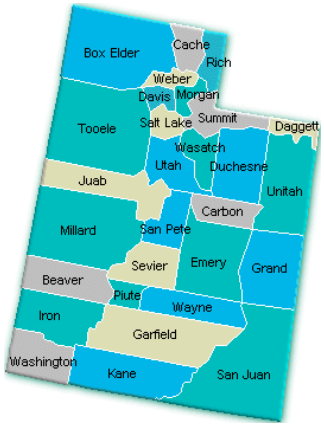
Watershed Improvement—Forestland Ranking Tool Questions and Instructions



USDA-NRCS—Salt Lake City, Utah

2007-Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Note to all users: The **official** Application and Evaluation Ranking Tools are located in Protracts.

NATIONAL Priority Issues

In order to answer yes to the National issues/priority questions you must have adequate documentation that the practice(s) will conserve the priority issue. This documentation can be in the form of a list of Threatened and Endangered species that will be impacted by the practices on the UT-CPA-52 or in the Tech Notes. See the species of concern list. Talk with your Area or partner biologist for more information on these species.

QUESTION #1: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in considerable reductions of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with TMDL's where available as well as the reduction of groundwater contamination or point source such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations?

- To claim these points, the proposed project must be expected to meet quality criteria for all applicable NRCS Water Quality criteria.

QUESTION #2: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in the conservation of a considerable amount of ground or surface water resources?

- To claim these points, the proposed project must be expected to meet quality criteria for all applicable NRCS Water Quantity criteria.

QUESTION #3: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards?

- To claim these points, the proposed project must include one or more of the conservation practices on page 4.

QUESTION #4: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land?

- To claim these points, soil erosion must go from above T to below T as a result of the proposed project OR Quality criteria for Soil Condition; Rangeland Site Stability must be met as a result of implementing the proposed project

QUESTION #5: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation?

- To claim these points, the project must be expected to meet quality criteria for one or more of the four national at-risk species resource concerns.

References:

- Forest Stewardship Plans
- CWMA Plans, other
- Stand Density Scores
- EFOTG
- CPM 440—Part 512 CPC Manual
- CPM 440-Part 515 EQIP Manual
- TMDL or Listed Watersheds:
- National Planning Procedures Handbook
- UT Bulletin 300-07-04
- Area Forester-UDSL&F
- Questions on the use of the ranking tool should be directed through Area Programs Specialists to Julie Nelson, State Economist.

National At-Risk species Resource Concerns

- Plant Condition; Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
- Plant Condition; T&E Plant Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern
- Fish and Wildlife; Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species
- Fish and Wildlife; T&E Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern

At-risk plant species are in Appendix C. - Rare Plant Species by Habitat Type

At-risk animal species are in Appendix A. - Utah CWCS Tier I, II, and III Species List.

See Utah-NRCS Website—Programs-EQIP tab.

STATE Priority Issues

Questions 1-3: What type of plan does the producer have? An RMS level plan where all resource concerns are addressed, a progressive plan where only one or two resource concerns are addressed or is it only in the inventory (identified the land uses, fields, tract soils etc. and the producer has not made any decisions) phase of the planning process. Work with the Area Forester (Utah Department of State Lands and Forestry) to assist with the answer to this question.

Answer yes to only one of the following: (Reference: UDSL&F Area Forester)

1. *Is the type of plan the cooperator has on the Forestland CTU for the EQIP project an RMS plan or a Forest stewardship plan from the Utah Department of Forestry?*
2. *Is the type of plan the cooperator has on the Forestland CTU for the EQIP project a Progressive plan?*
3. *Is the type of plan the cooperator has on the Forestland CTU for the EQIP project an Inventory?*

Questions 4-6: All of the management practices identified take place on the identified tract and field of the application. The management practices are scheduled to occur in the contract period, i.e. prescribed grazing is planned for 3 years in the grazing rotation. Does the grazing schedule fall within the contract period? This is a must. We can not pay for management practices that are not on the same tract and field that is contracted OR if the application of that practice falls out side of the contracting period. In other words the 3 years of prescribed grazing must be scheduled for that tract and field within the contracting period.

Answer yes to only one of the following:

4. *Will a management incentive practice be applied to 100% of the acres directly benefitted by the structural practices, and will the management practice be applied for only 1 year?*
5. *Will a management incentive practice be applied to 100% of the acres directly benefitted by the structural practices, and will the management practice be applied for only 2 years?*
6. *Will a management incentive practice be applied to 100% of the acres directly benefitted by the structural practices, and will the management practice be applied for 3 years?*

Proceed to page 3.....

EQIP National Priorities

1. Reductions of **nonpoint source** pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with TMDLs where available as well as the reduction of groundwater contamination and reduction of point sources such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations;
2. Conservation of **ground and surface water** resources;
3. Reduction of **emissions**, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards;
4. Reduction in **soil erosion and sedimentation** from unacceptable levels on agricultural land; and
5. Promotion of **at-risk species** habitat conservation.

STATE Priority Issues, continued

Question 7: You will need to coordinate with your local weed supervisor or county agent to identify if the target species is of concern. These species must be addressed THROUGH THE APPRORIATE PRACTICES in the contract if answered yes.

7. *Does the plan address control of an invasive species identified by a state, county, or local government or by a local Cooperative Weed Management Area as being a noxious species?*

Question 8: Is the planned project in an approved area wide plan as defined by the National Planning Procedures Handbook, Bulletin 300-7-04 and been designated as such by the Assistant for Field Operations? In order to answer yes to this question all of these REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET.

8. *Is this project in an area that is covered by an approved areawide plan as defined by the National Planning Procedures Handbook ?*

LOCAL Priority Issues

Question 1: Answer Yes to this question only if the project is within a TMDL watershed/area identified by the Utah Department of Environmental quality AND the project addresses one of the water quality impairments identified in the TMDL.

1. *Does this project address an identified water quality impairment within an approved TMDL?*

Questions 2-6: Look up the Stand Density Index (SDI) score in the cooperators' Forest Stewardship Plan that best represents the forest acreage to be treated. Use the 2007 EQIP Ranking Calculators spreadsheet (see page 5 for sample) to calculate the SDI points. Answer yes to only one of these questions.

If there is no Forest Stewardship Plan, answer yes to number 6.

2. *Is the SDI score between 81 and 100?*
3. *Is the SDI score between 61 and 80?*
4. *Is the SDI score between 41 and 60?*
5. *Is the SDI score between 21 and 40?*
6. *Is the SDI score between 1 and 20?*

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5. Promotion of **at-risk species** habitat conservation.

Conservation Practices—to claim points for National Priority Question #3, the proposed project must include one or more of the following practices:

Access Road (560)	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface (443)	Deep Tillage (324)
Alley Cropping (311)	Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)
Irrigation Water Management (449)	Drainage Water Management (554)
Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste (591)	Stripcropping (585)
Mulching (484)	Feed Management (592)
Anaerobic Digester, Controlled Temperature (366)	Surface Roughening (609)
Nutrient Management (590)	Field Border (386)
Animal Mortality Facility (316)	Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
Pasture and Hay Planting (512)	Filter Strip (393)
Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Erosion Control (450)	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
Pest Management (595)	Firebreak (394)
Atmospheric Resource Quality Management (370)	Use Exclusion (472)
Prescribed Burning (338)	Forest Site Preparation (490)
Closure of Waste Impoundment (360)	Vegetative Barrier (601)
Prescribed Grazing (528)	Forest Stand Improvement (666)
Composting Facility (317)	Waste Facility Cover (367)
Pumping Plant (533)	Fuel Break (383)
Conservation Cover (327)	Waste Storage Facility (313)
Range Planting (550)	Grassed Waterway (412)
Conservation Crop Rotation (328)	Waste Treatment Lagoon (359)
Recreation Area Improvement (562)	Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548)
Constructed Wetland (656)	Waste Utilization (633)
Recreation Land Grading and Shaping (566)	Heavy Use Area Protection (561)
Contour Buffer Strips (332)	Wastewater Treatment Strip (635)
Recreation Trail and Walkway (568)	Hedgerow Planting (422)
Contour Farming (330)	Wetland Creation (658)
Residue Management, Seasonal (344)	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603)
Contour Orchard and Other Fruit Area (331)	Wetland Enhancement (659)
Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats (643)	Irrigation Canal or Lateral (320)
Cover Crop (340)	Wetland Restoration (657)
Riparian Forest Buffer (391)	Irrigation Field Ditch (388)
Critical Area Planting (342)	Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)	Irrigation System, Microirrigation (441)
Cross Wind Ridges (589A)	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)
Rock Barrier (555)	Irrigation System, Sprinkler (442)
Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C)	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (650)