

## 2011 Grassland Reserve Program Evaluation Worksheet Completion Instructions

### 2011 Program Priorities:

Applications MUST be accepted from all potential applicants. Once the application has been accepted and eligibility requirements have been met. NRCS shall rank applications to prioritize applications for funding. In 2009, under the Interim Final Rule, program priorities have been set. The ND ranking sheet utilized the priorities to filter the applications for those that had a high priority of funding.

The last 4 digits of the Producer Phone # will be used in the web based system as the ID number for application tracking.

### Grasslands with a Threat of Conversion

#### Potential of property being converted to irrigated cropland (based on aquifers and irrigation waters).

If the potential exists to convert grassland to irrigated cropland, click the appropriate box. The application acreage shall be evaluated for irrigation conversion by assessing the availability of water sources for irrigation use. Aquifer maps are provided in the field office F drive under geodata/hydrography/aquifer\_a\_nd(cofips)

#### Potential of property being converted to dry land cropland due to soil productivity

The productivity index (PI) of the design soil of the application acreage shall be determined, click the appropriate box. When selecting the productivity index (PI) for the design soil, use the dominant critical area as one would use for planning. (EX. Since erosion rates are different on different landscapes, the planning decisions need to address the quality criteria or soil loss tolerance "T" value for the eroding areas. It is not practical to plan for an insignificant part of a field if this area is, say, less than 10% of the field.) If the offer is exclusively CRP this question would not apply.

#### Property has a high potential of being converted to non-agricultural use.

If the potential of conversion to non-agricultural use (housing development) is present, click the appropriate box.

### Grasslands that Promote Biodiversity

#### Percent of application acreage with native plant community that does not have a history of being cropped.

Points shall be awarded based on the percent of the offered acreage that is native rangeland that has never been cropped.

#### Number of Ecological Sites present on Property

Points shall be awarded based on the number of ecological sites on the offered acreage.

Digitize the boundary of the offered rangeland acreage in toolkit. In Planning Tools.mxd create a Soils map, and click Unique Soils. Go to Planning Tools, at the Planning Switchboard choose GRASS Form Bundle, select Range. In the CPA-19 form, count all the Eco Sites that comprise at least 1% of the offered acreage.

Pasture, hayland and CRP will not be included in this category.

#### Application includes CRP lands

Points shall be awarded if the acreage offered includes CRP lands that is within 12 months of expiration and the GRP application is an easement or 20 year rental agreement.

#### Application acreage lies within 1 mile of identified piping plover, sage grouse, or Dakota Skipper butterfly areas.

Points shall be awarded to applications with acreage that lies within 1 mile of areas potentially occupied by the sensitive species. The determination will be based on maps which locate these areas. See maps located in the ND SharePoint.

### Location

#### Property includes historical or archaeological sites

Points shall be awarded if a historical or archaeological site is located within the offered acreage. Use the county maps in your office that are used for cultural resource inventories.

#### Application provides native grassland protection to:

Points shall be awarded according to the size of land parcel offered.

**Proximity to water quality areas**

Points shall be awarded if the application acreage is within 1/4 mile from a TMDL priority waterbody in the Clean Water Act Sec. 303(D) list or from a "Save Our Lakes" waterbody or is within 1000' of a wellhead protection area. Wellhead Protection Area Maps are available in Section 1 of the FOTG (hard copy). The 303(d) and "Save our Lakes" maps are available in the f:\geodata\hydrography in the field office.

**Proximity of application area to a protected area:**

Protected areas include: Federal, State, or County owned grasslands, lands protected by easements, CREP parcels, Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, or Non-Profit Conservation Land

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**Cost-Effectiveness**

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Points shall be awarded according to the long-term benefits, and therefore the cost-effectiveness that the application will provide. In addition, if the application requires no cost-shared restoration activities (including facilitative practices), points shall be awarded.