

APPENDIX K – Conservation Management Plan and Carbon Farm Plan Contents

General Requirements

For easements, both conservation management plans and carbon farm plans must be approved by the Department and signed by the grantee and landowner prior to the execution of the deed and release of funds allocated for the development of the plan. For fee acquisitions, the plan must be approved by the Department and signed by the grantee and landowner within one year of close of escrow on the acquisition, within the grant term, and prior to release of the funds allocated for the plan. The plan must be developed by a qualified planner or resource conservation district.

Conservation management plans and carbon farm plans are living documents that must be reviewed by the landowner and grantee at least every 10 years. These plans are intended to provide flexibility for management of the land within the purposes of the acquisition. The grantee must notify SALC of any changes to the management that have the potential to significantly impact the conservation values or conservation purpose of the acquisition.

The plan must be updated if changes to the agricultural operations on or ownership of the property occur that have the potential to significantly impact the conservation values or purpose of the acquisition. The grantee and landowner must obtain an updated plan from qualified planner or resource conservation district in the event of such changes.

The grantee must report the landowner's implementation of the plan and any changes in the agricultural operation or ownership that have the potential to impact the conservation values or purpose from the previous year on its annual monitoring report. If the landowner is not complying with the plan, the grantee must identify how compliance will be achieved. If a change in operations or ownership that has the potential to impact the conservation values or purpose is reported, the grantee must instruct the landowner to update the conservation management plan. If, at the time of the next annual monitoring report, the landowner has not obtained an updated plan (and it is not due to inaction by SALC), then the landowner is in violation of the provisions of the deed and the grantee is responsible for bringing the landowner into compliance.

Conservation Management Plans

At a minimum, the conservation management plan must:

- A. Describe the activities that promote the long-term viability of the land to meet the purposes for which the Acquisition was acquired. This may include a farm or ranch succession plan.
- B. Include a description of the farm or ranch management system, and, if applicable, irrigation water right volumes needed for the agricultural activity on the property. The conservation management plan may incorporate or refer to information from baseline documentation reports, as appropriate.
- C. Identify required and recommended conservation or management practices that address the purposes and conservation values for which the property was selected, such as those identified in the selection criteria, the eligibility requirements, detailed characteristics of the project, the grant agreement or deed, or other project documents, and including practices to protect biodiversity and facilitate climate adaptation. The conservation management plan may incorporate, or cross-reference practices identified in other plans, such as an organic system plan for organic operations, USDA NRCS Conservation Plans, CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovations Planning Grants Program plans, a comprehensive nutrient management plan for animal feeding operations, or care of historic sites for easements with historical or archeological resources.
- D. Identify additional or specific criteria associated with permissible and prohibited activities consistent with the terms of the deed. For example, if a deed specifies that the location of the building envelope may be adjusted if it does not adversely affect the agricultural resources, the conservation management plan should describe the agricultural resources and how they may be impacted by construction of structures. Not every conservation management plan will need to specify additional or specific criteria for deed terms; whether such criteria are required should be determined by the grantee based on the agricultural resources present on the property and the clarity of the deed restrictions.

Carbon Farm Plans

At a minimum, the carbon farm plan must:

- A. Assess the carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emission reduction potential of the property.
- B. Include a description of the farm or ranch management system.

C. Describe recommended and required actions and activities to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions based on the carbon assessment and consistent with the conservation purpose of the acquisition. The carbon farm plan may incorporate, or cross-reference practices identified in other plans, such as organic system plans for organic operations, USDA NRCS Conservation Plans, CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovations Planning Grants Program plans, and comprehensive nutrient management plans for animal feeding operations.