

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE FY04 EQIP RANKING CRITERIA NORTHWEST LOCAL WORK GROUP

LOCAL WORK GROUP (LWG) – PRIORITY SETTING

The Northwest Local Work Group has taken the following actions:

- 1) A maximum point value has been assigned for each “Resource” and “Additional” Consideration. The weight of each category was based on the priorities determined through the locally led process.
- 2) Local modifiers were established for each consideration. This allowed the LWG to localize the ranking criteria by including modifiers that were not addressed in the state template.
- 3) Points were assigned for each modifier.

Ranking the applicants – Using the Worksheet

Important – Before granting points to an applicant for any item:

- 1) The modifier must apply to the area to be treated under the application.
- 2) The application must contain a conservation practice eligible for EQIP cost share or incentive payment that will address each modifier for which points are being awarded.

SOIL RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum: 100 Points)

"Streambank stabilization" (50 Points)

Grant points if there are streambank areas within pasture or cropland that need to be stabilized to halt excessive bank erosion and sediment loading are being treated by installation of practice 580 Streambank and Shoreline Protection. Also allow points for practices (treatment) that facilitate the regulation/exclusion of domestic livestock from streambank areas that are actively eroding.

"The RKLS is > 10 on cropland" (20 Points)

Values assigned by the Local Work Group target high potential sheet & rill erosion on cropland. For evaluation, use the predominant soil map unit for the cropland included in the application. Use the most current factors in the Field Office Technical Guide for R and K. The standard LS may be used if the actual LS has not been previously documented in the applicant's case file.

"Ephemeral gullies on cropland need treatment" (20 Points)

Points are granted if there is sufficient indication that excessive erosion is occurring from one or more ephemeral gullies within the cropland included in the application. This may be based on case file information, aerial photo interpretation, topographic maps, and applicant interview.

"Evidence of accelerated erosion on non-cropland" (20 Points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that accelerated erosion is occurring on non-cropland. This may be based on case file information, aerial photo interpretation, topographic maps, and applicant interview. Types of erosion to consider are sheet and rill, wind, ephemeral, or permanent gullies with active head cutting or mass wasting.

"Non-forest access roads deliver sediment to salmonid streams" (20 Points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that private, non-industrial, non-forest access roads are delivering sediment directly or indirectly to salmonid bearing streams in quantities likely to have significant detrimental impact on habitat quality. Evaluation may be based on the applicant's Conservation Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis.

WATER RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum: 650 Points)

“Irrigation system improved and IWM will be applied” (50 Points)

Grant points if the current irrigation system will be improved and irrigation water management will be applied. This includes replacing an open delivery system with pipeline, replace leaky delivery pipeline, converting above ground portable mainlines to underground pipelines, converting or improving sprinkler systems to more efficient systems.

“Will applicant apply IWM – Yes or No” (25 or 0 Points)

Does the applicant plan to make a change in irrigation management that will allow them to meet NRCS’s IWM practice standard: Yes or No. Yes = 25 points No = 0 points

“A buffer practice will be installed” (0 to 250 Points)

Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The LWG has assigned points based on the buffer type:

Riparian Forest Buffer	250 pts	Hedgerow Planting	50 pts
Contour Grass Strips	0 pts	Grassed Waterway	0 pts
Grass Buffer Strips	0 pts	Field Borders	50 pts
Shelterbelt	50 pts	Filter Strip	150 pts
Field Windbreak	50 pts		

“A CNMP will be included (livestock operations)” (25 Points)

Grant points if the application is a livestock operation with lands where animal manure is applied, and will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

“Storage is needed for animal manure” (100 Points)

Grant points if a waste storage facility is needed and included in the application. Evaluation may be based on applicant interview, livestock numbers, and current storage capability.

“Heavy use areas need stabilization” (75 Points)

Grant points if there is a need to stabilize small areas of short-term livestock containment to improve water quality and/or quantity. Evaluation may be based on soil interpretations, case file information, and applicant interview. The conservation practice “Heavy Use Area Protection” will be included in the application.

“Forest access roads deliver sediment to salmonid-bearing streams” (20 to 100 Points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that forest (private, non-industrial) access roads are delivering sediment directly or indirectly to salmonid-bearing streams. Evaluation may be based on the applicant’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis. The LWG has assigned points based on proximity:

Road adjacent to or crossing stream	100 pts
Road within 1/8 mile of stream	80 pts
Road within ¼ mile of stream	60 pts
Road within ½ mile of stream	40 pts
Road more than ½ mile of stream	20 pts

“Proposed contract area is within a groundwater sensitive area” (100 Points)

Grant points if the application is within an area that has been determined by the LWG to be a sensitive groundwater area. Examples include groundwater recharge areas, wellhead protection areas, groundwater management areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, and sole source aquifers.

- Name or location of sensitive area #1:
Areas where estimated groundwater recharge is less than 3.0 inches per year. (Evaluate using USGS Water-Resources Investigations Report 02-4114) - 100 pts
- Name or location of sensitive area #2:
Areas where rainfall is less than 32.0 inches per year. (Evaluated using FOTG Washington State Average Annual Precipitation Map – 100 pts
- Name or location of sensitive area #3:
Areas on San Juan Island, Whidbey Island and Camano Island where there is documented evidence of significant actual or potential saltwater intrusion into groundwater resources. (Evaluate using San Juan County Seawater Intrusion Risk Assessment - San Juan County Department of Health and Community Services or information located on the following website:
<http://www.islandcounty.net/health/Envh/Hydrogeology/CircleMap.htm>

“On farm Nitrogen Balance is less than 90% of crop removal” (20 Points)

Grant points if applicant’s nutrient balance shows that nitrogen loading from animals will be (the planned condition) less than 90% of expected crop removal for the crop and forage land base. (Use NRCS planning tool “WSP” or “Waste Calc” to determine the nitrogen balance. Use current (up-to-date) farm/livestock inventory or if unavailable, use soil survey and landowner interview to determine animal density, animal size and expected crop removal. Calculation will be verified with the development of a “CNMP”).

“Planned Practice will shift point of diversion from surface water to an alternate source where in-stream/surface water quantity is limited” (60 Points)

Grant points if the surface water diversion is a valid water right that is used for irrigation or livestock watering purposes and the point of withdrawal is located in a stream/basin that is closed to further appropriations by WA State Department of Ecology. Applicant must install practices that enable use of an alternate water supply such as ground water, water district, or other source. Evaluate using WA DOE list of streams closed to further water right accesses and applicant interviews.

“Proposed contract area is in a watershed for which a TMDL has been "Approved" or "Under Development" (20 Points)

Grant points if the applicant will implement practice(s) that will remediate pollution sources identified in a watershed cleanup plan (TMDL). Approved TMDL List @ http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/approved_tmdls.html
TMDL Under Development List @ http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/tmdl_status.html

“A practice will be implemented to Treat Animal Waste” (30 Points)

Grant points if a treatment system incorporating either composting or digestion of animal waste will be installed according to NRCS standards. Examples of practices include: Composting Facility (317), Anaerobic Digester, Ambient Temperature (365) Anaerobic Digester, Controlled Temperature (366).

PLANT RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum: 150 Points)

“Forest stand improvement will be applied” (100 Points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply forest stand improvement on the proposed contract acres. The definition of forest stand improvement is to manipulate species composition and stocking by cutting or killing selected trees and understory vegetation. The purposes are: to improve understory forage production, aesthetics, wildlife & fish habitat, recreation, hydrologic conditions; to improve or sustain timber production; to initiate forest stand regeneration; or a combination of purposes. Documentation for this practice includes: the extent and size of the treatment area; spacing, density and numbers of preferred species and understory species; stocking rates in terms of basal area, spacing or trees per acre by species and size class distribution; and the method, felling direction and timing of tree cutting.

“Utilize practices that improve plant condition (health & vigor) on forage ground (Pasture, hayland or forage cropland)” (25 Points)

The management scheme or plan does not provide the proper techniques and timing to meet the plant needs of establishment, growth, and harvest. Grant points if a combination of the following practice standards will be met to reduce soil compaction and promote an upward trend of proper plant community – 528a Prescribed Grazing, 511 Forage Harvest Management, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 472 Use exclusion, 382 Fence, 614 Water Facility, 548 Grazing Land Mechanical treatment

“Water Development is a factor for proper grazing distribution” (50 Points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that lack of adequate water quantity or availability are limiting factors for achieving proper grazing distribution. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, the National Range and Pasture Handbook, and applicant interview.

“Proposed contract is in an urban/wildland interface area at high risk of fire.” (30 Points)

Risk of wildfire is “High” or greater as determined by Washington Department of Natural Resources Northwest Region Use fire hazard maps prepared by WDNR.

ANIMAL RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum: 100 Points)

“There are instream structures known to be barriers to passage of salmonid fish on eligible lands” (100 Points)

Award points if there is sufficient indication that in-stream structures; including road culverts, on forestland (private, non-industrial), agricultural and range lands; are impairing upstream passage of salmonid fish. Evaluation may be based on the applicant’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis.

“Livestock have uncontrolled access to riparian areas” (50 Points)

Grant points if there are riparian areas that are not fenced and there is sufficient indication that grazing of domestic animals occur within these areas. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, and applicant interview.

- a. Riparian area will be fenced 50 pts
- b. Prescribed Grazing w/o fencing 0 pts
- c. (a or b) + riparian forest buffer 50 pts

“A practice will be implemented to benefit terrestrial species occupying the proposed contract area” (5 to 50 Points)

Grant points if the application includes one of the following conservation practices and provides direct wildlife benefit for terrestrial species that occupy the proposed contract area.

- Riparian Forest Buffer 15 pts
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt. 15 pts
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt. 15 pts
- Restoration & Mgmt. of Rare and Declining Habitats 5 pts

“Proposed contract area is in watershed directly discharging to recreational or commercial shellfish area.” (20 Points)

Shellfish beds are negatively impacted by fecal coliform bacteria that are typically transported by surface water. Grant points if applicant will implement practice(s) that will reduce or eliminate bacterial contamination to that watercourse that ultimately discharges into a bay containing commercial or recreational shellfish areas.

(See map of the Washington Dept. of Health 2002 Annual Inventory of Commercial & Recreational Shellfish Areas)

<http://ww4.doh.wa.gov/scripts/esrimap.dll?Name=bioview&Step=1>