

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Greater Sage Grouse

STRIKETHROUGH TEXT FOR NATIONAL CRITERIA ARE NOT APPLICABLE - DO NOT ANSWER THESE CRITERIA.

National Priorities Addressed

Issue Questions	Point(s)
If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category.	
1. a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
Water Quality Degradation — Will the proposed project improve water quality by: (select all that apply)	
2. a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?	15
2. b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?	10
2. c. Reducing impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides on land adjoining a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d listed waterbody, or other State designation)?	10
2. d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a "non impaired water body"?	10
2. e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?	10
Water Conservation — Will the proposed project conserve water by: (select all that apply)	
3. a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.	15
3. b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on farm water use?	10
3. c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed wide project?	10
3. d. Implementing practices that reduce on farm water use as a result of changing to crops with lower water consumptive use, the rotation of crops, or the modification of cultural operations?	10
Air Quality — Will the proposed project improve air quality by: (select all that apply)	
4. a. Meeting on farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	10
4. b. Implementing practices that reduce on farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	10
4. c. Implementing practices that reduce on farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?	10
4. d. Implementing practices that increase on farm carbon sequestration?	10
Soil Health: — Will the proposed project improve soil health by: (select all that apply)	
5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	10
5. b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	10
Wildlife Habitat – Will the proposed project improve wildlife habitat by: (select all that apply)	
6. a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern.	10
6. b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?	10
6. c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?	10
6. d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?	10
Plant and Animal Communities: Will the proposed project improve plant and animal communities by: (select all that apply)	
7. a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10
7. b. Implementing practice in an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)?	10
Energy Conservation — Will the proposed project reduce energy use by: (select all that apply)	
8. a. Reducing on farm energy consumption?	10
8. b. Implementing practice(s) identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit, which meet ASABE S612 criteria?	10
Business Lines – Will the practices to be scheduled in the "EQIP Plan of Operations" result in:	
9. a. Enhancement of existing conservation practice(s) or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is received?	10

State Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
State Category One – Habitat Priority (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
1. a. Priority 1: Projects identified by Sage-Grouse Local Working Groups with high priority leks within 3 miles of all or part of the treatment unit and addressing each of the threats, if they exist, associated with conifer invasion, fencing, watering facilities, and habitat management.	200
1. b. Priority 2: Projects addressing each of the threats, if they exist, associated with conifer invasion, fencing, watering facilities, and habitat management within 3 miles of a lek.	100
1. c. Priority 3: Projects addressing each of the threats, if they exist, associated with conifer invasion, fencing, watering facilities, and habitat management within 3-10 miles of a lek.	50
1. d. Priority 4: Projects improving sagebrush rangeland health that facilitates grazing management that may directly benefit sage-grouse, but there are no existing leks within ten miles of the treatment area.	25
State Category Two - Enrolled Acreage, enrolled acreage must be greater than zero (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
2. a. One hundred percent of eligible sagebrush and/or grassland enrolled.	100
2. b. Greater than or equal to fifty percent of eligible sagebrush and/or grassland enrolled.	50
2. c. Less than fifty percent of eligible sagebrush and/or grassland enrolled.	25
State Category Three - Percent of Identified Threats Treated (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
3. a. One hundred percent of identified threats are addressed; a threat assessment worksheet documents threats present on the treatment area and which threats have been addressed.	100
3. b. Greater than or equal to 75 percent of identified threats are addressed; a threat assessment worksheet documents threats present on the treatment area and which threats have been addressed.	75
3. c. Greater than or equal to 50 percent of identified threats are addressed; a threat assessment worksheet documents threats present on the treatment area and which threats have been addressed.	50
3. d. Less than 50 percent of identified threats addressed, but at least one threat will be addressed Greater than or equal to 50 percent of identified threats are addressed; a threat assessment worksheet documents threats present on the treatment area and which threats have been addressed.	25
Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
Local Category One – Proximity of a Lek to Fences	
1. a. Within 3 km of a lek either no fences exist or all fences will be removed as part of the conservation treatment.	35
Local Category Two – Lek Connectivity	
2. a. Conservation treatment will be implemented in areas of high connection to several leks with lower levels of habitat fragmentation and/or anthropogenic disturbance.	35
Local Category Three – Mountain Meadow and Wetland Habitat	
3. a. Conservation treatment will maintain meadows and wetlands in a healthy state in the management unit. Maintain or achieve a sage-grouse Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) score of 0.5 or better.	35
Local Category Four – Fence Markers	
4. a. Conservation treatment will result in flagging with NRCS approved vinyl markers to reduce bird strikes in, for all fences identified by either the fence collision tool located within the high and moderate risk areas or high use areas with gentler sloped topography.	35
Local Category Five – Control cheatgrass /Medusahead	
5. a. Conservation treatment to control cheatgrass or medusahead will result in improved quality of sagebrush, native bunchgrass and forb community and lower risk of catastrophic fire.	35
Local Category Six – Habitat Connectivity	
6. a. Conservation treatment will improve direct connectivity of lek to suitable nesting habitat, late brood rearing habitat, and/or wintering habitat.	35
Local Category Seven – Nesting Habitat	
7. a. Applicant is willing to rest a portion of their grazing unit (private or allotment) which would comprise at least 20 percent of the property or allotment. Resting means that area is rested from grazing once every three years, the area will be rested from grazing for one full year; this does not include areas required to rest after practice implementation.	40