

Draft FARM AND RANCLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM (FRPP) Ranking Criteria for Utah FY 2007

- I. Is the application submitted by an eligible entity? Yes No (If no, return application)
- II. Is there documentation of a pending offer? Yes No (Required by program rules, if no return application)
- III. Is there a recent (within the last 12 months) appraisal using new appraisal guidelines found in United States Land Acquisition Procedures (“the Yellow Book”) on the property? Yes No (To be used as a tie breaker)

IV. PERCENTAGE OF SOILS AND/OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR HISTORIC RESOURCES

Maximum 63 points

Percentage of some combination of prime, unique and/or farmland of statewide or local importance relative to the entire parcel of land being offered and/or contains historic or archaeological resources.*
(NRCS employees will not accept parcels unless they meet the eligibility criteria set forth in sections 519.32c, 519.32d, and 519.32e of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Manual.)

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
<50%	NOT ELIGIBLE - do not continue ranking	STOP
>50 %	10 Points (Baseline) plus	
	1 pt. for every % increase of prime, unique,	
	Statewide, etc. soil	

Ex. Producer has 100 acres of which 65 are prime, unique etc and 35 that are not.

Scoring= 10 pts. + (65% -50%= 15%) = 25 total points

** For the farm or ranchland to be eligible under this provision, the applicant must provide documentation showing that historical or archaeological resources are located on the farm or ranchland and are:*

- *Listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or*
- *Formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), or*
- *Formally listed in the State or Tribal Register of Historic Places.*

If eligible historic or archaeological resources are located on the offered land, the following ranking criteria will apply.

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
Listed in the NRHP	3 Points	
Eligible for listing in the NRHP	2 Points	
Listed in the state or tribal register	1 Points	

II. EXISTING LAND USE

Maximum 18 Points

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
Cropland Hayland/Pastureland (grasslands)	18 Points	
Rangeland (native vegetation)	14 Points	

Prorate if your offer has a mixture of any land use. Cropland or rangeland can contain **incidental forest land (less than 50 percent)**

III. PROXIMITY TO PROTECTED CLUSTER(S)

Maximum 15 Points

Parcels that contribute to large protected contiguous tracts. Parcels that link to other Private, Federal, Tribal, State, local, or non-governmental organizations’ efforts with objectives complementary to farm and ranch land protection. These clusters must be at least 20 acres in size. (i.e., undeveloped open space, watershed and wildlife protection, etc.). Note: a trail across an adjacent property is not classified as “developed”.

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
Adjacent (property lines touch)	15 Points	
> Adjacent – 1320'	10 points	
1321' - 2640'	5 Points	

Wilderness or other permanent easements for open space and/or agriculture use are protected clusters. (Ag Zoning is NOT a protected cluster.)

** FRPP will not fund the acquisition of eligible lands, if the NRCS State Conservationist or NRCS National Office determine that the protection provided by FRPP would be ineffective due to on-site or off-site conditions. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, the presence of hazardous materials on the parcel or a neighboring site and the close proximity of the site to an area zoned for development.*

IV. USDA FRPP COST/ ACRE

Maximum 15 points

Fair-market easement value multiplied by NRCS contribution percentage divided by the total acres of pending offer.

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
\$1,000 - \$2,000	15 Points	
\$2,001 - \$3,000	14 Points	
\$3,001 - \$4,000	13 Points	
\$4,001 - \$5,000	12 Points	
\$5,001 - \$6,000	11 Points	
\$6,001 - \$7,000	10 Points	
\$7,001 - \$8,000	9 Points	
\$8,001 - \$9,000	8 Points	
\$9,001 - \$10,000	7 Points	

\$10,001 - \$11,000	6 Points	
\$11,001 - \$12,000	5 Points	
\$12,001 - \$13,000	4 Points	
\$13,001 - \$14,000	3 Points	
\$14,001 - \$15,000	2 Points	
>\$15,001	1 Point	

Example:

Appraised fair market easement: value /acre	\$10,000
Total acres of offer:	600
Total appraised fair market easement value is	\$6,000,000

$$\frac{\$6,000,000}{600} \times .50 \text{ equals } \$5,000$$

This example would earn 12 points.

the State Conservationist determines that the purchase of two or more conservation easements are comparable in achieving FRPP goals, the State Conservationist shall not assign a higher priority to any one of these conservation easements based on lesser cost to FRPP. In other words, where two or more easements share the same number of ranking points, and only one parcel may be funded, one easement will not be ranked higher than the other(s) based on FRPP investment in the conservation easement. Criteria other than cost must be used to break the tie.

V. LEVERAGING

Maximum 40 Points

What percentage of the easement offer requires USDA funds?
 Funding requested from USDA, for easement:

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
< 19 %	10 Points	
20 - 24 %	9 Points	
25 - 29 %	8 Points	
30 - 34 %	7 Points	
35 - 39 %	6 Points	
40 - 44 %	5 Points	
45 - 50 %	4 Points	
> 50 %	Not eligible	

Document the leveraging:
 What are the funding sources?
 Are they committed? If yes,

NRCS easement cost			\$
Identified	Applications only?	Committed?	
Other Sources cost (list name)	Yes No	Yes No	\$
Other Sources cost (list name)	Yes No	Yes No	\$
Total easement cost			\$

Application made (2 points total)
 Committed (2 points for every 10% of matching funds needed 30 POINT max) _____ Points

VI. HISTORY OF ENTITY EASEMENT WORK

Maximum 6 Points

Participating entities' histories of acquiring, managing, holding, and enforcing easements, (including annual farmland protection expenditures, monetary donations received, accomplishments, and staff).

** In evaluating proposals, priority ranking should be given to those entities with a long-standing and successful history in acquiring and protecting farmland and that have extensive experience in managing and enforcing easements and adequate staff to manage stewardship responsibilities.*

	Points Allowed	Your Project Value
Greater than 5 easements	6 Points	
1-5 easements held	3 Points	

Name of Organization Holding Easement:

Address:
Phone Number:
Contact Person:

VII. HEL/Wetland Compliance and Conservation Plan

Maximum 7 Points

Intent: place a higher priority on farms that already meet FRPP conservation compliance requirements.

Application includes a current (prepared, revised, or reviewed within the last 5 years) conservation plan with a plan map AND signed AD-1026 forms(s) for all fields owned by the landowner.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Current Conservation Plan. | 5 points |
| 2. Conservation Plan has practices planned or implemented (within past 5 years) that will benefit wildlife habitat. | 2 points |
| 3. Does not meet the above criteria. | 0 points |

VIII. Land Evaluation Site Assessment Plan (LESA) or Similar Plan

Maximum 5 Points

Intent: give priority to county or, local areas that have developed land evaluation prioritization procedures.

Was offered acreage prioritized according to LESA or comparable plan? Yes=5 pts
(Documentation must accompany written proposal for points to be given.) NO= 0 pts

SUMMARY OF THE CRITERIA

Total Points by Sections

Section	Available Points (% of whole)	Your Total Project Value
I. Percentage of Soils and/or Archaeological or Historic Resources	63 (38)	
II. Existing Land Use	18 (11)	
III. Proximity to Protected Cluster(s)	15 (9)	
IV. USDA FRPP Cost/Acre	15 (9)	
V. Leveraging	40 (24)	
VI. History of Entity Easement Work	6 (3)	
VII. HEL/Wetland Compliance Plan/Con. Plan	7 (4)	
VIII. LESA or Similar Plan	5 (2)	
TOTAL POINTS:	169	

Submit “offers” as requested in the RFP to:

**Sylvia Gillen, State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building
125 South State Street, Room 4402
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138-11**

(A) Application Steps, Defined

The following steps outline FRPP application procedures.

- Step 1:** Landowners interested in participating in FRPP submit an application to eligible non-governmental organizations or State, Tribal, and local governments that have an existing farm and ranchland protection program.
- Step 2:** When funds are available, NRCS publishes a public notice or Request for Proposals in the *Federal Register* to solicit funding proposals from Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have existing farm and ranch land protection programs.
- Step 3:** Non-governmental organizations, State, Tribal or local entities submit FRPP proposals to the State Conservationist by the date specified in the Request for Proposals.
- Step 4:** The NRCS State Conservationist receives the proposals and determines entity and land eligibility.
- Step 5:** The NRCS State Conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, may rank the parcels based on the criteria in the State FRPP plan and/or LESA system or similar land evaluation system used to evaluate parcels.(Utah ranking Criteria will be used)
- Step 6:** The NRCS State Conservationist makes awards to eligible entities based on the funds provided by the NRCS National Office. Once selected, NRCS will enter into cooperative agreements with selected entities.
- Step7:** Following cooperative agreement signature by NRCS and the selected entity, funds may be obligated to the entity and the entity may begin to purchase conservation easements.

The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) sub-committee received comments concerning the 2006 ranking criteria and proposes using the following the ranking. The FRPP manual specifically states that the purpose of the program is to

Minimum program criteria require that offered parcel(s) contain at least 50% prime, unique, statewide or local important soil. In addition to minimum criteria, the sub-committee proposes using this item as a value to score proposals. The higher the percentage of required soils, the higher the values, thus a higher ranking score.

“Land Use” value was determined to be of importance in differentiating projects by the potential yield, forage type, and quality the proposed parcels are producing for sustained agriculture.

“Proximity to Protected Cluster” value was altered slightly to try and protect agricultural land near other protected lands. The alteration included a size minimum of 20 acres of already protected land. By doing this the sub-committee feels that sustained agriculture can be obtained over time if protected parcels are near each other rather than sporadically located.

The “FRPP Cost/Acre” value was altered to provide a point allocation for each thousand dollar interval below \$15,000/ac. This value is to award proposals that have lower cost/acre and possibly allowing for additional acreage to be protected.

The “Leveraging” value was adjusted to allocate a point for every 5% less requirement of public funds and entity may secure. Each entity that is capable of securing additional non-government dollars, allows for FRPP to be distributed further among the proposals submitted.

Additional comments were received concerning Threatened and Endangered Species. Clarification of Criteria VII indicates that a proposal may receive up to 7 additional points if the producer has a current Conservation Plan and is promoting a benefit to Wildlife Habitat.