**U.S. Grasslands Project**

**Conservation Easement Screening Form**

*For use with U.S. Grasslands Project Protocol v2.1*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Proponent:** |  |
| **Project Name:** |  |
| **Project ID:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

The conservation easement is the principle mechanism by which the project area is protected against land use change during the project period, and in perpetuity. The Qualified Conservation Easement (QCE) is a label applied to a conservation easement whose terms either explicitly prevent reversals of CRTs by referencing the Grassland Protocol, or implicitly prevent reversals of CRTs by including land use limitations which are sufficient to prevent land use that would disturb soil carbon in the project area. Grassland projects are ***required*** to employ a Qualified Conservation Easement.

**Instructions**: Please fill out the “Easement Section” column to indicate where each requirement can be found in the conservation easement. In the “Justification” column, please provide a description of how the referenced easement terms satisfy the specified requirement. This information will be used to confirm the eligibility of the project. The project’s easement provisions referenced in this form should be updated as needed for final registration to reference provisions as they appear in the final recorded easement.

| **Protocol Requirement** | **Easement Section** | **Justification** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. The Qualified Conservation Easement (QCE) includes a statement indicating that the easement is granted pursuant to the state enabling statute for conservation easements for the state in which the project is located (e.g., California Civil Code Section 815).
 |  |  |
| 1. If the easement is granted to a non-governmental agency, the easement holder must be accredited by the [Land Trust Alliance](https://landtrustalliance.org/why-land-matters/land-conservation/about-land-trusts?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI5pSttuGf_gIVLRHnCh1ouA9BEAAYASAAEgJaYPD_BwE) (or a similar entity if in a jurisdiction where the Land Trust Alliance does not operate).
 |  |  |
| 1. The language of the QCE is sufficiently clear to reasonably prevent cultivation on the entire project area.

I.e., the easement includes terms that prevent the conversion of the project area from grassland to another land use, such that avoidable reversals are sufficiently precluded as long as the easement is enforced. For example, whereas a basic conservation easement may only restrict the subdivision and/or development of the project area, a QCE would also restrict activities such as plowing and farming, which could release carbon stored in the soil.  |  |  |
| 1. The QCE dedicates the project area to grassland cover and includes terms that prevent the conversion of the project area from grassland to another land use, such that avoidable reversals are sufficiently precluded as long as the easement is enforced (i.e, for the duration of the crediting period AND for at least 100 years after credit issuance).
 |  |  |
| 1. The QCE explicitly refers to, and incorporates by reference, the terms and conditions of the PIA and the GHG reduction rights agreement (if applicable), thereby binding both the grantor and grantee – as well as their subsequent assignees – to the terms of the agreements for the full duration of the grassland project’s minimum time commitment, as defined in Section 3.5 of the protocol.
 |  |  |
| 1. The QCE explicitly makes all future encumbrances and deeds subject to the PIA.
 |  |  |
| 1. The QCE specifies any land within the project area where activities resulting in a land use other than grassland are allowed and, subsequently, excludes the affected land from the project area to avoid risk of a reversal due to such activities.

To satisfy this requirement, the QCE may make reference to the carbon project and simply specify that any non-grassland land use must occur outside of the specified project area. |  |  |
| 1. The QCE includes enforceable provisions for the ongoing monitoring of compliance with the terms of the easement.
 |  |  |
| 1. The QCE incorporates and requires environmental best management practices for rangeland management (this is not required for QCEs, but is highly recommended).
 |  |  |
| 1. Additional Information (if any):
 |  |

***End of Form***