurring within a substantial farming community.
- _____ The property is adjacent to planned or existing residential or commercial development.
- _____ For cropland: appropriate conservation farming practices are not in place or planned (ex. contour farming, filter strips, conservation tillage, or conservation cropping sequences).
- _____ For livestock operations: appropriate livestock management practices are not in place or planned (ex. livestock stream exclusion, fortified stream crossings, heavy use protection areas, and planned grazing practices).
- _____ There is not an adequate water source for current and/or future agricultural operations on the property (ex. river, streams, springs, or well)
- _____ This project would not protect prime or state important soils
- _____ The farm does not have a conservation plan

Other Project Considerations:

- _____ The project area has no development threat.
- _____ The project area is in a location to which it would be more appropriate to channel anticipated development pressures.
- _____ The project area is adjacent to and could have its conservation values affected by land that contains a major pollution source
- _____ The project area will require management activity of SAHC that SAHC is not prepared to take responsibility for.
- _____ Involvement in the project could cause significant negative public opinion that will affect SAHC's ability to accomplish its mission.
- _____ The project would require significant financial outlay by SAHC without leveraging funds.

DECISION/RECOMMENDATION OF LANDS COMMITTEE:

Accept _____
Decline _____

Conditions:

Further information needed:

Summary: