

National Bulletin: 440-23-24

Date: 09/06/2023

Subject: PGM—Announcing the Easement Automated Landowner
Change Detection Pilot

Action Required By: December 31, 2023

Purpose: This national bulletin announces the implementation of the Easement Automated Landowner Change Detection Pilot for easement programs.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2024.

Background: NRCS holds title to or enforces rights on more than 24,000 easements, providing protection to more than 5.4 million acres nationwide. To effectively monitor and enforce these lands, NRCS must be aware of every person or entity with a legal interest in each conservation easement. Land ownership changes frequently, which causes NRCS to expend significant time and resources to track these changes.

To make this process more efficient, the Easement Programs Division (EPD) initiated a pilot project to develop a tool that regularly scans for potential changes in the ownership and subdivision of easements. The Easement Automated Landowner Change Detection Pilot uses tax parcel records, the National Easement Staging Tool (NEST), and the Geographic Information System to identify potential changes in ownership. It then alerts NRCS to those changes and provides summary reports to state offices for further investigation.

In fiscal years 2021 and 2022, the pilot project for this process was completed with the assistance of state easement staff. In fiscal year 2023, EPD has updated the process to increase accuracy and effectiveness. EPD has generated new summary reports using this updated version. Easements using ProTracts and Conservation Desktop as their system of record are not included in these reports.

Explanation: EPD has used the Easement Automated Landowner Change Detection Pilot to generate a state-specific report listing easements or portions of easements that have potentially changed ownership. This report covers all easement programs that are managed in NEST.

The reports are available in the EPD SharePoint site at [2023 State Reports](#). All states must access the changed reports and validate the report findings by December 31, 2023. States must work from the SharePoint version of the report to maintain consistent national data.

EPD will provide a recorded training video and other materials related to the Easement Automated Landowner Change Detection Pilot on the SharePoint Training site at [Stewardship Training](#).

Contact: Direct questions related to this national bulletin or the Easement Automated Landowner Change Detection Pilot to Wayne van Rooyen, National Realty Specialist, by email

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