

Easement Monitoring Checklist

I. Scheduling the Visit: 2 weeks before your visit (or more)

- Contact the landowner to arrange a time for the site visit.** Introduce yourself, explain the purpose of the visit, arrange to meet with the landowner and, if possible, to walk the land with them. If the landowner will not be present during the entire visit, try to arrange to have a friend or another volunteer land steward with you.
- Make arrangements with stewardship staff to get the Field Notebook, in person if possible.**

II. Reviewing the Easement and Field Notebook: 1 week before your visit

- Review Sections 1 (Purposes), 2 (Use Limitations) and 3 (Reserved Rights) of the Easement Deed.**
- Review previous Monitoring Reports, Landowner Surveys and other correspondence,** making note of any concerns, management problems, and Reserved Rights the landowner has exercised or plans to exercise.
- Review surveys, photographs, and maps of the property.**
- Verify paperwork:** check the accuracy of the directions to the property and the landowner contact information, and make sure that all the sections of the Field Notebook are up to date and in order. If they are not, indicate what's missing to stewardship staff in your report.
- Follow up with stewardship staff** if you have any questions or concerns about the materials in the Field Notebook.

III. Packing the Field Bag: Day of the site visit, bring:

- Field Notebook
- Camera with extra batteries and memory card (or film)
- Compass (and/or GPS unit, if desired)
- Pen/pencil and paper or notebook
- Field map of the easement property (found in the front of the Field Notebook, with the Monitoring Map)
- Proper attire (rain gear, boots, hunter's orange hat or vest, first aid kit, water and snacks, insect repellent, etc.)
- Cell phone to use in the event of emergencies (if reception is available)

IV. Conducting the Site Visit: Day of the site visit

- Meet the landowner.** If the residence is contiguous to the easement, stop and introduce yourself. If the landowner is not accompanying you, give them an estimate of the amount of time you will be on the property.
 - **Questions to Ask Landowners:** It is important to be sensitive – land ownership involves many private decisions, and no landowner likes to be interrogated. A tactful land steward, however, can appropriately ease questions into a conversation. Use common sense, and express curiosity and appreciation of the landowner's situation, whatever it may be. The information we seek is asked in the Landowner Survey. Use your interaction with the landowner to fill gaps in this survey and to guide your monitoring. You are on a fact-finding mission.
 - **Responding to Questions:** When asked a question during the site visit, if you don't know the answer, simply offer that staff will reply soon with an answer. Be sure to make a note in your report

so that staff will know about the landowner's concerns. Remember: as a land steward, it is not your job to interpret the easement for the landowner and approve or disapprove of their proposals.

Walk the property boundaries and interior

- Visit areas of interest marked on the Monitoring Map or in the Landowner Surveys (streams, wetlands, existing buildings, proposed sites for exercise of Reserved Rights, etc.).
- Follow interior roads and trails if possible.
- Make notes and observations on a notepad and/or copy of the survey (a copy of the survey has been provided in the notebook for you to mark up).
- Take photographs only of areas of concern, i.e. changes from your last visit, changes from the baseline photographs, significant natural changes (wind throws, beaver flooding, etc.). When possible, include an object in the photo for scale and reference. Indicate locations of photos on the field copy of the survey.
- Exercise caution and think about your safety at all times. Beware of dogs, wasps, poison ivy, and other hazards. Keep track of your whereabouts using the maps, a compass, and landscape features.

Take note of the following:

- Are the boundaries marked with painted blazes, survey flags, or other marks?
- Are the boundaries marked with Monadnock Conservancy signs (Signs should be approximately 250' apart at eye level – on trees, fence posts, etc.)?
- Do access points show signs of use? What kinds of use?
- Are there land uses on adjacent lands that are of possible concern (e.g. dumping, heavy logging, construction close to the boundary, runoff)?

V. Following Up: As soon as possible after the site visit (within 30 days at the most)

- Fill out the Monitoring Report completely and sign it.** Write a comprehensive summary of what you saw, heard, and learned on your visit.
- Develop any film you have or print digital photos.** Number, sign, and date the back of the photographs and write a summary of the subject of each photograph and its significance.
- Discuss your visit with stewardship staff,** especially any concerns, disturbances or unusual situations.
- Deliver the Field Notebook, Monitoring Report, photographs, and any other paperwork to the office.**
- Say thank you.** Please consider sending a card or personal letter to the landowner thanking them for visiting with you.