

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**Application Ranking Questions**

**WHIP Working Lands for Wildlife (New England Cottontail)**

**National Priorities Addressed**

Issue Questions	Responses
Healthy Plant & Animal Communities - Wildlife Habitat Conservation - Will the proposed project assist the applicant implement practices which:	
1. a. Retain wildlife and plant benefits on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?	40 Point(s)
1. b. Support existing or new national or landscape initiatives that support State, National or tribal fish or wildlife plans such as: <u>Working Lands for Wildlife</u>	40 Point(s)
1. c. Benefit federally listed threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, fish or wildlife species of concern?	25 Point(s)
1. d. Benefit State WHIP Plan (SWP) prioritized native habitat critical to a fish or wildlife species?	20 Point(s)
1. e. Increase, improve or establish pollinator habitat?	20 Point(s)
1. f. Eradicate or control SWP prioritized noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	15 Point(s)
1. g. Benefit declining or important aquatic wildlife species prioritized in the SWP?	20 Point(s)
1. h. Benefit SWP prioritized fish or wildlife species in forested areas?	15 Point(s)
1. i. Establish habitat on pivot corners and irregular areas on agricultural land?	10 Point(s)
1. j. Provide self-sustaining habitat for SWP prioritized fish and wildlife while reducing net carbon emissions or boosting carbon storage (e.g., warm season perennial grasses, trees or shrubs)?	10 Point(s)
1. k. Benefit migration and other movement corridors for SWP prioritized wildlife?	15 Point(s)
Business Lines - Conservation Implementation - Additional Ranking Considerations - Will the applicant in the proposed project:	
2. a. Implement wildlife habitat practices scheduled in the Schedule or Plan of Operations (NRCS-CPA-1155) within the first two years of date of obligation of the agreement?	20 Point(s)

**State Issues Addressed**

Issue Questions	Responses
1. a: Species Presence: Is there credible verification of species occurrence (for example, photos, Heritage Database, USFWS, NRCS or State fish and wildlife agency documentation)? This should not be taken to imply that a site visit is required. Value = 200 pts	200 Point(s)
1. b: Species Presence: Based upon available species occurrence data and information, is the target species assumed to occur within the offered area? Value = 100 pts	100 Point(s)
2. a: Distance to Known Populations: The offered area shares a common border in an area with known populations of the target species? Value = 50 pts	50 Point(s)
2. b: Distance to Known Populations: The offered area is proximal to an area with a known population of the target species. Proximal means within the accepted normal species dispersal ability. Value = 35 pts	35 Point(s)
3. Will 75% or more of the practices be located within the "Focal Area"? Value = 15 pts	15 Point(s)

**Local Issues Addressed**

Issue Questions	Responses
1. Is the property under conservation easment (protected land not able to be developed)? Value = 100	100 Point(s)
2. Is the patch being created >12 contiguous acres? Value = 75	75 Point(s)
3. Is the patch being created > 5 contiguous acres? Value = 50	50 Point(s)
4. Is the patch being created adjacent to other habitat or dispersal corridors such as power lines, train tracks, shrub wetlands? Value = 25	25 Point(s)