



COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Contribution Fund

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Albemarle County ACE Contribution Fund?

This is a special fund established by the County of Albemarle in 2005 to be used exclusively for purchasing conservation easements under the County's ACE Program. This fund is supported entirely by private contributions. The fund provides citizens with an opportunity to have a direct role in permanently protecting the County's open space, and its natural, cultural, historical and scenic resources. In turn, future generations will be able to experience the scenic farmland, woodlands, and open spaces that define the County's character.

For additional information regarding the County's ACE Program, please contact the Department of Community Development's Planning Division (434-296-5832) or visit the department's web site at www.albemarle.org.

Donations to the ACE Contribution Fund are tax deductible as an itemized deduction as provided by IRS regulations.



How do I make a contribution?

Contributions should be by check, made payable to the County of Albemarle, and reference the ACE Contribution Fund. The checks should be sent to:

County of Albemarle
Department of Community Development
401 McIntire Road – Room 227
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Attention: Management Analyst

Contributions are welcome at any time in any amount. Upon receipt of the contribution, the Department of Community Development will issue a receipt recognizing the contribution. Approximately three weeks after receipt, the contributor will receive a letter from the County's Department of Finance recognizing the contribution as a tax deductible donation.



How will the ACE Contribution Fund support Albemarle County's open space preservation efforts?

Contributions will be used in combination with funding from the County's ACE Program to complete conservation easement acquisitions. Contributions provide vital funding needed to complete acquisitions that could not otherwise be acquired with ACE Program funds alone.



How is land selected for purchase?

The County's Comprehensive Plan identifies the most important areas to protect as open space. Under the ACE Program, a ranking evaluation system was created to award points for a number of different values including: 1) open space resources (such as size of parcel and whether it joins a permanently protected area); 2) threat of conversion to development and; 3) natural, cultural, historical or scenic resources (such as mountaintops, working family farms, important view-sheds, scenic highways and rivers, watersheds, productive soils and historically significant properties). Any property that is awarded a minimum of 15 points is eligible for consideration; however, properties in the applicant pool with the highest point total have the highest priority.



Who is responsible for distributing ACE Contribution Funds?

All disbursements from the ACE Contribution Fund must be approved by the Board of Supervisors following a recommendation from Department of Community Development staff and the ACE Committee.



How will contributions be managed?

The ACE Contribution Fund will be maintained by the County's Department of Finance as a separate fund to ensure that contributions are reserved exclusively for conservation easement acquisitions. The fund will earn interest that will also be applied towards conservation easement acquisitions.

No contributed funds will be used for administration or overhead costs – 100% of all contributions will be devoted exclusively to purchase conservation easements. Any associated administration or overhead costs will be covered by the County's general fund.



Can contributions be designated to go towards the purchase of a particular parcel of land?

Contributors can earmark their donations for the purchase of a particular parcel of land if that land is identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan as land that should remain in open space.



How will land acquired with money from the ACE Contribution Fund be protected in the future?

All property purchased with money from the ACE Contribution Fund will have specific restrictions on the use and development of the property placed in the deed. These restrictions limit the use of the property in perpetuity to agricultural, forestry or open space uses.

“Preserving our rural landscape and natural heritage through the voluntary acquisition of conservation easements”