

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Cropland - Central Sierra**

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 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: Sheet and Rill Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations promotes soil health and reduces sheet and rill erosion, as estimated by RUSLE2; and, includes a combination of vegetative and management practices such as residue and tillage management, cover crop, or conservation crop rotation where erosion is estimated at – (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
2. a. Greater than 2T; after treatment estimated soil loss will not exceed T.	20
2. b. Less than 2T; after treatment estimated soil loss will not exceed T.	5
State Category Three Ranking Criteria – SOIL EROSION: Wind Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations may include practices such as windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, windbreak/shelterbelt renovation or herbaceous wind barriers; or, may include practices that promote soil health such as residue and tillage management, cover crop, or conservation crop rotation. Treatment will reduce wind erosion as estimated by WEPS by – (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
3. a. Greater than 50 percent; and, total annual soil loss is estimated to not exceed T after treatment.	20

3. b. 20 to 49 percent; and, total annual soil loss is estimated to not exceed T after treatment.	10
3. c. Less than 20 percent; and, total annual soil loss is estimated to not exceed T after treatment.	5
State Category Four Ranking Criteria – SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Organic Matter Depletion (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
4. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in a STIR value reduced from a conventional tillage value to 20 or less. (If 'Yes' to 4.a. then 4.b. must be 'No').	40
4. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in a STIR value is reduced from a conventional tillage value to 80 or less. (If 'Yes' to 4.b. then 4.c. must be 'No').	35
4. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in SCI increased from a negative value to a positive value	30
4. d. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes cover crops during times in the crop rotation that are seasonally fallowed, or when a cash crop is normally planted.	30
State Category Five 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 (Select "Yes, if applicable)	
5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will minimize the transport of nutrients to a surface waterbody on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category, "Nutrients," where an existing pathway to the surface water exists; and, conservation treatment includes managem	15
State Category Six Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Groundwater The California State Water Resources Control Board map, "Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Areas and High Use Groundwater Basins," map is available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/docs/hydro_areas.pdf Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes management practice(s) and the treatment area is located within: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
6. a. A Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	10
6. b. A High Use Ground Water Basin Area, but not a Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	5
State Category Seven Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pesticides Transported to Surface Water NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5 (February 2011) is found at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1043138.pdf (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes any combination of NRCS conservation practices or IPM techniques from NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5, Tables 1 and 2 (February 2011) that results in a reduction of the WIN-PST surface water hazard rating for at least one pesticide to 'Low' or 'Very Low' and adoption of a Year-Round University of California Integrated Pest Management (UC IPM), when available for the crop or other comparable protocol.	15

7. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes any combination of NRCS conservation practices or IPM techniques from NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5, Tables 1 and 2 (February 2011) that results in a reduction of the WIN-PST surface water hazard rating to 'Low' or 'Very Low' for at least one pesticide.	10
State Category Eight Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program website: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/agriculture/ 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 (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
8. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will minimize and mitigate water quality impacts associated with sediments in runoff water from the treatment unit to a surface water body on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category 'Sediments' or to a surface water body under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.	15
8. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes vegetative practices to minimize the potential of sediment delivery into a surface water body.	15
8. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural practices to minimize the potential of sediment delivery into a surface water body.	15
State Category Nine Ranking Criteria – INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space 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. (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
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.	10
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.	5
State Category Ten Ranking Criteria – INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching and Field Operations (Select "Yes," if applicable).	
10. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of farming, ranching, and field operations practices that result in at least 10 percent reduction in energy use. Practices include those that state "reduce energy use" in the purpose section of the standard.	15
Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)

<p>Local Category One - Conservation Activity Plan</p> <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.</p> <p>Answering "Yes" to this question will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the local ranking category.</p>	
<p>1. a. Is the program application for development of a TSP prepared Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other local level Answers. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining Answers in this section.</p>	400
<p>Local Category Two - SOIL EROSION: Sheet and Rill</p> <p>Soil loss tolerance, T, is based on soil type. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes a combination of vegetative and management practices that will control surface water runoff to minimize or eliminate sheet and rill erosion and, the benchmark condition is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
<p>2. a. Greater than 2T; after treatment estimated soil loss will not exceed T.</p>	40
<p>2. b. Less than 2T; after treatment estimated soil loss will not exceed T.</p>	30
<p>Local Category Three - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Organic Matter Depletion</p> <p>Soil organic matter is assessed through the Soil Condition Index (SCI) score. (Select "Yes," to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
<p>3. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations increases a Soil Condition Index (SCI) score from a negative score to a positive score.</p>	50
<p>3. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations increases SCI and includes at least one of the following: Cover Crop, Mulch, Residue and Tillage Management, Conservation Crop Rotation or Conservation Cover.</p>	40
<p>Local Category Four - INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation</p> <p>Water California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools.</p> <p>Conservation treatment includes implementation of IWM and/or an irrigation system improvement (does not include water conveyances to the field) that results in a water savings of: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
<p>4. a. Greater than 15 percent.</p>	60
<p>4. b. At least 15 percent.</p>	50
<p>4. c. At least 10 percent.</p>	40
<p>4. d. At least 5 percent.</p>	20
<p>Local Category Five - INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation</p> <p>Water California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools. Level I = Basic Irrigation Water Management; Level 2 = Intermediate Irrigation Water Management; Level III = Advanced Irrigation Water Management Conservation treatment (structural and/or management) results in attainment of 449 – Irrigation Water Management: (Select "Yes" to One Answer, if applicable)</p>	
<p>5. a. Conservation treatment will achieve Level II or III irrigation water management according to NRCS CA Bulletin 201-11-3, and the farm operation ranks as "High" in need for 449 – Irrigation Water Management as determined from the Irrigation Scheduling planning tool.</p>	40
<p>5. b. Conservation treatment will achieve Level II or III irrigation water management according to NRCS CA Bulletin 201-11-3, and the farm operation ranks as "Medium" or "Low" in need for 449 – Irrigation Water Management as determined from the Irrigation Scheduling planning tool.</p>	30

5. c. Conservation treatment will achieve Level I irrigation water management according to NRCS CA Bulletin 201-11-3.	10
Local Category Six - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations – (Select “Yes” to All Applicable Answers)	
6. a. Result in development and implementation of a nutrient management plan according to NRCS conservation practice standard, 590 – Nutrient Management, to reduce the potential for off-site transport of nutrients to surface water.	20
6. b. Results in implementation of residue and tillage management, cover crop, and/or conservation crop rotation conservation practices to improve soil health. Practices will increase surface water infiltration in turn reduce runoff that carries nutrients in surface water.	40
6. c. Includes vegetative practices on treatment areas where the slope is greater than 5 percent; treatments will filter surface water runoff and concentrated water flows and may include practices such as, but not limited to, filter strips, conservation cover, cover crop and/or critical area planting to minimize the potential for surface water runoff to transport nutrients and organics to a surface water body. (If 'Yes' to 6.d. then 6.c. must be 'No')	20
6. d. Includes vegetative practices on treatment areas where the slope is less than 5 percent; treatments will filter surface water runoff and concentrated water flows and may include practices such as, but not limited to, filter strips, conservation cover, cover crop and/or critical area planting to minimize the potential for surface water runoff to transport nutrients and organics to a surface water body. (If 'Yes' to 6.c. then 6.d. must be 'No')	10
Local Category Seven - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pesticides Transported to Surface Water The Windows Pesticide Screening Tool (Win-PST) hazard rating is greater than ‘Low’ for the treatment unit and mitigation is needed. NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5 (February 2011) is found at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1043138.pdf Conservation treatment includes any combination of NRCS conservation practices or IPM techniques from NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5, Tables 1 and 2 (February 2011) that results in a reduction of the Win-PST pesticide hazard rating for surface water to ‘Low’ or ‘Very Low’ for at least one pesticide, and – (Select “Yes” to All Applicable Answers)	
7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes mitigation measure(s) outlined in NRCS Agronomy Technical Note No. 5 to be implemented according to NRCS conservation practice standard, 595 - Integrated Pest Management. Mitigation measures may include techniques such as changing the timing of application, product substitution, or using precision application equipment.	20
7. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in irrigation system upgrade that will reduce runoff and/or tailwater, where irrigation runoff is identified as a pathway for pesticide loss. Examples include adoption of subsurface drip irrigation in fields that were previously furrow irrigated; or installing a sprinkler system in an orchard that was previously flood irrigated.	10
7. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will establish vegetative practice(s) to filter surface water runoff entering a waterway such as an intermittent or perennial stream, irrigation canal or drain; in-field irrigation conveyances are not considered waterways.	10

7. d. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in adoption of a Year-Round University of California Integrated Pest Management (UC IPM) Program, when available for the crop, or other comparable protocol.	20
Local Category Eight - 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 will reduce water quality impacts associated with turbidity in runoff water from the treatment unit: (Select "Yes" to Only One Answer, if applicable)	
8. a. To a surface water body on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category 'Sediment'.	30
8. b. To a surface water body or wetland complex.	20
Local Category Nine - INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space Evaluated using the following assessment protocols: Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
9. a. Riparian Zone: As documented in the Conservation Plan, the conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will improve the riparian zone that directly benefits fish or wildlife, where the riparian WHEG 'planned' worksheet is greater or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5).	10
9. b. Multiple Habitat Types: As documented in the Conservation Plan, the conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will improve multiple habitat types that directly benefits fish or wildlife, 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)	10
9. c. Pollinator Habitat: Conservation treatment using Hedgerow Planting, Cover Crop or Conservation Cover, in the EQIP schedule of operations will restore or enhance habitat for pollinators using the PHA with a minimum 'planned' score of 110 points or greater.	10
Local Category Ten - INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/ Ranching Practices and Field Operations Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes conservation practices that will result in: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
10. a. At least 30 percent or greater reduction in energy use.	10
10. b. At least 20 percent reduction in energy use.	8
10. c. At least 10 percent reduction in energy use.	5