

Fiscal Year 2012
Wetlands Reserve Program
Michigan Eligibility and Ranking Worksheet

(To be completed after development of the Preliminary Wetlands Reserve Plan of Operation (WRPO))

Landowner(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

County and Field Office: _____

Field Visit Date: _____

Completed by: _____

Is this application part of a larger project consisting of adjacent landowners that rely on each other for restoration?

Yes	No
If yes, consult the WRP Coordinator. You may be allowed to complete one ranking for the entire project. Applicants should be aware of project cancellation if an applicant is unable to convey an easement. List other applicants:	

Check one of the following:

_____ PERMANENT EASEMENT

_____ 30 YEAR EASEMENT

_____ RESTORATION ONLY

_____ 30-YEAR CONTRACT (acreage owned by Indian Tribes only)

Total Ranking Points from Page 12	
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A. Eligible Restorable Wetlands—lands capable of having wetland hydrology and hydrophytic vegetation restored. See Part 514.14 of the WRP Manual for further details. Enter the appropriate number of acres in the column on the right. **Although the same acres may fit into more than one category, account for each acre only once.**

Categories	Acres
1. “Swampbuster” Categories	
a. Prior converted cropland	
b. Farmed wetlands	
c. Commenced conversion wetlands	
d. Farmed wetland pasture	
2. Former or degraded wetlands occurring on lands that have been or are being used for the production of food and fiber, including pasture, hayland and forest production lands, where hydrology has been significantly degraded or modified and will be substantially restored through the implementation of the Wetlands Reserve Plan of Operations (WRPO).	
a. Pasture	
b. Hayland	
c. Forest production lands	
3. Lands substantially altered by flooding where: (See Part 514.14, C, 3 of the WRP Manual for further details.)	
a. Lands have been scoured by floods or broken levees; or	
b. Lands have soil saturation and water table elevation changes as a result of off-site surface or subsurface hydrologic changes.	
4. Riparian Areas along streams or other waterways. Offered riparian area must link wetlands less than 1 mile apart and those wetlands are currently or will be protected under the same WRP easement transaction. Protected wetlands include areas currently enrolled under an existing easement or other device or circumstance that achieves the same objectives as an easement, such as State or Federal wildlife management areas. See Part 514.14, E of the WRP Manual for further details.	
5. Lands in CRP. CRP lands may be enrolled in WRP only if the land and landowner meet the eligibility requirements. Reminder: Lands that contains trees established under a CRP contract are not eligible.	

6. Eligible wetlands previously restored under a local, State or Federal restoration program, or privately developed wetland areas meeting or capable of meeting NRCS restoration standards and specifications and WRP policy.	
a. Local	
b. State	
c. Federal	
d. Privately developed	
7. Hydric soils minor components (inclusions) or problematic hydric soils (non-typical situations). Site assessment documentation must verify feasibility of hydrology and hydrophytic vegetation restoration. State Conservationist approval required. Approval will be based on restorability and ecological merits of the site. See Part 514.14, H of the WRP Manual for further details.	
	TOTAL
ADD ACRES FROM CATEGORIES 1 THROUGH 7 FOR TOTAL ELIGIBLE RESTORABLE WETLAND ACRES.	

- B. **Eligible Adjacent Lands**—lands that will contribute significantly to the wetland functions and values or practical administration of the enrolled area.
- Acres of eligible adjacent lands must not exceed total eligible restorable wetland acres (Section A).
 - The State Conservationist may consider waiving this “one-to-one ratio” in certain unique situations. See Part 514.14, I, 2 of the WRP Manual for further details.
 - Eligible adjacent lands should primarily be upland buffer, but may also include wetlands and manipulated wetlands that cannot be restored.

Categories	Acres
1. Non-hydric	
2. Manipulated, but not restorable hydric	
3. Existing Wetland	
	TOTAL
ADD ACRES FROM CATEGORIES 1 THROUGH 3 FOR TOTAL ELIGIBLE ADJACENT ACRES.	

TOTAL ELIGIBLE LANDS	Acres
Eligible Restorable Wetlands (Section A) + Eligible Adjacent Lands (Section B) =	

C. Information required for the National Easement Staging Tool (NEST)

The following data is required for the NEST. "Existing habitat acres" are those that will not be restored/enhanced or treated. "Proposed habitat acres" are those that will be restored/enhanced or treated. Existing habitat acres + proposed habitat acres = Total offered acres.

Habitat	Existing habitat acres--will not be treated	Proposed habitat acres--will be treated	Total Offered Acres
Upland			
Palustrine open water/unknown bottom			
Palustrine Forested/ Palustrine Shrub Scrub			
Palustrine Emergent			
Other Riparian			
Estuarine			

Enter the number of cropland acres:

Cropland Acres	
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D. Unique Considerations

1. Will the proposed WRP project restore, enhance or include an existing remnant natural wetland community with a State ranking of S1, S2 or S3, as defined by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)?

- Examples include lakeplain prairie, wet prairie, coastal plain marsh, interdunal wetland, fen, or wet meadow.
- Consult NRCS State Biologist.
- Use the MNFI database. Attach the MNFI printouts and pre-settlement vegetation maps to document the presence of remnant or former communities.

Yes	No
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2. Will the restoration occur within the area of Hillsdale County specifically identified for the protection of the Federally-listed Copperbelly Watersnake?

- See Copperbelly Area Map.

Yes	No
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Unique Consideration Notes:

If you answered yes to either of the above unique considerations questions, the application will be reviewed by the NRCS State Biologist and considered for priority funding. Continue ranking.

E. Environmental Benefits Considerations

1. Habitat – Consult NRCS State Biologist

- a. Is there documented evidence (within the last 15 years) from the MNFI of State or Federal threatened or endangered (T/E) species or State species of special concern on or near the proposed project, and will the proposed project directly benefit the listed species?

Yes	No
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- b. If State or Federal T/E species or State species of special concern are not present, will the proposed project provide habitat for migratory birds?

Yes	No
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- Provide MNFI search documentation for the section where the proposed project is located, as well as the surrounding 8 sections.
- Document the effect of the proposed project on the species on the NRCS-CPA-52.
- Consider the protection of existing habitat for T/E species provided by an easement as enhancing the habitat.
- Points will only be awarded if the proposed project will directly benefit the T/E species, species of special concern or migratory birds, and the WRPO will address the species.
- Select one category.

The WRPO will provide for restoration or enhancement of habitat for a State or Federal T/E species located within the same section as the proposed project or in a section adjacent to that of the proposed project.	20 points
The WRPO will provide for restoration or enhancement of habitat for a State species of special concern located within the same section as the proposed project or in a section adjacent to that of the proposed project.	15 points
The WRPO will provide for restoration or enhancement of habitat for migratory birds.	5 points
None of the above.	0 points

List the species for which points are taken, including migratory birds:

2. Proximity to wetland complexes

Will the proposed project add to a wetland complex as identified on the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) map?

- Use the 2012 WRP ArcMap layer to determine the appropriate point category. Instructions for using the layer are located on SharePoint.
- Select one category.

Proposed project is within ½ mile of a cumulative 40 acres of Palustrine Emergent Wetland (PEM) and/or Palustrine Scrub Shrub Wetland (PSS), as identified on the NWI map, or an existing WRP easement.	10 points
Proposed project is within 1 mile of a cumulative 40 acres of Palustrine Emergent Wetland (PEM) and/or Palustrine Scrub Shrub Wetland (PSS), as identified on the NWI map, or an existing WRP easement.	6 points
Proposed project is within ½ mile of a cumulative 40 acres of Palustrine Forested Wetland (PFO) and/or Palustrine Open Water Wetland (POW), as identified on the NWI map.	4 points
None of the above.	0 points

3. Location factors associated with habitat, water quality and attenuation of floodwater flows.

- Use the 2012 WRP ArcMap layer to determine the appropriate point category. Instructions for using the layer are located on SharePoint.
- Max 30 points.

Proposed project is located in a primary focus area of the 1998 North American Waterfowl Management Plan Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture Implementation Plan.	10 points
Proposed project is located within a designated wellhead protection area.	5 points

Proposed project is located within the DEQ designated Critical Floodwater Storage Area (see SharePoint—not in 2012 WRP ArcMap layer).	5 points
Proposed project is within 2 miles of the Great Lakes shoreline including the St. Mary's, St. Clair and Detroit Rivers.	5 points
Proposed project is within a watershed with an approved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nutrients and/or sediment.	5 points
None of the above.	0 points

4. Duration of the enrollment

Permanent Easement	10 points
30-Year Contract (acreage owned by Indian Tribes only) or 30-Year Easement	5 points
Restoration Cost-Share Agreement	0 points

5. Enhancing effective restoration of previously enrolled land.

Will the proposed project allow for more effective restoration of land that is already enrolled in WRP and contiguous to the proposed project?

Yes	10 points
No	0 points

6. Invasive species

See invasive species lists from the Michigan DNR publication "Meeting the Challenge of Invasive Plants: A Framework for Action" on SharePoint.

●Select one category.

The site does not contain invasive species and there is no apparent danger of invasion (i.e. no invasive species nearby).	15 points
Less than 10% of the site contains invasive species and the WRPO will specifically address their eradication and control.	10 points

10 to 25% of the site contains invasive species and the WRPO will specifically address their eradication and control.	5 points
More than 25% of the site contains invasive species.	0 points

7. Habitat fragmentation and boundary management

Does the proposed site contain one or more in-holdings that will affect the values and functions of the proposed restoration and boundary management?

- An in-holding is any portion cut out of the easement area that significantly increases the easement boundary edge. Example: a long cut out extending into the easement for an access road and area for building structures.
- A small square cut from the corner of the easement area may be acceptable.

Yes	0 points
No	10 points

8. Project size

- Allocate 0.25 points per acre.
- Max 20 points.

_____ acres X 0.25 =	
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9. Protection/restoration of vegetative communities that existed prior to manipulation.

What percent of the eligible adjacent lands (Section B) are currently or will be restored to a vegetative community type that best approximates the vegetative conditions that existed prior to manipulation?

- Consider MNFI data (e.g. pre-settlement vegetation maps and the “Natural Communities of Michigan” publication), aerial photography (old and new), soils and soil descriptions, landowner accounts, etc.
- Consult the NRCS State Biologist for assistance in approximating the vegetative conditions that existed prior to manipulation.
- Attach documentation to support your findings.
- Note: At least 70% of the eligible adjacent lands should be restored to the vegetative conditions that existed prior to manipulation. If this is not possible, document the reasons and provide justification for moving forward with the project. This information will be reviewed by the NRCS State Biologist and the WRP Coordinator.

100% - 90% (approx. acres_____)	10 points
89% - 80% (approx. acres_____)	5 points
79 % - 70% (approx. acres_____)	2 points
< 70% (approx. acres_____)	0 points

10. Hydrology restoration

Percent of the eligible restorable wetlands (Section A) where hydrology restoration practices will provide hydrologic conditions (1) suitable for the needs of the native wetland-dependent wildlife species that occurred in the area prior to manipulation and (2) appropriate for the wetland functions and values that existed prior to manipulation.

- Consider MNFI data (e.g. pre-settlement vegetation maps and the “Natural Communities of Michigan” publication), aerial photography (old and new), soils and soil descriptions, landowner accounts, etc.
- Consult the NRCS State Biologist for assistance in approximating the hydrologic conditions that existed prior to manipulation.
- Attach documentation to support your findings.
- Note: Hydrology restoration will reestablish the conditions that existed prior to manipulation to the maximum extent practicable. Hydrology restoration and management for wetland types different from what likely existed prior to manipulation of the site will not involve more than 30% of the wetland restoration site. Measures taken to counteract offsite hydrologic effects are not counted against the 30 percent. Attach justification documentation if hydrology restoration and management for wetland types different from what likely existed prior to manipulation of the site will involve more than 30% of the wetland restoration site. This information will be reviewed by the NRCS State Biologist and the WRP Coordinator to determine final eligibility.

90 – 100% (approx. acres_____)	175 points
80 – 89% (approx. acres_____)	115 points
70-79% (approx. acres_____)	65 points
< 70% (approx. acres_____)	0 points

11. Buffer-Water Quality

What portion of the wetland area of the proposed project will be surrounded by a minimum 30-foot non-hydric/upland buffer?

- The buffer must be within the proposed project site.

71-100% of wetland portion is protected by a min. 30' buffer	10 points
41-70% of wetland portion is protected by a min. 30' buffer	6 points
10-40% of wetland portion is protected by a min. 30' buffer	3 points
<10% of wetland portion is protected by a min. 30' buffer	0 points

12. Buffer—Habitat

Select the percent of upland buffer (non-hydric) within the proposed project site.

50% - 40%	10 points
39% - 25%	6 points
24% - 10%	3 points
< 10%	0 points

13. Evidence of crop or forage production on the degraded hydric soils within the past 5 years.

- Max 20 points.

At least 50% of the converted hydric soil component of the site has been row cropped or tilled within the past 2 years.	20 points
At least 50% of the converted hydric soil component of the site has been row cropped or tilled within the past 5 years.	15 points
At least 50% of the converted hydric soil component of the site has been hayed within the past 2 years.	10 points
At least 50% of the converted hydric soil component of the site has been hayed within the past 5 years OR it is actively being grazed.	5 points
Not cropped, tilled or hayed within the past 5 years.	0 points

ADD POINTS FROM QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 13 ABOVE FOR TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS POINTS	
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F. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1. Cost Benefit Comparison

Using the WRP cost guidance list, estimate the restoration cost per acre.

●Reminder: Ineligible land includes land where the cost of restoration of the project area will exceed the fair market value of the land. This criterion may be waived by the State Conservationist in situations in which the restoration may be accomplished without accumulating a long-term operation and maintenance cost burden to the program.

●Attach documentation showing how you arrived at the estimate.

●Estimated restoration cost per acre: \$_____

●Total environmental benefits points from page 10: _____pts

●Divide the estimated restoration cost per acre by the total environmental benefits points.

Enter the result here. _____\$/Point. Using this result, select the appropriate number of points to award below.

≤\$8/Point	20 Points
\$9-10/Point	15 Points
\$11-12/Point	10 Points
\$13-14/Point	5 Points
\$≥15/Point	0 Points

2. Easement Costs: Landowner Offer (LO)

If the landowner will accept an offer less than the Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC), complete the formula with the per acre offer amount and the corresponding GARC.

●Max 20 points

<p>Formula: ((GARC-LO)/GARC)x100</p> <p>((\$_____ - \$_____) / \$_____) x 100 =</p>	_____ Points
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3. Enhancement Costs

What percent of the “restoration” cost will be spent on wetland enhancement or alternative communities?

●Alternative Community – An assemblage of plant and animal species that occurs naturally in the general landscape area in which the easement or restoration cost-share agreement is located. It is not the community that would have occurred on the specific site prior to manipulation.

0-30%	10 points
>30%	0 points

4. Extent of operation and maintenance needed after restoration. Choose the most limiting category that applies.

Preliminary restoration plan contains practices with typically low repair/replacement costs, such as ditch plugs, tile breaks and microtopography.	10 points
Preliminary restoration plan contains engineered practices with typically higher repair/replacement costs, such as grade stabilization structures and structures for water control (i.e. engineering practices other than tile breaks or ditch plugs).	0 points

5. Partner Contribution

Have wetlands been restored on the proposed project area under a State or Federal program?

- Examples: Partners for Fish & Wildlife, Conservation Reserve Program.

- Select one category.

Yes and the restoration meets NRCS restoration standards and specifications.	15 points
Yes, however, the restoration does not meet NRCS restoration standards and specifications.	10 points
No	0 points

ADD POINTS FROM QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 5 ABOVE FOR TOTAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS POINTS	
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TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS POINTS + TOTAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS POINTS (Record this amount here and on page 1.)	
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Note: The preliminary restoration plan should not by any means be construed as the final restoration plan. It is the intent of NRCS to work with the landowner to restore and protect the proposed project site. However, NRCS will be the final decision making authority for restoration.

Any alteration of site hydrology or vegetative cover after ranking and prior to easement closing will cause the WRP application and ranking to be ineligible for program benefits.

Landowner Signature	Date
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District Conservationist Signature	Date
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Ranking Team Leader Signature	Date
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