

Environmental Quality Incentives Program At-risk Species Habitat Conservation – 2006 Ranking Guidelines

Ranking criteria to address the National EQIP Priority of promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation have been developed to select projects that will do the best job of enhancing and restoring habitats for wildlife species experiencing significant population declines. \$400,000 dollars in funding is being made available for these projects.

Ranking criteria will be scored on an Excel Spreadsheet. Enter points for each factor in the bold outlined Points boxes so that the spreadsheet will do the math automatically. First, screen each application using the screening criteria on Sheet 1 of the spreadsheet. Only applications achieving a “High” priority rating during the screening process need to be ranked, unless additional funds remain after all “High” priority applications are funded.

A Wildlife Habitat Evaluation, using the new Habitat Models, or where no suitable model exists (i.e. Woodland habitat projects) the old Woodland WHEG, will need to be completed for the projects prior to ranking. Request assistance from the Area or State Biologists if help is needed with the evaluations or ranking.

Applicants are encouraged to work with the regional teams of the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development and/or the Sage Grouse Local Work Group in order to develop larger scale projects involving multiple partners. Such projects will receive higher scores when ranked. Applications must be submitted by January 13, 2006. Ranking criteria will then be completed and copies of applications, ranking criteria, and supporting documentation will be mailed to Karen Fullen, State Biologist, by February 2, 2006. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their proposal by February 15, 2006.

Following is clarification and guidance in applying the ranking criteria.

Questions for Applicants: Ask applicants if they would be willing to host tours of their project for educational purposes, and whether they would like to be contacted about other wildlife oriented cost-share programs if their EQIP application is unsuccessful. Answers will not affect their ranking score.

Practices and Cost: Provide a detailed list of the conservation practices from the FOTG that will be applied, including units and extents. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Use the Utah NRCS Cost List for 2006 to develop a detailed cost estimate for each practice component. NRCS cost share will be 50% of the practices implemented. Attach a copy of the conservation plan, if any. Also, include the total cost of the project with partnership contributions. In total cost, consider monitoring and evaluation, cultural resources inventories, and other items provided by partners that are not conservation practices. EQIP funds can only provide cost share for conservation practices listed in the NRCS FOTG. However, other costs paid by partners will be considered when evaluating

the cost/benefit ratio. Enter EQIP cost-share and Total costs in the appropriate bold outlined boxes.

1. **Partnerships:** List partners involved in the project that will contribute land, money, equipment, supplies, and/or monitoring and evaluation. State what each partners' contribution will be and the dollar value of that contribution. State whether each partners' commitment is in writing or verbal. Do NOT count NRCS, UACD, or SCD employees as partners. Where applicable, grazing associations should be counted as one partner. Priority is given to projects with commitments from multiple partners.
2. **Project monitoring or evaluation:** This is a type of partnership contribution that is ranked separately due to the importance of NRCS having sound scientific data for the benefits of EQIP funded projects on at-risk wildlife species. Projects where partners are contributing scientific monitoring or conducting an experimental design will be given higher priority.
3. **Priority habitat type(s) and Species benefited:**

Section A. List the acres of each Habitat Category from the Utah Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (descriptions attached) that will benefit from implementation of the project. Priority is given to projects that restore or enhance multiple habitat types (for example, shrub steppe, riparian and wet meadow) as opposed to those that focus only on one habitat type.

Section B. Check Utah DWR maps, consult with your Area or State Biologist, or with a DWR or FWS biologist to determine whether the proposed project is located in an area determined to be important or essential habitat for the target species. If points are assigned, fill in how this determination was made.

Section C. List the at-risk wildlife species from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Sensitive Species List (attached) that the proposed project is targeting for habitat improvement. Priority is given to projects that benefit multiple at-risk species. Higher priority is given to Candidate and Conservation Agreement Species than to Species of Concern.

4. **Coordination/Other planning efforts:** If the proposed project fits in to a larger planning effort, such as an existing Areawide Resource Management Plan, Species Recovery Plan, DWR Management Plan, Utah Partners in Flight Avian Conservation Strategy, Sage Grouse Local Work Group plan, etc.; list the plan(s) here and assign points. Priority is given to projects that are part of a larger coordinated effort.

5. **Proximity to area protected for wildlife:** List areas managed for wildlife within a 1 mile radius of the proposed project area. Include National and State Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and State Wildlife Management Areas, and lands under a conservation easement for wildlife. Do not include Cooperative Wildlife Management Units or public lands with multiple uses that are not managed primarily for wildlife. Priority is given to projects that are adjacent or close to protected areas managed for wildlife.

6. **Improvement in Habitat Condition:** Use the scores from the completed Habitat Model(s) and/or Woodland WHEG. If more than one are used, average the “Before” and “After” scores. Multiply the “Before” and “After” scores by 10 and subtract the resulting “Before” score from the resulting “After” score. Enter the difference in the Points box. Priority is given to projects that result in the most improvement in habitat conditions, as measured by the Habitat Models/WHEGs.

7. **Management:** List cost-shared management practices from the FOTG that will be applied and the number of years they will be applied. Remember that EQIP rules prohibit cost-sharing on a management practice for more than 3 years. An example of high management intensity for a project that involves riparian fencing might be: Use Exclusion – 3 years, Prescribed Grazing – 3 years, Upland Wildlife Habitat Management 3 years. Priority will be given to projects with the highest management intensities.

8. **Cost/Benefit Ratio:** When you have filled in the boxes correctly, the spreadsheet will calculate this factor automatically. Otherwise, total points for factors 1 through 7, multiply by 10,000, and divide the product by the amount of NRCS Cost-share requested.

**Descriptions of Utah Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS)
Habitat Categories**

HABITAT	% OF TOTAL AREA OF UTAH	DESCRIPTION
RIPARIAN		
Lowland Riparian	0.2%	Riparian areas generally <1,670 m (<5,500 ft) elevation; Principal woody species include Fremont cottonwood (<i>Populus fremontii</i>), salt cedar (<i>Tamarix pentandra</i>), netleaf hackberry (<i>Celtis reticulata</i>), velvet ash (<i>Fraxinus velutina</i>), desert willow (<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>), willow (<i>Salix</i> spp.), and squawbush (<i>Rhus trilobata</i>).
Mountain Riparian	0.2%	Riparian areas generally >1,670 m (>5,500 ft) elevation; Principal woody species include willow, narrowleaf cottonwood (<i>Populus angustifolia</i>), thinleaf alder (<i>Alnus tenuifolia</i>), water birch (<i>Betula occidentalis</i>), black hawthorn (<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>), rocky mountain maple (<i>Acer glabrum</i>), red-osier dogwood (<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>), and wild rose (<i>Rosa woodsii</i>).
Wetland	0.2%	Low elevation marsh and Wetland areas <1,670 m (<5,500 ft) elevation; Principal species include cattail (<i>Typha latifolia</i>), bullrush (<i>Scirpus</i> spp.), and sedge (<i>Carex</i> spp.).
Wet Meadow	<0.1%	Water saturated meadows dominated by grasses, forbs, sedges, and rushes at 3,300-9,800 ft. elevation. Principal species include sedges, rushes (<i>Juncus</i> spp.), reedgrass (<i>Calamagrostis</i> spp.), timothy (<i>Phleum</i> spp.), Alpine (<i>Poa</i> spp.), hairgrass (<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>), willowherb (<i>Epilobium</i> spp.), cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla</i> spp.), saxifrage (<i>Saxifraga</i> spp.), etc. Associated species include willow, honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera</i> spp.), and water birch.
SHRUBLANDS		
Shrubsteppe	13.4%	Shrubland principally dominated by big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), black sagebrush (<i>Artemisia nova</i>), low sagebrush (<i>Artemisia arbuscula</i>), or silver sagebrush (<i>Artemisia cana</i>); or dominate sagebrush shrub land and perennial Grassland at 750-3,500 m (2,500-11,500 ft) elevation. Principle associated grass species include bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron spicatum</i>), needlegrass (<i>Stipa comata</i>), sand dropseed (<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>), blue grama (<i>Bouteloua gracillis</i>), Thurber's needlegrass (<i>Stipa thurberiana</i>), western wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron smithii</i>), Indian ricegrass (<i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>), galleta (<i>Hilaria jamesii</i>), and cheatgrass (<i>Bromus tectorum</i>). Primary associated shrub species include rabbitbrush (<i>Chrysothamnus</i> spp.), snakeweed (<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>), winterfat (<i>Ceratoides lanata</i>), shadscale (<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>), bitter brush (<i>Purshia tridentata</i>), and oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.). Primary associated tree species include juniper (<i>Juniperus</i> spp.), pinyon (<i>Pinus</i> spp.), mountain mahogany (<i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i>), and Ponderosa Pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>).
Mountain Shrub	1.3%	Deciduous shrubland at 1,000-3,000 m (3,300-9,800 ft) elevation principally dominated by alder leaf mountain mahogany, cliff rose (<i>Cowania mexicana</i>), bitter brush, serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier utahensis</i>), and (<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>), buckbrush (<i>Ceanothus</i> spp.), chokecherry (<i>Prunus virginiana</i>),

		snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos</i> spp.), pointleaf manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos pungens</i>), and bearberry (<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>); or deciduous shrub land principally dominated by bigtooth maple (<i>Acer grandidentatum</i>); forest principally dominated by mountain mahogany; or conifer forest or woodland with spruce-fir dominate/associate or co-dominate with Mountain Shrub; Primary associated shrub species include Gambel oak (<i>Quercus gambelii</i>), currant (<i>Ribes</i> spp.), ninebark (<i>Physocarpus</i> spp.), mountain lover (<i>Paxistima myrsinites</i>), blueberry (<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.), elderberry (<i>Sambucus</i> spp.), Oregon grape (<i>Mahonia repens</i>), and manzanita. Primary associated tree species include Rocky Mountain maple (<i>Acer glabrum</i>), Aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>), Douglas fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>), white fir (<i>Abies concolor</i>), limber pine (<i>Pinus flexilis</i>), Alpine fir (<i>Abies lasiocarpa</i>), Engelmann spruce (<i>Picea engelmannii</i>), and Ponderosa Pine.
High Desert Scrub	25.2%	Shrublands at 670-3,150 m (2,200-10,300 ft) elevation principally dominated by greasewood (<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>), shadscale (<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>), graymolly (<i>Kochia vestita</i>), mat-triplex (<i>Atriplex corrugata</i>), castle valley clover (<i>Atriplex cuneata</i>), winterfat (<i>Ceratoides lanata</i>), budsage (<i>Artemisia spinescens</i>), four-wing saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>), halogeton (<i>Halogeton glomeratus</i>), Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra</i> spp.), horsebrush (<i>Tetradymia canescens</i>), snakeweed (<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>) and rabbitbrush (<i>Chrysothamnus</i> spp.); or low elevation perennial Grassland co-dominate with shrubland. Principal Grassland species include galleta (<i>Hilaria jamesii</i>), indian ricegrass, three-awn (<i>Aristida glauca</i>) and sand dropseed (<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>). Primary associated forb species includes desert trumpet (<i>Eriogonum inflatum</i>). Primary associated shrub species include sagebrush, and black brush (<i>Coleogyne ramosissima</i>); Other associated species include seepweed (<i>Suaeda torreyana</i>).
Low Desert Scrub	4.6%	Shrubland at 670-1,830 m (2,200-6,000 ft) elevation principally dominated by black brush or creosote (<i>Larrea tridentata</i>), or white bursage (<i>Ambrosia dumosa</i>). Primary associated shrub species include spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>), Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra</i> spp.), shadscale, snakeweed, turpentine bush (<i>Thamnosia montana</i>), dalea (<i>Dalea fremonti</i>), honey mesquite (<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>), and brittlebush (<i>Encelia farinosa</i>); Other associated species include joshua tree (<i>Yucca brevifolia</i>), datil yucca (<i>Yucca baccata</i>), prickly pear (<i>Opuntia engelmannii</i>), and other cacti.
Northern Oak	2.8%	Deciduous shrubland principally dominated by Gambel oak at 1,125-2,750 m (3,700-9,000 ft) elevation. Primary associated shrub species include bigtooth maple (<i>Acer grandidentatum</i>) and sagebrush. Primary associated tree species include Aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>) and mountain mahogany.
Desert Oak	0.8%	Deciduous shrubland principally dominated by wavyleaf oak (<i>Quercus undulata</i>) and shrub live oak (<i>Quercus turbinella</i>) at 820-2,100 m (2,700-7,000 ft) elevation. Primary associated tree species include juniper, pinyon (<i>Pinus</i> spp.), and Ponderosa Pine.
GRASSLAND		
Grassland	3.5%	Perennial and annual Grasslands; or herbaceous dry meadow, including mostly forbs and grasses occurring at 640-2,740 m (2,200-9,000 ft) elevation. Principle perennial grass species include bluebunch wheatgrass, sandburg bluegrass (<i>Poa secunda</i>), crested wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron cristatum</i>), basin wildrye (<i>Elymus cinereus</i>), galleta, needlegrass, sand dropseed, blue gramma, Thurbers needlegrass, western wheatgrass, squirreltail (<i>Sitanion hystrix</i>),

		timothy, poa (<i>Poa</i> spp.), spike (<i>Trisetum spicatum</i>), Indian ricegrass, and some sedges. Principle annual grass species include cheatgrass. Principal forb species include yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>), dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>), Richardson's geranium (<i>Geranium richardsonii</i>), (<i>Penstemon</i> spp.), mulesears (<i>Wyethia amplexicaulis</i>), golden aster (<i>Chrysopsis villosa</i>), arrowleaf balsamroot (<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>), hawkbit (<i>Agoseris pumila</i>), larkspur (<i>Delphinium</i> spp.), and scarlet gilia (<i>Gilia pulchella</i>). Primary associated shrub species include sagebrush, shadscale, greasewood, creosote, rabbit brush, cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>), snowberry, and elderberry (<i>Sambucus caerulea</i>). Primary associated tree species include juniper.
Alpine	0.4%	Tundra vegetation at 1,980-3,500 m (6,500-11,500 ft) elevation, including sedges and avens. Principle species include Alpine avens (<i>Geum rossii</i> , <i>G. trifolium</i>), sedges, tufted hair grass, <i>Festuca ovina</i> , <i>Koeleria cristata</i> , <i>Trisetum spicatum</i> , <i>Silene acaulis</i> , <i>Paronychia pulvinata</i> , <i>Arenaria obtusiloba</i> , <i>Trifolium nanum</i> , <i>Kobresia myosuroides</i> , <i>Polygonum bistortoides</i> , <i>Eriophorum chamissonis</i> , and willow. Primary associated species include Engelmann spruce.
FOREST		
Sub-Alpine Conifer	2.3%	Conifer forest principally dominated by combinations of Engelmann spruce and Blue Spruce (<i>Picea pungens</i>) and sub-Alpine fir (<i>Abies lasiocarpa</i>) at 1,830-3,400 m (6,000-11,200 ft) elevation. Primary associated tree species include lodgepole (<i>Pinus contorta</i>), white fir, Douglas fir, limber pine, and bristlecone pine (<i>Pinus aristata</i>).
Mixed Conifer	1.2%	Conifer forest principally dominated by combinations of white fir and Douglas fir at 1,500-3,050 m (5,000-10,000 ft) elevation. Primary associated tree species include Engelmann spruce and blue spruce and subalpine fir.
Ponderosa Pine	1.2%	Conifer forest or woodland at 1,600-2,700 m (5,200-8,700 ft) elevation with principally Ponderosa Pine dominate/associate or co-dominate with Mountain Shrubs. Principle Mountain Shrub associate species include manzanita, bitter brush, Gambel oak, snowberry, and curleaf mountain mahogany. Primary associated tree species include juniper, pinyon (<i>Pinus</i> spp.), white fir and Douglas fir. Primary associated shrub species include sagebrush, and rabbitbrush.
Lodgepole Pine	1.0%	Conifer forest principally dominated by lodgepole (<i>Pinus contorta</i>) at 1,830-3,450 m (8,000-11,000 ft) elevation. Primary associated tree species include Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir.
Pinyon-Juniper	19.4%	Conifer forest at 820-3,400 m (2,700-11,000 ft) elevation principally dominated by Rocky Mountain juniper (<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>), One-seed Juniper (<i>Juniperus monosperma</i>), and Utah juniper (<i>Juniperus osteosperma</i>); or conifer forest principally dominated by two-needle pinyon (<i>Pinus edulis</i>) or singleleaf pinyon (<i>Pinus monophylla</i>); or conifer forest principally co-dominated by <i>Pinus edulis</i> or <i>Pinus monophylla</i> and <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> , <i>Juniperus monosperma</i> and <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> . Primary associated tree species include mountain mahogany, Ponderosa Pine, white fir, and Douglas fir. Primary associated shrub species include sagebrush, black brush, and Gambel oak.
Aspen	3.4%	Deciduous forest principally dominated by Aspen at 1,400-3,200 m (5,600-10,500 ft) elevation. Primary associated conifer species include Engelmann spruce, blue spruce, subalpine fir, white fir, Douglas fir, Lodgepole Pine, and

		Ponderosa Pine. Primary associated shrub species include snowberry and serviceberry.
ADDITIONAL HABITAT CATEGORIES		
Water - Lentic	3.4%	Open water: lakes and reservoirs.
Water - Lotic	<0.1%	Open water: streams and rivers.
Playa	4.4%	Sand flats and mosaics of sparsely vegetated and barren playa flats at 1,280-1,620 m (4,200-5,300 ft) elevation. Principal shrub species include pickleweed (<i>Allenrolfea occidentalis</i>). Primary associated species include samphire (<i>Salicornia</i> spp.), mound saltbush (<i>Atriplex falcata</i>), greasewood, saltgrass (<i>Distichlis stricta</i>), and seepweed.

At-Risk Species from Utah Sensitive Species List (September 22, 2004)
Most recent at: <http://dwrcdc.nr.utah.gov/ucdc/>

Fishes

Conservation Agreement Species

Bonneville cutthroat trout *Oncorhynchus clarki utah*
Colorado River cutthroat trout *Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus*
Virgin spinedace *Lepidomeda mollispinis mollispinis*
least chub *Iotichthys phlegethontis*

Wildlife Species of Concern

roundtail chub *Gila robusta*
bluehead sucker *Catostomus discobolus*
flannelmouth sucker *Catostomus latipinnis*
leatherside chub *Gila copei*
desert sucker *Catostomus clarki*
Yellowstone cutthroat trout *Oncorhynchus clarki bouvieri*
Bear Lake whitefish *Prosopium abyssiicola*
Bonneville cisco *Prosopium gemmifer*
Bonneville whitefish *Prosopium spilonotus*
Bear Lake sculpin *Cottus extensus*

Amphibians

Conservation Agreement Species

Columbia spotted frog *Rana luteiventris*

Wildlife Species of Concern

western toad *Bufo boreas*
Arizona toad *Bufo microscaphus*

Reptiles

Wildlife Species of Concern

zebra-tailed lizard *Callisaurus draconoides*
western banded gecko *Coleonyx variegatus*
desert iguana *Dipsosaurus dorsalis*
Gila monster *Heloderma suspectum*
common chuckwalla *Sauromalus ater*
desert night lizard *Xantusia vigilis*
sidewinder *Crotalus cerastes*
speckled rattlesnake *Crotalus mitchellii*

Mojave rattlesnake *Crotalus scutulatus*
cornsnake *Elaphe guttata*
smooth greensnake *Opheodrys vernalis*
western threadsnake *Leptotyphlops humilis*

Birds

Federal Candidate Species

Gunnison Sage-grouse *Centrocercus minimus*
Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

Conservation Agreement Species

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Wildlife Species of Concern

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*
Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*
Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*
Greater Sage-grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus*
Black Swift *Cypseloides niger*
Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*
Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*
Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*
American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*
Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus*
Sharp-tailed Grouse *Tympanuchus phasianellus*

Mammals

Wildlife Species of Concern

Preble's shrew *Sorex preblei*
Townsend's big-eared bat *Corynorhinus townsendii*
spotted bat *Euderma maculatum*
Allen's big-eared bat *Idionycteris phyllotis*
western red bat *Lasiurus blossevillii*
fringed myotis *Myotis thysanodes*
big free-tailed bat *Nyctinomops macrotis*
pygmy rabbit *Brachylagus idahoensis*
Gunnison's prairie-dog *Cynomys gunnisoni*
white-tailed prairie-dog *Cynomys leucurus*
silky pocket mouse *Perognathus flavus*
dark kangaroo mouse *Microdipodops megacephalus*
Mexican vole *Microtus mexicanus*
kit fox *Vulpes macrotis*

Mollusks

Federal Candidate Species

Ogden rocky mountainsnail *Oreohelix peripherica wasatchensis*

fat-whorled pondsnail *Stagnicola bonnevillensis*

Wildlife Species of Concern

southern tightcoil *Ogaridiscus subrupicola*

Eureka mountainsnail *Oreohelix eurekaensis*

lyrate mountainsnail *Oreohelix haydeni*

Brian Head mountainsnail *Oreohelix parawanensis*

Deseret mountainsnail *Oreohelix peripherica*

Yavapai mountainsnail *Oreohelix yavapai*

cloaked physa *Physa megalochlamys*

Utah physa *Physella utahensis*

wet-rock physa *Physella zionis*

longitudinal gland pyrg *Pyrgulopsis anguina*

smooth Glenwood pyrg *Pyrgulopsis chamberlini*

desert springsnail *Pyrgulopsis deserta*

Otter Creek pyrg *Pyrgulopsis fusca*

Hamlin Valley pyrg *Pyrgulopsis hamlinensis*

carinate Glenwood pyrg *Pyrgulopsis inopinata*

Ninemile pyr g *Pyrgulopsis nonaria*

bifid duct pyrg *Pyrgulopsis peculiaris*

Bear Lake springsnail *Pyrgulopsis pilsbryana*

Black Canyon pyrg *Pyrgulopsis plicata*

sub-globose Snake pyrg *Pyrgulopsis saxatilis*

southern Bonneville pyrg *Pyrgulopsis transversa*

northwest Bonneville pyrg *Pyrgulopsis variegata*

California floater *Anodonta californiensis*

western pearlshell *Margaritifera falcata*