

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Statewide - SFR - Rangeland**

National Priorities Addressed

| Issue Questions | Point(s) |
|--|----------|
| <p>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.</p> | |
| <p>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.</p> | 250 |
| <p>Water Quality Degradation – Will the proposed project improve water quality by: (select all that apply)</p> | |
| <p>2. a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?</p> | 15 |
| <p>2. b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?</p> | 10 |
| <p>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)?</p> | 10 |
| <p>2. d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a "non-impaired water body"?</p> | 10 |
| <p>2. e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?</p> | 10 |
| <p>Water Conservation – Will the proposed project conserve water by: (select all that apply)</p> | |
| <p>3. a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.</p> | 15 |
| <p>3. b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?</p> | 10 |
| <p>3. c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?</p> | 10 |
| <p>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?</p> | 10 |
| <p>Air Quality - Will the proposed project improve air quality by: (select all that apply)</p> | |
| <p>4. a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?</p> | 10 |
| <p>4. b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?</p> | 10 |
| <p>4. c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?</p> | 10 |
| <p>4. d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?</p> | 10 |
| <p>Soil Health:- Will the proposed project improve soil health by: (select all that apply)</p> | |
| <p>5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?</p> | 10 |
| <p>5. b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?</p> | 10 |
| <p>Wildlife Habitat – Will the proposed project improve wildlife habitat by: (select all that apply)</p> | |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 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 Ranking Criteria – Conservation Activity Plan 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 state 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 state level questions. If answer is “No”, proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. | 250 |
| State Category Two Ranking Criteria – SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select “Yes,” if applicable) | |
| 2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce stream bank erosion on perennial, intermittent and/or ephemeral streams using conservation practices to maintain vegetative cover and protect banks from erosion caused by livestock impacts. | 42 |
| State Category Three Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml . Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes NRCS conservation practice, CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing or 472 – Access Control, to manage livestock access and/or improve riparian vegetative cover to reduce excess nutrients to surface water, where the waterbody is: (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable) | |
| 3. a. Listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category ‘Nutrients’. | 30 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 3. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Nutrients'. | 20 |
| 3. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category "Nutrients". | 15 |
| 3. d. A ditch or canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category, "Nutrients". | 10 |
| 3. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round. | 5 |
| 3. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year. | 3 |
| State Category Four Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes NRCS conservation practice, CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing or 472 – Access Control, to manage livestock access and/or improve riparian vegetative cover to reduce excess sediment to surface water, where the waterbody is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable) | |
| 4. a. Listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'. | 30 |
| 4. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'. | 20 |
| 4. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'. | 15 |
| 4. d. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'. | 10 |
| 4. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round. | 5 |
| 4. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year. | 3 |
| State Category Five Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Elevated Water Temperature (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable) | |
| 5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations addresses factors that contribute to high water temperatures on a stream known to support a fishery. | 25 |
| 5. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations addresses factors that contribute to high water temperatures for a stream waterbody that does not support a fishery. | 10 |
| State Category Six Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Productivity and Health (Select "Yes," if applicable) | |
| 6. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes CPS 528 – Prescribed Grazing to design and implement a grazing management plan to control the access, duration and timing of livestock grazing in each field for improved productivity, health and vigor of key forage species. Structural and/or vegetative practices may also be include the EQIP schedule of operations, in addition to CPS 528, if needed to support the grazing management plan. | 40 |

| | |
|---|----|
| <p>State Category Seven Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will either: 1) includes any combination of practices to increase plant diversity where the planned land unit was invaded by brush species and herbaceous species should dominate, or 2) results in the design and implementation of a grazing management plan according to CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing, for restoration of the desired plant community by implementing prescribed grazing on –</p> <p>(Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p> | |
| 7. a. At least 75 percent of the ranch/livestock operation. | 25 |
| 7. b. At least 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation. | 15 |
| 7. c. Less than 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation. | 5 |
| <p>State Category Eight Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will address noxious or invasive weed species through any combination of herbicide, biological, targeted grazing, and/or mechanical treatments on –</p> <p>(Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p> | |
| 8. a. At least 75 percent of the ranch/livestock operation. | 25 |
| 8. b. At least 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation. | 15 |
| 8. c. Less than 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation. | 5 |
| <p>State Category Nine Ranking Criteria – INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation</p> <p>Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space is evaluated using either the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). The 'planned' assessment score must be greater than or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5) for the WHEG or greater than or equal to 90 points (≥ 90 points) for the PHA.</p> <p>(Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p> | |
| 9. a. Fish or wildlife habitat improvements in the EQIP schedule of operations directly benefit Federal or State threatened, endangered, rare, proposed, candidate, fully protected and selected species (selected species included: Tricolored blackbird, Western burrowing owl, Foothill yellow-legged frog, Steelhead, Western pond turtle and pollinators) and the WHEG or PHA the 'planned assessment score is met. | 20 |
| 9. b. Fish or wildlife habitat improvements in the EQIP schedule of operations directly benefit habitat for Species of Special Concern (as identified in Section II under Special Environmental Concerns) animals and the WHEG or PHA the 'planned assessment score is met. | 15 |
| <p>State Category Ten Ranking Criteria – LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Livestock Water</p> <p>(Select "Yes," if applicable)</p> | |
| 10. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reliable, clean livestock water where access to off-stream water was previously limited. Livestock water will be available through a tank/trough system not creeks, ponds, springs or wetlands. | 10 |
| <p>State Category Eleven Ranking Criteria – INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching and Field Operations</p> <p>(Select "Yes," if applicable)</p> | |
| 11. a. Conservation treatment results in more efficient use of fossil fuels by replacing existing equipment or by implementation energy efficient farming, ranching, and field operations management practices. | 3 |

| Local Issues Addressed | |
|---|----------|
| Issue Questions | Point(s) |
| Local Category One - SOIL EROSION: Classic Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable) | |
| 1. a. Conservation treatment includes structural or vegetative practices to stabilize a classic gully and prevent further headcut advancement. | 40 |
| Local Category Two - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable) | |
| 2. a. Conservation treatment will restrict livestock access to channel banks in order to reduce soil loss where livestock are impacting streambank stability and causing sediment delivery to a surface water body. | 40 |
| Local Category Three - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water Visual assessment using photo monitoring and documentation of conditions through field notes of the stream, pond and/or spring are required to document resource concerns. Treatment area is within the riparian area of the surface water body under consideration. Conservation treatment includes structural (alone) or structural and vegetative practices to control livestock access to: (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers, if applicable) | |
| 3. a. a perennial creek or an intermittent creek that flows for greater than one month. | 30 |
| 3. b. an intermittent or ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month. | 20 |
| 3. c. a permanent pond or spring. | 10 |
| Local Category Four - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediments in Surface Water Visual assessment using photo monitoring and field notes of the stream, pond and/or spring are required to document benchmark condition. Treatment area is upland areas adjacent to the surface water body or the stream channel/riparian area. Conservation treatment includes structural, vegetative and/or management practices to minimize sediment in surface water runoff to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable) | |
| 4. a. a perennial creek or an intermittent creek that flows for greater than one month. | 60 |
| 4. b. an intermittent or ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month. | 30 |
| 4. c. a permanent pond or spring. | 20 |
| Local Category Five - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition Conservation treatment restores desired plant community and utilizes mechanical, chemical or biological control on sites where the predominant soil depths in the treatment unit are 20 inches or more, slopes are less than 50 percent, and typically have a brush canopy cover: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable) | |
| 5. a. greater than 70 percent. | 50 |
| 5. b. between 30 - 70 percent. | 30 |
| 5. c. less than 30 percent. | 20 |
| Local Category Six - INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space is evaluated using the following assessment protocols: The Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers) | |

| | |
|---|----|
| 6. a. Riparian Zone: Conservation treatment will improve the riparian zone where the riparian WHEG 'planned' worksheet is greater or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5). | 25 |
| 6. b. Multiple Habitat Types: Conservation treatment will improve multiple habitat types, improving habitat elements for both upland/riparian, based on the appropriate WHEG that benefit both terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species. The score on the WHEG worksheet for the Land Use/Cover Type is greater than or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5) | 25 |
| 6. c. Pollinator Habitat: Conservation treatment will restore or enhance habitat for pollinators using the PHA with a minimum 'planned' score of 110 points or greater. | 20 |
| 6. d. Rare or Declining Habitat for Native Fish and/or Wildlife Species: Conservation treatment will restore or enhance regional or locally identified rare or declining habitats for the benefit of native fish and/or wildlife, such as, Alkali sink scrub, Central Valley riparian oak forest, wetlands (all types), large streams and rivers, or other habitats as determined by NRCS Area or local Biologist, where the 'planned' assessment score is greater or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5) for the WHEG. | 25 |
| 6. e. Habitat Continuity: Implementing a project with a fish screen that will eliminate entrainment of fish into the water delivery system (pipe or ditch) on a native fish-bearing stream where life history stages susceptible to entrainment are present concurrent with water diversions seasonally or year round. | 25 |
| Local Category Seven - LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Stock Water Conservation treatment results in reliable water including adequate storage for livestock, to improve livestock distribution. (Select "Yes," if applicable) | |
| 7. a. Conservation treatment results in reliable year round water available for livestock and wildlife (including adequate storage) where access to water was previously limited and caused declining range health conditions due to inability to properly manage grazing. Conservation treatment makes water available to livestock through a tank and trough system and/or a livestock pond. | 30 |