

# Ranking Criteria for FY2024 RCPP 2035 Buffalo Creek Watershed Entity-Held-Easements

| Section: Applicability Question                        |                |        |
|--|----------------|--------|
| Question   | Answer Choices | Points |
| Is the proposed easement area located in Pennsylvania? | YES            | --     |
|  | NO             | --     |

| Section: Category Question  |                |        |
|---|----------------|--------|
| Question  | Answer Choices | Points |
| Is the application for a forest or agricultural land easement located in the Buffalo Creek watershed? (Geospatial answered) | Yes            | --     |
|   | Otherwise      | --     |

| Section: Program Questions  |   |        |
|---|---|--------|
| Question  | Answer Choices  | Points |
| Application directly addresses the resource concern identified in PPA Attachment 4 -"Long term protection of the Land to protect soils and agricultural use".   | YES   | 50     |
|   | NO  | 0      |
| PPA exhibits identify direct relationship between proposed activities and partner contributions, and application leverages RCPP funding with partner contributions.   | YES   | 50     |
|   | NO  | 0      |
| Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland in the parcel to be protected.   | a. Greater than 80% prime soils                               | 50     |
|   | b. Greater than 70% and less than or equal to 80% prime soils | 40     |
|   | c. Greater than 60% and less than or equal to 70% prime soils | 25     |
|   | d. Greater than 50% and less than or equal to 60%             | 10     |
| Protecting the parcel provides multifunctional benefits of agricultural or forest land protection or improvement; the landowners a historically underserved group, small scale farmer, limited resource landowner, new or beginning farmer or rancher or veteran landowner. | YES   | 50     |
|   | NO  | 0      |

| Section: Resource Questions for Forest Land OR Agricultural Land Easements            |   |        |
|---|---|--------|
| Question  | Answer Choices  | Points |
| Percent of project area located within Buffalo Creek Watershed. (Geospatial answered) | a. 100%   | 17     |
|   | b. Greater than 75% but less than 100%  | 12     |
|   | c. Greater than 50% but less than or equal to 75%   | 8      |
|   | d. Greater than 25% but less than or equal to 50%   | 4      |
|   | e. Zero points for projects with less than 25% of project area in Buffalo Creek Watershed | 0      |
|   | Otherwise   | --     |

| Section: Resource Questions for Forest Land OR Agricultural Land Easements   |  |        |
|--|--|--------|
| Question   | Answer Choices   | Points |
| Percent of cropland, rangeland, grassland, historic grassland, pastureland, or nonindustrial private forest land in parcel to be protected. (select one)                                 | a. Greater than 50 percent   | 17     |
|  | b. Greater than 40 percent and less than or equal to 50 percent  | 8      |
|  | c. Greater than 33 percent and less than or equal to 40 percent  | 4      |
|  | Zero points for 33 percent or less   | 0      |
| Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to the average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture (www.agcensus.usda.gov). * | Ratio greater than 2.0   | 15     |
|  | Ratio greater than 1.0 and less than or equal to 2.0   | 7      |
|  | Ratio of 1.0 or less   | 0      |
| Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (www.agcensus.usda.gov). *   | Decrease of more than 15 percent   | 16     |
|  | Decrease of greater than 10 and less than or equal to 15 percent   | 9      |
|  | Decrease of greater than 5 and less than or equal to 10 percent  | 5      |
|  | Decrease of greater than 0 and less than or equal to 5 percent   | 1      |
|  | Less than 0 percent  | 0      |
| Percent population growth in the county as documented by the United States Census (www.census.gov).*   | Growth rate of more than 3.0 times the State growth rate State growth rate   | 10     |
|  | Growth rate of 2.0 and less than 3.0 times the State growth rate County growth rate                                    | 7      |
|  | Growth rate of greater than 1.0 and less than 2.0 times the State growth rate  | 4      |
|  | Growth rate of 1.0 or less   | 0      |
| Population density (county population per square mile) as documented by the most recent United States Census.*   | Population density of greater than three times the State population density State Density                              | 10     |
|  | Population density of greater than two and less than three times the State population density County Density           | 7      |
|  | Population density of greater than one and less than two times the State population density                            | 4      |
|  | Population density less than one times the state population density  | 0      |
| Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure.*   | Parcel boundary adjoins other agricultural operations and infrastructure   | 10     |
|  | Parcel boundary is within one mile of other agricultural operations and infrastructure                                 | 7      |
|  | Parcel boundary is greater than one mile but less than three miles of other agricultural operations and infrastructure | 4      |
|  | Parcel boundary is greater than three miles from other ag operations and infrastructure                                | 0      |
| Parcel ability to maximize the protection of contiguous or proximal acres devoted to agricultural use.*  | Parcel links two non-continuous corridors of protected agricultural use  | 15     |
|  | Parcel is a contiguous or proximal expansion of agricultural use protected area  | 7      |
|  | Parcel does not increase a protected agricultural use area   | 0      |

| Section: Resource Questions for Forest Land OR Agricultural Land Easements   |   |        |
|--|---|--------|
| Question   | Answer Choices  | Points |
| Existence of a farm succession plan or similar plan established to address agricultural viability for future generations.*   | YES   | 5      |
|  | NO  | 0      |
| The land is currently enrolled into CRP that will expire within 1 year.*   | YES   | 5      |
|  | NO  | 0      |
| Parcel is located adjacent to a waterway of special environmental significance that will benefit from a permanent agricultural easement.*  | YES   | 15     |
|  | NO  | 0      |
| The landowner has a current conservation plan addressing soil, water, plant, animal and other potential resource concerns. The conservation plan accurately reflects the current ag operation/management of the parcel.* | YES   | 15     |
|  | NO  | 0      |
| The Parcel is located within an area zoned for agricultural use, is located within an Agricultural Security Area or other locally identified unique agricultural area.*  | YES   | 10     |
|  | NO  | 0      |
| The Parcel contains an archaeological or historical resource.  | YES   | 5      |
|  | NO  | 0      |
| Percent of the Fair Market Value (FMV) of the easement that is the eligible entity's own cash resources for payment of easement compensation to the landowner and comes from sources other than the landowner.           | a. Eligible Entity is providing 50% or more of the FMV                        | 10     |
|  | b. Eligible Entity is providing at least 33% but less than 50% of the FMV     | 5      |
|  | Zero points if Eligible Entity is providing less than 33% of the FMV          | 0      |
| Proximity and connectivity to permanently protected areas (State or Federal forests/parks/easements, game lands, other conservation easements).  | Project is directly adjacent to an existing permanently protected area        | 15     |
|  | Project is within 1 mile of an existing permanently protected area            | 10     |
|  | Project is within 3 miles of an existing permanently protected area           | 5      |
|  | Project greater than 3 miles away from an existing permanently protected area | 0      |
| Threatened, Endangered, and Special Concern Species (maintain rare native species) (Attach PNDI print to ranking form).  | YES   | 10     |
|  | NO  | 0      |