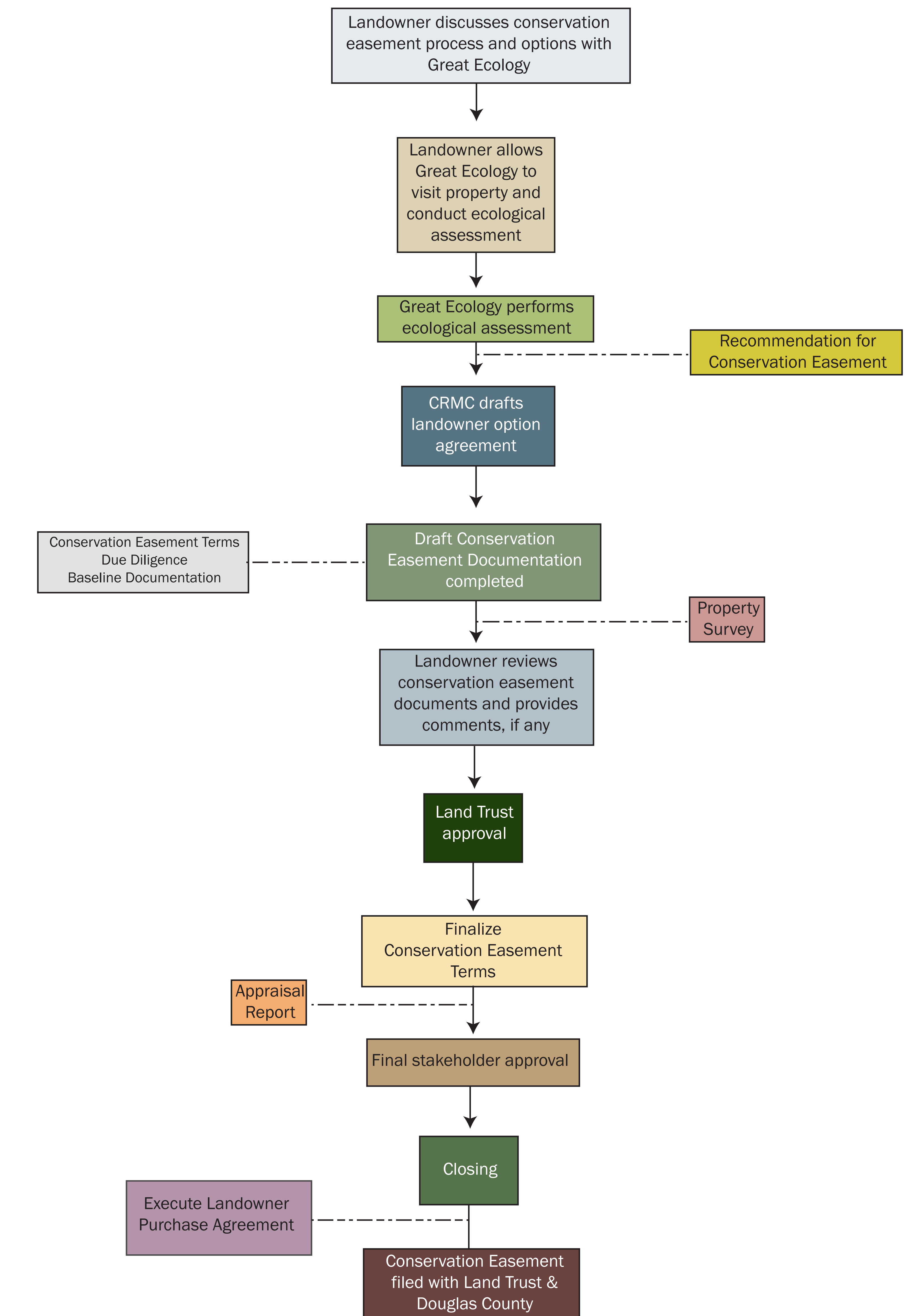


# Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project Off-site Mitigation

As of Spring 2017, Great Ecology has assessed more than 350 acres for preservation. Two landowners have already begun the conservation easement process, which when completed will permanently protect approximately 100 acres of valuable habitat. The remaining acreage is recommended for conservation and we are in discussions with the landowners regarding conservation easements on their property.

## Conservation Easement Process



To protect and conserve the important wildlife habitat and natural resources along waterways, Douglas County has created a riparian conservation zone (RCZ) that extends across public and private lands. The RCZ includes the creek channel and its adjoining floodplain as well as a buffer area beyond the floodplain. Conserving these areas supports a long-range habitat conservation plan, as well as helps conserve beautiful views and rural character of much of the county.

Great Ecology is working with Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company, Inc. (CRMC) to help landowners conserve portions of their property that fall within the RCZ and buffer area. Great Ecology is conducting ecological assessments of the land, and working with landowners to develop plans for conservation.

### FAQ

**Q: If I place my land in conservation easement, do I still own the land?**

A: Yes, the property owner retains full ownership of the land. The conservation easement restricts development on all or a portion of the property, which is placed on the deed of the property to be observed in perpetuity, but there is no change in ownership.

**Q: Is there a financial incentive to conserving the land?**

A: Yes, CRMC offers financial compensation in the form of a one-time payment for placing RCZ and buffer areas, if present, into a conservation easement. The amount of this payment is based on the value and unique terms of the conservation easement.

**Q: Do I need to be present for the ecological assessment?**

A: No, but Great Ecology welcomes the landowner to accompany them during the assessment, and values the landowner's knowledge of the land.

**Q: What's involved in an ecological assessment?**

A: Great Ecology's team makes a visual and semi-quantitative analysis of the property, with particular focus on riparian areas, wetlands, cottonwood-willow, and upland areas. This includes documenting abundance and vigor of plants, taking photographs, and similar metrics. A typical site visit takes several hours to a full day, depending on the size of your property and ease of access. Site visits are conducted during the growing season, approximately mid-May through mid-October.

**Q: What is a conservation easement anyway?**

A: A conservation easement allows you to place your property under permanent protection from significant development, which means that you can pass your land on to future generations in the condition you have it now. Conservation easements are focused on particular conservation values.

The conservation values of a qualified conservation easement include one or more of the following: to preserve land for outdoor recreation or education of the general habitat; to protect habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants; to preserve open space; and to preserve historically significant land or structures.

**Q: Can I continue to use my property for agriculture?**

A: Landowners may continue using their property for agricultural purposes assuming the RCZ is not impacted.

**Q: What are the benefits of a conservation easement?**

A: A conservation easement will allow for protection of important wildlife habitat and contribute to Douglas County's goals to preserve views and the rural character of the landscape. CRMC is also providing financial incentives to landowners to place a conservation easement on their property. These incentives vary depending on the extent of land being preserved, and the proportion of the property, among other factors.

**Q: Who holds the conservation easement?**

A: The conservation easement is held by a land trust. We have relationships with Douglas Land Conservancy, Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust, and others. We will work with landowners to identify their preferred holder of the easement before we begin the process.

**Q: Sounds great, how do I get started?**

A: Contact Joshua Eldridge at Great Ecology to discuss further details. He can be reached at: 303.872.0927.

