

Baseline Documentation For Natural Resource Projects

Purpose Statement:

The monitoring and stewardship of the properties protected through the uses of LCHIP funds is a critical component to ensure its long term protection. The baseline inventory report should be the basis from which one will monitor the protected property. It is important that the baseline inventory report includes important information that relates to each individual property and information that will allow one to complete their monitoring and stewardship responsibilities effectively into the future. The following criteria have been drawn up to help the preparers of baseline inventory reports in creating reports that will have consistent formats, information and effectiveness for all the projects funded through LCHIP.

Information needs will obviously vary, sometimes quite widely, from property to property.

Photographic Documentation:

We believe that clear, labeled and precisely located photographs are a critical part of any baseline inventory report. Photographic documentation should cover as much of the property as possible and in as much detail as possible. This is particularly true for structures and improvements located on the property at the time the project is completed.

GPS Information:

Global Position Systems (GPS) have in recent years become much more affordable and able to produce more accurate location information. This information will be immensely useful in the future as properties change owners and landscapes change over time. LCHIP highly encourages the preparers of baseline inventory reports to use GPS coordinates when locating photo points, structures and other important features of a property.

Baseline Inventory Report Should Contain the Following Information:

A. Table of Contents

Page numbers and information included in each of the following sections.

B. Owner Acknowledgement Statement (see end of document)

C. Summary Information:

1. Landowners name, contact information
2. Easement holder name, contact information
3. Executory Interest name, contact information
4. Date or proposed date of project acquisition
5. Detailed directions to the property from the nearest town
6. General physical property description, including acreage
7. Summary of the conservation values protected
8. Extent of the investigation – Who did the work, when was the property visited, who else was consulted for information that is in the report etc...

D. History of the Project

This section should describe how contact was initiated between the involved parties and why, who the key players were in developing the project.

E. Land Uses and Management

1. Historic

This should include all of the known historical uses of the property. Describe any past agricultural, logging, residential and recreational uses.

2. Current

This section should describe what the property is currently being used for including residential and recreational uses.

F. Inventory of Property Improvements

Disagreements often occur on the construction of new buildings or property improvements. For this reason it is critical that all existing improvements be detailed in the baseline inventory report. This information should include GPS locations of all improvements. The following need to be listed in this section.

1. Major agricultural structures such as barns, sheds, riding arenas and corrals
2. Minor agricultural structures such as stock tanks and fences
3. All man made ponds, stock tanks or reservoirs
4. Any recreational improvements present on the property
5. Roads, public and private, paved and unpaved need to be located on a site map and preferably shown in photographs. This includes two-tracks present on the property
6. Existing radio towers, cell towers, power lines, dumps, transfer stations, gravel pits and cemeteries etc...

G. Description of Property and Conservation Values

1. Physical Description

- a) Topography – A general description and notable landmarks referenced in the report.
- b) Geology – Note the underlying geology and any notable features located on the property.
- c) Soils – Note the major soil types and their locations on the property.
- d) Hydrology – Note water features found on the property, watershed information and any other information related to water on the property.

2. Vegetative Communities

Provide a brief description of the main vegetative community types found on the property. The description should also include human altered vegetative communities such as hay field, corn fields or pastures. It is important to note the general locations of each community type and include a map showing the locations of the communities if appropriate.

3. Wildlife Values

Each property is used in different ways by wildlife and wildlife uses change over time. Please provide a description of the notable species found on the property.

4. Scenic, Open Space and Historical Values

A) This section should describe the public open space values that are protected by the project. These can include views from public roads or public lands and community buffers.

B) If the property has any historical or archaeological values please briefly describe.

H. Appendices

Information included in Appendices to the document are generally used for reference and can include a wide array of information depending upon the property. These typically include:

1. Photographic Documentation

Clear color photographs showing the property, with photopoints located on a map.

2. USGS Topographic Map

This should show property lines and other nearby protected land

3. **Aerial Photograph**
4. **Annotated Survey Plan or Detailed Property Map**
Including man-made features
5. **Excerpt of soils map**
Showing property lines, plus soils productivity classifications
6. **References cited in the Report**
7. **Recorded Copy of the Easement (submitted after closing)**

***Sample Owner Acknowledgement Statement**

Property Name:

Grantor: Name
 Address
 Town, State, Zip

Grantee: Name
 Address
 Town, State, Zip

Property Description

(Include acreage, general location and relevant natural features, not to exceed more than a few paragraphs)

In compliance with Section 1.170-14(g)(5)(i)(D) of the Federal Tax Regulations this baseline inventory report is an accurate representation of the property at the time of the conservation easement donation

Grantor _____ Date _____

Grantee _____ Date _____