



Is a Conservation Easement appropriate for my property?

The Allegheny Valley Conservancy seeks to promote good land use through the protection, conservation and management of properties in the watersheds of the Allegheny River and French Creek. However, not every parcel of land in these regions should or can be protected through the creation of a conservation easement. The Conservancy has developed criteria that it uses to determine if a project is appropriate, and has established procedures to facilitate the selection, negotiation and approval of easement projects.

Your property may meet some or all of the criteria, which are based on the mission of the Conservancy. The members of the Conservancy will conduct an initial evaluation using the checklist below, and will also make a visit to your site. Once the appropriateness of an easement is established, the Conservancy will work closely with you to develop the easement to best serve your needs. Each property has its own unique features and characteristics; the Conservancy wants to work with you to protect these features both to the benefit of the landowner and the public.

Initial Evaluation Checklist

- Is the property located in the Allegheny River or French Creek watersheds?
- Is the property in relatively natural, scenic or historic condition?
- Does the property have recreational or agricultural value?
- Is the property currently in active agricultural or silvicultural use?
- Is the property of sufficient size that its conservation resources are likely to remain intact?
- Are there characteristics of the property that enhance its benefit to the public? These might include:
 - Endangered, threatened or rare species or natural communities;
 - Relatively natural wildlife habitat, ecosystems or natural features;
 - Potential to contain natural or historic features of educational or scientific value;
 - Contains or provides a buffer for wetlands, floodplains, waterways, riparian corridors, aquifer recharge areas, lands necessary for the protection of a water supply, water resource, wetland habitat or other sensitive areas;
 - Provides a buffer for or is close or contiguous to an existing conservation easement, park, preserve or other protected land;
 - Protects scenic views from waterways, public roadways or recreational areas;
 - Has historical or archaeological value or is adjacent to or buffers such lands;
 - Contains unique or outstanding physiographic characteristics or offers significant relief from urban closeness and/or helps to define the community.

In addition, the Conservancy must make a determination of the feasibility of the easement project. There are several factors that may preclude the Conservancy from the pursuit of a property. These may include:

- The property is not visible or accessible to the public;
- The property is part of a greater parcel that may face development;
- The conditions of the easement may be unusually difficult to manage or enforce;
- The property cannot be acquired with reasonable effort;
- The property is not large enough to be significant;
- The property is found to be irreparably contaminated.

Members of the Conservancy are available to talk with you about your property or answer questions you may have. The basic criteria outlined here provides some guidance to begin these discussions. Talking it over with members of the Conservancy will allow you to evaluate the features of your property that make it valuable, and to begin to explore the options you may have in preserving and protecting your property into the future.

Allegheny Valley Conservancy