

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Rangeland - Central Coast**

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: 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)
<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 (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural, vegetative or management practices to reduce sheet and rill erosion using visual assessment, photos and documented via assistance notes.</p>	20
<p>Local Category Three - SOIL EROSION: Classic Gullies</p> <p>Resource assessment is based on visual assessment including estimate of soil loss from the gully and determination of whether gully is relic and stable or actively eroding. (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>3. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural or vegetative practices that are needed to control surface water runoff and sufficiently stabilize and prevent lengthening, deepening and widening of existing gullies; after treatment will result in determination of stable gully - vegetated and stable.</p>	30
<p>Local Category Four - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>4. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce soil loss on channel banks where livestock are impacting streambank stability and integrity to minimize or eliminate sediment delivery to a surface water body; treatment can include structural or vegetative practices such as filter strips, riparian herbaceous cover and/or riparian forest buffer.</p>	25
<p>Local Category Five - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Compaction (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reducing compaction due to livestock traffic and heavy use by implementing practices to move livestock away from this site and/or mechanical or vegetative practices to reduce compaction. Soil compaction is evaluated by penetrometer, pin flag test, or evaluation the soil for observation of compaction layer/platy structure in the top 8 inches of the soil surface.</p>	10
<p>Local Category Six - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Organic Matter Depletion (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>6. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of structural and/or vegetative practices to manage livestock grazing to improve soil organic matter content by maintaining residual dry matter (RDM) levels developed by University of California Cooperative Extension.</p>	15
<p>Local Category Seven - NSUFFICIENT WATER – Inefficient Moisture Management (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	

7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of structural, vegetative or management practices to improve water retention on-site to hold precipitation within the soil profile.	15
Local Category Eight - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
8. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will minimize transport of nutrients in surface water runoff to a water body. Treatment occurs in uplands adjacent to surface water body under consideration.	25
8. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will control livestock access to a water body to minimize or eliminate animal wastes in a surface water body. Treatment occurs within riparian area of water body under consideration.	25
Local Category Nine - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pathogens and Chemicals from Manure, Bio-Solids, or Compost Applications Transported to Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural and/or management practices to control livestock access to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
9. a. A perennial creek to minimize or eliminate the risk of pathogens in surface water.	25
9. b. An intermittent, seasonal, creek to minimize or eliminate the risk of pathogens in surface water.	15
9. c. A pond or spring to minimize or eliminate the risk of pathogens in surface water.	10
Local Category Ten - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pathogens and Chemicals from Manure, Bio-Solids, or Compost Applications Transported to Groundwater (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
10. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in abandoned wells properly decommissioned to prevent contamination of groundwater by animal waste and other potential sources of pathogenic microbial contamination.	15
Local Category Eleven - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural and/or management practices to control livestock access to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
11. a. A perennial creek or wetland where sediment or livestock trampling damage is observed.	30
11. b. An intermittent, seasonal, creek where sediment or livestock trampling damage is observed.	20
11. c. A pond or spring where sediment or livestock trampling damage is observed.	10
Local Category Twelve - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural and/or vegetative practices to minimize sediment transport in surface water runoff to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
12. a. A perennial creek.	25
12. b. An intermittent, seasonal, creek.	15
12. c. A pond or spring.	10
Local Category Thirteen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	

13. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of NRCS conservation management practice, 528 – Prescribed Grazing, as scheduled in the EQIP schedule of operations application for financial assistance; and, which includes the design and implementation of a grazing system that will enhance rangeland health and ecosystem function as well as optimize efficiency and economic return through monitoring and record keeping. (e.g. photo points, stubble height after grazing, etc); if needed to support the grazing management plan, treatment also includes structural and/or vegetative practices.	35
13. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations on annual rangelands results in implementation of structural and/or vegetative practices to manage livestock grazing and to maintain residual dry matter (RDM) levels developed by University of California Cooperative Extension.	25
13. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations on perennial rangelands results in implementation structural and/or vegetative practices to manage livestock grazing and maintain stubble height levels for key forage species.	10
Local Category Fourteen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations 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)	
14. a. Greater than 70 percent.	20
14. b. Between 30 - 70 percent.	10
14. c. Less than 30 percent.	5
Local Category Fifteen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
15. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will address a noxious or invasive state-listed species of concern, identified by a local weed management group, or the local workgroup. Control of the plant pest is part of the implementation of an NRCS approved conservation practice.	25
Local Category Sixteen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Wildfire Hazard, Excess Biomass Accumulation The fire hazard severity zone will be determined from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), "Fire Hazard Severity Zones," map http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/webdata/maps/statewide/fhszs_map.pdf (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
16. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations utilizes mechanical, chemical or biological control on sites that have brush canopy cover greater than 70 percent to reduce wildfire hazard; and, the planned treatment is located within a 'Very High' or 'High' Fire Hazard Severity Zone. • Treatment of woody species provides limited improvement for grazed rangeland productivity. These sites typically have shallow or droughty soils.	15
16. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations utilizes mechanical, chemical or biological control on sites that have brush canopy cover between 30 to 70 percent to reduce wildfire hazard; and, the planned treatment is located within a 'Very High', 'High' or 'Moderate' Fire Hazard Severity Zone. • Treatment of woody species provides limited improvement for grazed rangeland productivity. These sites typically have shallow or droughty soils.	10

<p>Local Category Seventeen - 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)</p>	
<p>17. a. 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).</p>	15
<p>17. b. 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.</p>	15
<p>17. c. Invasive Species: Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce invasive species identified by the local work group, Cal-IPC, or Weed Management Area where the planned score in the respective plant community WHEG is $\leq 15\%$ estimated percent cover, but appear controlled (exceptions are Arundo, Tamarisk or Eucalyptus, where percent cover needs to be $< 5\%$).</p>	15
<p>Local Category Eighteen - LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Stock Water (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>18. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations 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 in the EQIP schedule of operations makes water available to livestock through a tank and trough system and/or a livestock pond.</p>	25