

Maine NRCS Wetland Reserve Program State Ranking Factors Worksheet

| | | | |
|----------|--|-------------|--|
| Name: | | County | |
| Address: | | Fiscal Year | |

Application is for:

- Permanent Easement
 30 year Easement
 30-year Contract
 Restoration Agreement Only

Factor 1 – Prioritization of Wetland Habitat Type (30 Points**)

The WRP project area would restore and protect existing priority wetland habitats (based on dominant cover types) => choose one of the following:

-
- 20 Spartina saltmarsh, peatland (i.e., bogs and fens), emergent marsh, Atlantic white cedar swamp, vernal pool complexes (> 3)
-
- 15 Seepage forest, floodplain forest, fresh or brackish tidal marsh, N. white cedar swamp, vernal pool
-
- 10 Sedge or tussock meadow, lacustrine fringe, shrub-shrub wetland
-
- 5 Other wetland communities not listed above ^a
 Type: _____
-

_____ Additional points associated with Ag uses (see ** below) =

^a – If agreed to by the NRCS and USFWS, habitats in the “other hydrophytic...” category may be rated higher (**up to 20 points**) when warranted and on a site-by-site basis. Additional Points = _____
 Written justification for the higher rating must be provided here: _____

**NOTES:

Add points for restoration of crop or forage production areas:

Where area is a Prior Converted Cropland (PC) or any wetland converted for agricultural uses prior to December 23, 1985 that was actively managed within the previous 5 years, **add 10 points**

Where area is PC or any wetland converted for agricultural uses prior to December 23, 1985, but not recently managed, **add 5 points**

Where area is non-abandoned Farmed Wetland (FW) or Farmed Wetland Pasture (FWP), **add 5 points**

If the restored or enhanced plant community differs from the original or historic community, it should not be more than 30 percent of the restoration area.

Pine plantations are not consistent with the goals of the WRP and sites must be restored to their original or historic pre-conversion ecosystem or other desirable plant communities that meet the intent of WRP.

F₁ SCORE _____

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Wetland Habitat Type Community Descriptions for Factor 1

If priority wetlands are identified and desirable under Factor 1 above, community descriptions for each will be developed and added below.

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Factor 2 – Priority Geographic Regions or Locations (25 Points)

The WRP restoration site would (pick only one of the following):

25 be contiguous with an existing WRP site and would allow more complete restoration of an existing WRP project

 be contiguous with a perpetual non-WRP conservation area

20 OR

be contiguous with or within a Beginning with Habitat-designated Focus Area, National Estuarine Focus Area, and/or North America Waterfowl Management Plan Focus Area

 be contiguous with a non-perpetual easement ≥ 100 acres in size with wetlands

OR

15 be contiguous or within other State or Nationally designated priority ecological focus area not mentioned above. Specify: _____

OR

protect a riparian corridor 300 feet wide connecting two existing protected wetlands

10 includes a stream or river reach receiving management emphasis by a Federal or State agency (e.g., mapped A. salmon spawning –rearing habitat, priority brook trout stream)

5 within 1 mile of any 3rd order or larger stream, isolated wetland of ≥ 20 acres, or coastal estuarine or marine shoreline

0 Meets none of the above criteria

F₂ SCORE _____

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Factor 3 – Hydrology and Wetland Restoration Potential (110 Points)

Current hydrology impacts and area and increment of hydrology to be restored are as follows:

110 Historical *hydrology on-site is significantly impacted* (e.g., water diverted, diked to prevent inflow or to impound water, and/or ditched to accelerate removal of rainfall from the site) and *will be fully restored on ≥ 70 percent* of the offered wetland acreage; the remaining area will meet wetland hydrology criteria.

80 Historical *hydrology on-site is significantly impacted* (e.g., water diverted, diked to prevent inflow or to impound water, and/or ditched to accelerate removal of rainfall from the site) and *will be fully restored on ≥ 50 percent but < 70 percent* of the offered wetland acreage; the remaining area will meet wetland hydrology criteria.

65 Historical *hydrology on-site is significantly impacted* (e.g., water diverted, diked to prevent inflow or to impound water, and/or ditched to accelerate removal of rainfall from the site), but *site conditions preclude hydrology being restored to its historic composition or area; however, ≥ 70 percent* of the historic wetland area can be enhanced to provide valuable wetland functions, and to enhance waterfowl and wading bird habitat.

50 Historical *hydrology on-site is significantly impacted* (e.g., water diverted, diked to prevent inflow or to impound water, and/or ditched to accelerate removal of rainfall from the site), but *site conditions preclude hydrology being restored to its historic composition or area; however, ≥ 50 and < 70 percent* of the historic wetland area can be enhanced to provide valuable wetland , and to enhance waterfowl and wading bird habitat.

OR

Historical *hydrology on-site is moderately altered and will be fully restored on ≥ 30 percent* of the offered wetland acreage; the remaining area will meet wetland hydrology criteria.

30 *Hydrology will be fully restored on < 20 percent* of area; the remaining area will meet wetland hydrology criteria.

0 Historical, natural wetland hydrology is essentially not impacted on this site. Project may still be eligible if the land being considered is a riparian zone connecting two protected wetlands.

F₃ SCORE _____

Note:

- *Factors 1 – 4 comprise the environmental benefits portion of this WRP ranking sheet. Hydrology restoration potential must comprise at least 50% of the potential environmental benefit factors; therefore, Factor 3 is worth 110 points.*

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Factor 4 – Wetland Functions and Values (55 Points)

15 Documented presence and/or likely benefits to Federal T & E species, Federal-proposed species, or Federal candidate species for listing => _____

Wetland Community State-rarity Ranking (choose one):

15 S1\S2 – Critically imperiled\imperiled(15 pts)
 S3 – Rare (10 pts)
 S4\S5 – Apparently\ demonstrably secure (5 pts)

Documented presence and/or likely benefits to Maine-designated (choose one):

10 T & E species => _____
and/or
 Essential Wildlife Habitat => _____

Documented presence and/or likely benefits to Maine-designated (choose one):

10 Significant Wildlife Habitat => _____
and/or
 Species of concern => _____
and/or
 Priority 1 or 2 migratory bird species of greatest conservation need identified in Maine's *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* will benefit => _____

5 The project site is located in an identified aquifer groundwater recharge area.

0 Meets none of the above criteria,
OR
 Surrounding landuse, ownership patterns, and/or disturbance will greatly impact and will potentially preclude attainment of functions and value normally associated with this wetland community

F₄ SCORE _____

Notes:

- (1) Other values and functions typically associated with wetlands and wetland restoration are assumed. These values include, but are not limited to: protection and improvement of water quality, attenuation of water flows due to flood, protection and enhancement of open space and aesthetic quality, protection of flora and fauna which contributes to the Nation's natural heritage, recreation opportunity, and potential contributions to education and scientific knowledge.
- (2) Ranking Factors 1 to 4 evaluate environmental benefits warranting consideration for the WRP (see Title 440- Conservation Programs Manual, Subpart C).

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Factor 5 – Design, Operation & Maintenance (15 Points)

Difficult Design and unusually high operation and maintenance criteria:

-
- 15 normal\expected engineering design for restoration and normal operation and maintenance after restoration is expected
-
- 5 restoration will require an extensive, expensive design to address risky situations (e.g., areas with high velocity flows, areas subject to storm surges, flood prone areas where dikes will need to be constructed to prevent off-site impact), and costs will likely exceed NRCS planning allotment.
-
- 15 Exotic species presence or invasion potential will be problematic and require long-term monitoring and treatment in order to meet specifications for restoration set forth in the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 657-Wetland Restoration.
-

F₅ SCORE _____

Factor 6 – Likelihood of Success Limiting Factors (0 to – 15 Points)

Factors which may limit a restoration project's success potential are as follows:

-
- Contaminants have likely accumulated in the restored wetland, due to surrounding land uses and insufficient buffers and have the potential to cause harm to wildlife, domestic animal and humans.
- 15 OR
- Changes in water quality due to past and expected future land uses will limit the ability to restore pre-alteration plant communities or will affect species diversity (e.g., a naturally nutrient poor wetland is surrounded by farms or dense residential housing with septic tanks and residual nutrients or nutrient-rich runoff will change the species dynamics within the historic wetland area.)
-
- 8 Potential permitting problems will hinder timely restoration, require extensive monitoring or otherwise increase costs to potentially unacceptable levels
-
- Human activity may limit the use of the restored wetland by threatened/endangered, migratory, or other wetland dependent species.
- 5 OR
- Based on the information contained in Hazardous Substance Checklist and Preliminary Certificate of Inspection and Possession investigation, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a potential for contaminants, or their effects, to be present.
-
- 0 No factors limit the success of the proposed wetland restoration.
-

F₆ SCORE _____

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Factor 7 – Federal Cost Reduction (15 Points)

Financial contributions of the landowner above and beyond their normal non-federal match, or cooperating non-federal partners will lower the Federal contribution to this project by providing non-federal match.

15 Restoration costs reduced \geq 20%

10 Restoration costs reduced $<$ 20% and \geq 10%

5 Restoration costs reduced by $<$ 10

F₇ SCORE _____

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Acres proposed for enrollment to the WRP = _____ | acres |
| Financial Contributions of Landowner and/or Partners = _____ | |
| Total Score (TS) = $\sum F_n$ = _____ | |
| Est. Project Restoration Cost (PC) = _____ | |
| Est. Restor. Federal Cost (FC) = ((PC \times % Cost-share¹) - Contributor \$\$) \div acres = _____ | |
| County GARC² (\$/ac.) = _____ * If there is no easement, the value = 0 (zero) | |
| Total Cost (TC) = FC + GARC _____ | |
| Enrollment Factor (%)³ = _____ | |

¹ – *Permanent Easement* = 100%; *30-year easement* = 75%; *30-year contract* = 75%; *10-year agreement* = 75%

² – See Appendix

³ – The EF is as follows for the following enrollment types: *Permanent Easement* = 100%; *30-year easement* = 70%; *30-year Contract* = 50%; and *10-year Agreement* = 30%.

RANKING FORMULA

The formula for computing individual site scores for ranking intentions is given below. Higher scores receive preference over lower scores, and selections will be made by site scores until the maximum allotted acreage or dollar amount allocated to Maine NRCS is reached. *The formula incorporates environmental benefits, and weighs them against restoration cost, the application type (i.e., easements, 30- or 10-year agreements, etc.), and cost effectiveness as directed by Title 440 – Conservation Programs Manual, Subpart C.*

PROJECT SCORE

$$PS = (((TS \times 250_{\text{potential points}}) - TC) \div 250_{\text{potential points}}) \times EF = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

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NOTES: Scores are computed only for sites that meet initial eligibility criteria. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) reviewed landowner eligibility and land eligibility based on criteria contained in the Wetland Reserve Program Handbook (Title 440-Conservation Programs Manual, Subpart B, §514.12 to §514.15).

NRCS and the Service have conducted this evaluation to determine initial program eligibility and to provide a ranking mechanism for funding purposes. Ranking is based on preliminary data and the assumption that no ecological contaminants are present on the project site. Therefore, our recommendation of accepting this property into WRP is based on the following conditions:

1. Based on a completed Hazardous Substance Checklist and Preliminary Certificate of Inspection and Possession, there are no known contaminants or other conditions that would preclude successful restoration or pose an unacceptable risk to NRCS holding an easement interest \or post a threat wildlife or humans. Therefore, no further surveys are required.

2. Based on the historical use of this property and/or the Hazardous Substance Checklist and Preliminary Certificate of Inspection and Possession, it is reasonable to conclude that there is risk to NRCS and\or to the health of wildlife or humans. Additional surveys and a risk assessment must be conducted, or this project will not warrant further consideration for enrollment to the WRP.

SIGNATURES (*required, electronic signatures will suffice):

Date:

District
Conservationist

NRCS Biologist*

US FWS Biologist*

State of ME Biologist

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Appendix: County-specific GARCS

Market survey and Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARC)

- The 2007 Census of Agriculture includes a market survey of the value of land and buildings for each county in Maine. These values were adjusted according to the most recent USDA - National Agricultural Statistic Service market survey of 2009, which provides statewide figures only. An across the board decrease of -1.14% was applied to the 2007 county figures (Column A),
- The overall estimated land value was assumed to be 80% of the overall value of land plus buildings (Column B),
- The value of wetlands and floodplain values was assumed to be 50% of the estimated land value (Column C),
- and the WRP GARC is 80% of the value of Wetlands and Floodplains (Column D).

| County | A | B | C | D |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| | Est. Land & Building | Est. Land Value | Wetland & Floodplain Land Values | WRP GARC |
| | \$\$/acre | \$\$/acre | \$\$/acre | \$\$/acre |
| Androscoggin | 2,949 | 2,359 | 1,180 | 944 |
| Aroostook | 1,139 | 911 | 456 | 364 |
| Cumberland | 4,903 | 3,923 | 1,961 | 1,569 |
| Franklin | 2,592 | 2,074 | 1,037 | 830 |
| Hancock | 2,797 | 2,238 | 1,119 | 895 |
| Kennebec | 2,683 | 2,146 | 1,073 | 859 |
| Knox | 3,813 | 3,050 | 1,525 | 1,220 |
| Lincoln | 3,792 | 3,034 | 1,517 | 1,213 |
| Oxford | 2,724 | 2,179 | 1,090 | 872 |
| Penobscot | 2,253 | 1,802 | 901 | 721 |
| Piscataquis | 1,974 | 1,579 | 790 | 632 |
| Sagadahoc | 3,665 | 2,932 | 1,466 | 1,173 |
| Somerset | 1,857 | 1,485 | 743 | 594 |
| Waldo | 2,234 | 1,787 | 894 | 715 |
| Washington | 1,115 | 892 | 446 | 357 |
| York | 4,640 | 3,712 | 1,856 | 1,485 |