



## CONSERVATION EASEMENT ANNUAL MONITORING PROGRAM

### What is it?

Tinicum Conservancy is legally responsible and committed to the grantors of every conservation easement to uphold the terms and conditions of the easement. We meet this responsibility in part by making an annual visit to every property to ensure that the agreements and restrictions that protect each property are being honored in perpetuity.

### Why monitor?

In addition to our obligation to the grantors of each conservation easement, we are also required by our National Land Trust Accreditation to monitor every conservation easement property on an annual basis. The annual visit also gives the conservancy and landowners an opportunity to share updates or plans and talk about any issues, questions or support that may be needed.

### Who monitors?

Conservancy staff work with a large group of dedicated and trained volunteer monitors. All volunteers are local community members and often have conserved properties themselves. All monitoring visits are conducted in teams of two: one staff person and one volunteer



The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

team up for safety, integrity and work-sharing.

### How do we monitor?

Conservancy staff or volunteers contact landowners to schedule a visit annually by phone, email and/or postal mail, about the same time each year, approximately 2-3 weeks ahead of the visit date. We invite landowners to meet and join us for our walk about the property, although landowners are not obligated to do so. The monitoring team will walk as much of the property as needed to see it entirely. We utilize various forms of technology to help navigate each property

including digital maps and GPS. Often, monitors will take notes and/or photos to document new structures, changes in the landscape or even parts of a property a landowner may not see very often. This helps the conservancy keep records of how properties change over time.

### What happens after the visit?

Conservancy staff create a report to document each annual visit. These reports are archived as part of each conservation easement file and are not public record. A landowner may request a copy of a monitoring report for their own property at any time. After the monitoring visit, the conservancy will send a follow-up letter that may contain notes about conversations, questions or observations made during the visit.





### Using remote satellite imagery

In 2020, the conservancy sought safe, practical and time-efficient alternatives to in-person annual property visits. The conservancy contracted with Upstream Tech ([www.upstream.tech](http://www.upstream.tech)), a land conservation support company that provides digital satellite imagery for our conservation easement properties.



The digital images are similar to what is publicly available on Google Earth. Using this technology is acceptable by the Accreditation Commission to meet our requirement to monitor every easement property annually. Since 2020, Tincum Conservancy reviews digital satellite images once a year to remotely “visit” most\* conservation easement properties. No matter the technology, properties are visited in person at least once every two years. Digital satellite images may be reviewed in alternating years.

\*Most properties may be monitored using satellite imagery. They include:

- Those that may be clearly viewed from boundary to boundary, having open meadow, pasture, crop lands or forests whose imagery is available during “leaf-off” seasons
- Those with no trespass issues from adjacent neighbors

- Those without significant changes in previous years
- Those that don’t require in-person follow-up or communications with the landowners

*If you have any questions about our monitoring program, please call us during business hours at 610-294-1077 or email us at [info@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:info@tincumconservancy.org).*



*“Protecting our rural character and natural resources through community-based land conservation.”*

