

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE FY04 EQIP RANKING CRITERIA SNAKE RIVER LOCAL WORK GROUP

Ranking the Applications – Using the Worksheet

Important - Before granting points to an application for any resource modifier:

- 1) The modifier must apply to the area to be treated under the application.
- 2) The application must include a conservation practice eligible for EQIP cost share or incentive payments, that will address the resource modifier for which points are being awarded.
- 3) The total ranking score awarded for a given application category may not exceed the maximum score for that application category.

DRY CROP APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 300)

“The RKLS is > 25 on cropland” (100 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.

“Cereal grain cropland on HEL soils will be seeded as pasture/hayland” (40 points)

Give points for establishment of native or introduced forage species on HEL cropland that has been in cereal grain, summer fallow, or annual production for a minimum of two consecutive years immediately prior to the conversion year. Cropping history may be verified through FSA crop history records (FSA-578) or applicant interview.

“A buffer practice will be installed” (40 points maximum)

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	40 pts
Contour Grass Strips	0 pts
Grass Buffer Strips	40 pts
Shelterbelt	40 pts
Field Windbreak	30 pts
Hedgerow Planting	0 pts
Grassed Waterway	40 pts
Field Borders	40 pts
Filter Strip	40 pts

“Direct Seed will be used in a system” (150 points)

The intent is to discourage use of the No-Till or Direct Seed practices in a manner that does not teach a producer how to convert into a No-Till/Direct Seed system – such as Direct Seed winter wheat only on pea ground.

“The CI is > 16 on cropland” (100 points)

Values assigned by the Local Work Group target high potential wind 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 C and I.

“Proposed contract area is within a contributing area to PM-10, dust” (20 points)

Grant points if the application is for land located within the Conservation Priority Area identified on the CRP Air Quality Map (2-CRP, WA Exhibit 12).

“Full season chemical fallow” (20 points)

Points are granted if vegetation is managed without soil disturbance from harvest of the previous crop until seeding of the crop following the fallow season.

IRRIGATED CROP APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 170)

“Surface Irrigation will be converted to a more efficient system” (80 points maximum)

Surface irrigation is the distribution of irrigation water by surface means such as furrows, borders, contour levees, or contour ditches. Grant points if the application includes conservation practices that directly improve irrigation efficiencies on land that is currently under surface irrigation. This includes the use of gated pipe, PAM, sprinkler, and trickle systems. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview. The LWG has assigned points based on the proposed change:

Surface to Trickle	80 pts
Surface to Pivot + IWM	80 pts
Surface to Hand/Wheel + IWM	64 pts
Buried pipe / gated pipe w / PAM + IWM	0 pts
PAM with IWM	0 pts

“Will applicant apply IWM – Yes or No” (70 or 0 points)” (70 points)

Does the applicant plan to make a change in irrigation management that will allow them to meet NRCS’s IWM practice standard: Yes = 70 points No = 0 points

“Irrigated ground with Hydrologic Unit A” (110 points)

This applies to irrigated ground with Hydrologic Soil Class A.

“Irrigation System Improved and Irrigation Water Management will be applied” (65 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.

“Irrigation System will be improved” (1 point)

Points will be awarded if the current irrigation system will be improved. This includes but is not limited to, replacing an open delivery system with pipeline, replacing a leaky delivery pipeline, converting surface or wheel lines to center pivot system, & converting from overhead sprinklers to micro-irrigation.

GRAZING LAND APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 185)

“Water Development is a factor for proper grazing distribution” (40 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.

“Winter feeding areas adjacent to streams will be relocated creating buffers with livestock exclusion” (37 points)

Winter feeding areas are defined as areas where livestock are fed with access to pasture and range, as well as specific feeding sites. Livestock in these areas are in the stream, next to the stream, and have a direct impact on the stream and riparian area. Feeding areas will be relocated no less than the minimum buffer width specified in the current Riparian Forest Buffer Standard (391).

“Livestock have uncontrolled access to riparian areas” (80 points maximum)

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. LWG has assigned points based on proposed treatment:

a. Riparian area will be fenced	70 pts
b. Prescribed Grazing w/o fencing	60 pts
c. (a or b) + riparian forest buffer	80 pts

“There is an excessive invasion of weeds or woody vegetation” (40 points maximum)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that there are adverse impacts to plant production, condition, and quality goals as a result of invasive weeds or woody vegetation. Evaluation may be based on aerial photography and applicant interview. LWG has assigned points based on extent of problem:

100% of planning unit impacted	40 pts
50 – 99% of planning unit impacted	30 pts
25 – 49% of planning unit impacted	20 pts
< 25% of planning unit impacted	10 pts

“Prescribed grazing will be applied” (100 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply prescribed grazing on the proposed contract acres. The definition of prescribed grazing is the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals managed with the intent to achieve a specified objective. The purposes are: to improve or maintain the health & vigor of the desired plant community; maintain or improve water quality and quantity, reduce soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition; and improve or maintain animal health and productivity. It includes developing a grazing schedule for the operating unit to document expected quantity and quality of forage for each pasture; number of livestock by kinds and class, and periods of grazing, resting and other treatment for each management unit.

FOREST LAND APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 185)

“Forest diseases, pests, or overstocking problems exist and will be treated” (25 points)

Grant points if forest diseases or pests exist or if overstocking of the site is causing a decline in forest health on Non-Industrial Private Forestland (NIPF). Evaluation may be based on case file information, applicant interview or information from cooperating consulting foresters or DNR.

“Forest access roads deliver sediment to salmonid-bearing streams” (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. 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 1/4 mile of stream	60 pts
Road within 1/2 mile of stream	40 pts
Road more than 1/2 mile of stream	0 pts

“There are instream structures known to be barriers to passage of salmonid fish on eligible lands” (80 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 APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 150)

“A CNMP will be included (livestock operations)” (30 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” (25 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.

“Confinement areas adjacent to streams will be relocated creating buffers with livestock exclusion” (20 points)

Confinement areas are defined as restricted areas where livestock are fed and waste and effluent are concentrated. Confinement areas will be relocated no less than the minimum buffer width specified in the current Riparian Forest Buffer Standard (391).

“A buffer practice will be installed” (50 points maximum)

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	50 pts
Contour Grass Strips	0 pts
Grass Buffer Strips	40 pts
Shelterbelt	40 pts
Field Windbreak	30 pts
Hedgerow Planting	0 pts
Grassed Waterway	40 pts
Field Borders	40 pts
Filter Strip	40 pts

“Relocation of feeding facilities” (100 points)

Grant points if project includes relocation of feeding facilities.

“Heavy use areas will have runoff control structures” (10 points)

Points will be granted for installing runoff control structures needed to prevent contamination flowing out of or through the confinement area(s) to state or federal waters during a storm event up to a 25-year, 24-hour event.

“Odors from animal waste will be treated” (10 points)

Grant points for treatment and/or application of animal waste that reduces odors in the farm vicinity. Evaluation may be based on case file information or applicant interview. Treatment of the problem will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (Maximum points = 10)

“Planned practices will assist the producer in complying with laws/regulations” (10 points maximum)

Grant points if the application includes practices that will assist the person in complying with the Dairy Waste Law, AFO/CAFO regulations, or the Forest Practices Act. In order to qualify for points, compliance must be enforceable by an agency with the ability to impose fines or sanctions for violation. Points may not be granted if the applicant is under a court order to carry out a plan. Nor can EQIP be used to assist applicant come into compliance in sodbusting or swampbusting situations. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

LWG has assigned points based on regulation type:

Dairy Waste Law	10 pts
AFO/CAFO	10 pts
Forest Practices Act	10 pts

“Proposed contract area is adjacent to a stream which supports listed salmonid” (10 points)

Grant points if the application has a stream which supports listed salmonids running through it, or is adjacent to such a stream as identified on the map (*Distribution of Federally-Listed Salmon, Trout, and Char on Private and Tribal Lands* dated September 2002).