

## WHIP FY2011 Ranking Guide

<b>National Ranking Questions(250 points)</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1.</b> Will the proposed project assist the applicant to:		
<b>a.</b> Retain wildlife and plant benefits on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program?	<b>40</b>	Self-explanatory
<b>b.</b> Address and support existing conservation initiatives such as but not limited to the following (sage Grouse, Lesser Prairie Chicken, Longleaf Pine, New England-New York Forestry) or new conservation initiatives that support State, National or tribal fish or wildlife plans?	<b>40</b>	Application must be addressing the New England-NY Forestry Initiative or New England Cottontail.
<b>c.</b> Benefit federally listed threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate fish or wildlife species of concern?	<b>20</b>	Application must benefit <i>FEDERAL</i> listed species or <i>FEDERAL</i> candidate species. USFWS coordination will be required.
<b>d.</b> Benefit prioritized native habitat critical to a fish or wildlife species?	<b>20</b>	Application must entail restoration/management of priority habitat types designated in MA State WHIP Plan (i.e., salt marsh, freshwater marsh, wet meadow, shrub wetland, rivers-streams, grassland, pitch pine-scrub oak, oak forest, young forest, shrub land)
<b>e.</b> Increase, improve or establish pollinator habitat?	<b>20</b>	Application must include pollinator practice(s)
<b>f.</b> Eradicate or control prioritized noxious or invasive species?	<b>20</b>	Application must be targeting an exotic invasive plant on the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List <a href="http://www.mass.gov/agr/famproducts/proposed_prohibited_plant_list_v12-12-05.htm">http://www.mass.gov/agr/famproducts/proposed_prohibited_plant_list_v12-12-05.htm</a>
<b>g.</b> Benefit declining or important aquatic wildlife species prioritized in the State WHIP plan?	<b>20</b>	Application must include practices that will benefit aquatic species (turtles, fishes, mussels, etc) noted in the MA State WHIP plan.
<b>h.</b> Implement conservation practices which benefit prioritized fish or wildlife species in forested areas?	<b>15</b>	Application must include practices creating young forest habitat or snag creation.
<b>i.</b> Establish habitat on pivot corners and irregular areas on agricultural land	<b>10</b>	Applicant must meet the definition of an ag producer and land must be associated with the agricultural tract
<b>j.</b> Provide self-sustaining habitat for prioritized fish and wildlife while reducing net carbon emissions or boosting carbon storage?	<b>10</b>	Application must include practices that will result in <u>increased</u> perennial vegetative cover from current conditions (e.g., converting ag land to perennial vegetation)
<b>k.</b> Benefit migration and other movement corridors for prioritized wildlife?	<b>15</b>	Prioritized wildlife includes all at-risk species noted in MA State WHIP Plan
<b>2.</b> Will the applicant complete habitat development within the first two years of the agreement?	<b>20</b>	Self-explanatory

<b>State Ranking Questions (450 points)</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Notes</b>
		<b>Orange text = KFAF ranking tool differences (i.e., variation in points, wording and additional question).</b>
<b>1.</b> STATE PRIORITY HABITAT - Answer only one of the following. Is the proposed project:	<b>100 max</b>	Application must entail:
<b>a.</b> A Priority 1 action in the MA State WHIP plan <span style="color: #e67e22;">OR KFAF – wildlife application? (KFAF ranking tool only)</span>	100	Wetland restoration; fish passage; riparian buffer est.; grassland restoration/mgmt; pitch pine-scrub oak restoration/mgmt; or young forest-shrubland restoration/mgmt.
<b>b.</b> A Priority 2 action in the MA State WHIP plan <span style="color: #e67e22;">OR KFAF - production application? (KFAF ranking tool only)</span>	75	Invasive species control as only practice; pollinator habitat creation; forestry practices, oak regen, shrub row creation
<b>c.</b> Neither a Priority 1 nor Priority 2 action in the MA State WHIP plan?	0	
<b>2.</b> HABITAT IMPROVEMENT - Answer only one of the following. The habitat assessment score between the current condition and planned condition increased by:	<b>100 max (50 max)</b>	Complete the MA Habitat Assessment Guide for the existing and planned condition.
<b>a.</b> More than 0.5 points?	100 (50)	
<b>b.</b> Between 0.3 and 0.5 points?	60 (30)	
<b>c.</b> Less than 0.3 points?	25 (15)	
<b>3.</b> HABITAT SCALE - Is the proposed project an appropriate scale for the targeted species?	<b>50</b>	Solicit input from Mass Wildlife (Marianne Piche, Dave Paulson, etc) or state NRCS staff
<b>4.</b> NHESP PRIORITY HABITAT – Is the proposed project located within NHESP Priority Habitat AND will it benefit the listed species?	<b>50</b>	Proposed project must be approved by NHESP as Exemption 11 (active management of state-listed species) under MESA.
<b>5.</b> LIKLIHOOD OF SUCCESS - Answer only one of the following. The proposed project:	<b>150 max</b>	

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a. Is technically feasible and likely to achieve the wildlife goals?	150	
b. Has some potential limitations that may impact success?	50	
c. Has substantial limitations that will likely impact success?	-450	
<b>6. Is the proposed project located within an intact forested landscape of at least 100 acres?</b>	<b>50</b>	

<b>Local Ranking Questions (250 points)</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket Counties</b>		
1. Is the proposed project located within ½ mile to a state wildlife management area, local, private or non-governmental protected open space that provides quality habitat?	<b>45</b>	
2. Will the proposed project benefit multiple listed species (i.e., 2 or more)?	<b>45</b>	
3. Will the proposed project directly benefit the globally rare sandplain grass habitat?	<b>80</b>	
4. Will the proposed project directly benefit any one of these species: American eel, New England cottontail, or Spadefoot toad?	<b>80</b>	
<b>Berkshire County</b>		
1. Is the project of an appropriate scale for the species targeted (e.g., grassland: minimum 5 acres for turtles, 10 acres for grassland nesting birds; shrubland/young forest: minimum 5 acres; riparian buffer: minimum 35 feet)	<b>75</b>	
2. Will the proposed project benefit a state listed species in the County?	<b>50</b>	
3. Is the proposed project located on protected land (i.e., C61, CR land, etc.)?	<b>25</b>	
4. Answer only one of the following. The proposed project will benefit:	<b>100 max</b>	
a. >5 species in greatest need of conservation or WHIP listed species?	100	
b. 1 to 5 species in greatest need of conservation or WHIP listed species?	75	
<b>Franklin County</b>		
1. Is the proposed project a single, progressive practice that is working to implement a whole farm plan?	<b>25</b>	
2. Are 2 or more resource concerns being addressed by the proposed project?	<b>100</b>	
3. Is the proposed project located within ½ mile to a state wildlife management area, local, private or non-governmental protected open space that provides quality habitat?	<b>50</b>	
4. Is the project of an appropriate scale for the species targeted (e.g., grassland: minimum 5 acres for turtles, 10 acres for grassland nesting birds; shrubland/young forest: minimum 5 acres; riparian buffer: minimum 35 feet)	<b>25</b>	
5. Answer one of the following.	<b>50 max</b>	
a. For grassland projects, has there been any management activity completed within the last 10 years (ex., delayed mowing, liming, invasive species control, reseeding, etc.)?	50	
b. For forestry projects needing a forest management plan, has there been any recent activity done within the last 5 years (ex., communication with forester, harvesting or thinning, invasive control, etc.)?	50	
<b>Hampden, Hampshire Counties</b>		
1. Will the proposed project assist the producer to control a heavy infestation of invasive species?	<b>75</b>	
2. Is the proposed project located within ½ mile of state owned land that is managed for wildlife?	<b>38</b>	
3. Will the proposed project enhance an existing habitat management effort with regards to its juxtaposition to other similar or complementary habitat patches?	<b>25</b>	

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<b>Local Ranking Questions (cont.)</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Notes</b>
4. Will the proposed project entail implementing prescriptions outlined in the producer's forest management plan?	<b>12</b>	
5. Answer one of the following. Will the proposed project:	<b>100 max</b>	
a. Benefit >5 at-risk species as identified in the MA State WHIP plan?	<b>100</b>	
b. Benefit 1 – 5 at risk species as identified in the MA State WHIP plan?	<b>40</b>	
c. Provide no benefits to at-risk species?	<b>0</b>	
<b>Middlesex, Essex, Suffolk Counties</b>		
1. Will the planned practices address a specific endangered, threatened or at-risk species identified on the site by a Natural Heritage Estimated or Priority Habitat polygon or documented by a local monitoring program?	<b>51</b>	
2. Is hunting or another wildlife management technique practiced on the property to maintain a desired population balance?	<b>26</b>	
3. Will the proposed project AVOID removing Prime and State Important soils from agricultural production?	<b>51</b>	
4. Will the proposed project help the participant to implement their forest management or forest stewardship plan?	<b>20</b>	
5. Have all regulatory permits been obtained OR no regulatory permits are needed to complete the proposed project?	<b>102</b>	
<b>Plymouth, Bristol, Norfolk Counties</b>		
1. Will the proposed project further the participant's implementation of their forest management plan?	<b>65</b>	
2. Will the proposed practices provide pollinator habitat?	<b>65</b>	
3. Will the proposed project enhance similar or complementary habitat in the area?	<b>60</b>	
4. Is the project of an appropriate scale for the species targeted (e.g., grassland: minimum 5 acres for turtles, 10 acres for grassland nesting birds; shrubland/young forest: minimum 5 acres; riparian buffer: minimum 35 feet)	<b>60</b>	
<b>Worcester County</b>		
1. Will the proposed project benefit a state listed species within "core habitat or riparian area" as designated by the Massachusetts BioMap or Living Waters Projects?	<b>70</b>	
2. Will the proposed project benefit at least 5 state listed species in greatest need of conservation or WHIP listed species?	<b>82</b>	
3. Is the proposed project of an appropriate scale for the species that will benefit, and is it within the proper landscape context? (SCALE – grassland: minimum 5 acres for reptiles, 10 acres for grassland dependent birds; shrubland: minimum 5 acres; riparian buffer: minimum 35 feet; pollinator border: minimum 35 feet. CONTEXT – evaluation of overall property and nearby landscape)	<b>63</b>	
4. Will the proposed project create habitat contiguous with similar habitat or will it provide habitat diversity on a landscape scale?	<b>35</b>	