

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Rangeland - Sierra Nevada Foothills**

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 S614 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>	

air Quality - Will the proposed project improve air quality by: (select all that apply)	3
Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
Local Category One - SOIL EROSION: Sheet and Rill (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
1. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural, vegetative or management practices to reduce sheet and rill erosion. Resource assessment of active erosion is based on visual assessment, photos and documented in assistance notes.	20
Local Category Two - SOIL EROSION: Classic Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural or vegetative practices to stabilize a classic gully and prevent further headcut advancement.	20
Local Category Three - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
3. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural or vegetative and management practices to stabilize streambank erosion and protect from further bank cutting.	20
Local Category Four - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Petroleum, Heavy Metals, or Other Pollutants Transported to Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will provide secondary containment of petroleum, heavy metals or other pollutants that are stored and handled on-farm to reduce the potential for pollutants to enter a surface water body such as a stream, irrigation canal, pond or a spring) (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
4. a. Pollutants are stored or handled within 0 - 150 feet of a defined drainage and/or surface water body.	5
4. b. Pollutants are stored or handled greater than 150 feet of a defined drainage and/or surface water body.	3
4. c. Pollutants are stored or handled greater than 500 feet of a defined drainage and/or surface water body.	1
Local Category Five - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Petroleum, Heavy Metals, or Other Pollutants Transported to Groundwater Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will provide secondary containment of petroleum, heavy metals or other pollutants that are stored and handled on-farm to reduce the potential for pollutants to enter groundwater. The hydrologic soil group for the treatment unit is predominately: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
5. a. A, Soils with high infiltration rates.	5
5. b. B, Soils with moderate infiltration rates.	3
5. c. C, Soils with slow infiltration rates, and/or D, soils with very slow infiltration rates.	1
Local Category Six - 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)	
6. a. A perennial creek or wetland where sediment or livestock trampling damage is observed.	40
6. b. An intermittent, seasonal, creek where sediment or livestock trampling damage is observed.	25

6. c. A pond or spring where sediment or livestock trampling damage is observed.	15
Local Category Seven - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Elevated Water Temperature Treatment area is within the riparian area of the surface water body under consideration. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural (alone) or structural and vegetative practices to control livestock access to: (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
7. a. A perennial creek to re-establish overhanging vegetation.	30
7. b. An intermittent creek to re-establish overhanging vegetation.	20
7. c. A permanent pond or spring to re-establish overhanging vegetation.	15
Local Category Eight - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
8. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of NRCS conservation management practice, 528 – Prescribed Grazing 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.	40
8. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations on rangelands results in implementation of structural and/or vegetative practices to improve plant productivity and health, through improved grazing distribution.	10
Local Category Nine - 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 range sites or where the predominant soil depths in the treatment unit are 20 inches or more and typically have a brush canopy cover where: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
9. a. Slopes are between 0 - 30 percent.	25
9. b. Slopes are between 30 - 50 percent.	15
Local Category Ten - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations utilizes mechanical, chemical or biological control on sites that have noxious or invasive woody plants on: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only)	
10. a. Greater than or equal to ½ mile in length or greater than 1 acre in size; treatment of woody species provides improvement for riparian habitat.	25
10. b. Less than ½ mile in length or less than 1 acre in size; treatment of woody species provides improvement for riparian habitat.	15
Local Category Eleven - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in control and management of noxious and invasive weeds listed by the County Agriculture Commissioner, Weed Management Group, UC Extension Specialist and/or Category A, B or C CDFA state-listed noxious weeds to minimize their spread to other sites; and, the extent of infestation is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
11. a. Greater than 25 acres or greater than 20 percent of the conservation treatment unit (CTU).	30
11. b. Between 5 and 25 acres or between 10 to 20 percent of the CTU.	25
11. c. Less than 5 acres or less than 10 percent of the CTU.	15

<p>Local Category Twelve - 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)</p>	
<p>12. 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.</p>	25
<p>12. 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.</p>	10
<p>Local Category Thirteen - 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>13. 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).</p>	20
<p>13. 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).</p>	30
<p>Local Category Fourteen - LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Stock Water (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>14. 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>	30