

2017 Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACEP) Wetland Reserve Easement Ranking Form

ELIGIBLE LAND TYPES* (Please check all that apply)

** See WRP Manual for complete definition*

- Degraded or Altered Wetland (Hydrology must be impacted) _____
- Farmed Wetlands or Converted Wetlands in General _____
- Swampbuster Categories _____
- Lands Substantially Altered by Flooding _____
- Former or Degraded Wetlands (Hydrological Alteration has to be present) _____
- Croplands _____
- Grasslands _____
- Riparian Areas _____
- Lands in CRP program (Excluding Riparian Buffers) _____
- Wetlands Restored under a Local, State, or other Federal Program _____
- Adjacent Lands _____

NOTES:

Environmental Considerations

Hydrology

A. Existing Wetland Manipulations (complete #1 or #2 below)

1 Wetlands with annual cropping history

Score

- a) Wetland has **significant** hydrologic modification on-site and will have the hydrology restored to the extent determined technically feasible resulting in a significant increase in the functions and values of the wetland. Examples include but are not limited to: fill, drainage ditches, pits, tiles, pumping or flooding of such magnitude that permanent wetland hydrologic conditions are created. 50
- b) Wetland has **moderate** hydrologic modification on site, and will have hydrology restored to the extent determined technically feasible resulting in a moderate increase in the functions and values of the wetland. Examples include but are not limited to: alterations due to farming or substantial grazing. 25
- c) Wetland has **minor** hydrologic modification. Examples include but are not limited to: removal of woody species and minor alterations due to grazing. 10

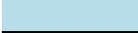
2 Wetlands with no **ANNUAL** cropping history

Score

- a) Wetland has **significant** hydrologic modification on-site and will have the hydrology restored to the extent determined technically feasible resulting in a significant increase in the functions and values of the wetland. Examples include but are not limited to: fill, drainage ditches, pits, tiles, pumping or flooding of such magnitude that permanent wetland hydrologic conditions are created. 30
- b) Wetland has **moderate** hydrologic modification on site, and will have hydrology restored to the extent determined technically feasible resulting in a moderate increase in the functions and values of the wetland. Examples include but are not limited to: alterations due to farming or substantial grazing. 20
- c) Wetland has **minor** hydrologic modification. Examples include but are not limited to: removal of woody species and minor alterations due to grazing. 10

B. Percentage of wetland hydrology on easement restored to pre-agricultural conditions.	Score	
a) 51% or greater	50	
b) 26-50%	25	
c) 0-25%	10	

Wildlife

A. Wildlife Habitat for T&E and Species of Concern	Score	
a) Easement acquisition and restoration efforts are specifically focused on the recovery of one or more federally listed threatened or endangered species.	15	
b) Site will generally contribute to the protection or recovery of a federally listed T&E species, a proposed threatened/proposed endangered or a candidate species as listed in the FOTG Section II.	10	
c) Site will generally contribute to the protection or recovery of a STATE species of concern (e.g. species having a state rank of S1, S2, or S3 on the Montana National Heritage Program animal or plant SOC list).	5	

B. Species Suitability	Score	
a) Post restoration site will provide significant benefits for waterfowl, shorebirds (including wading birds), and neotropical migrants.	15	
b) Post restoration site will provide significant benefits for two of the groups listed above.	10	
c) Post restoration site will provide significant benefits for one of the groups listed above.	5	

C. Landscape Context	Score	
a) Easement area is located directly adjacent to 640 or more acres of primarily native habitat?	15	
b) Easement area is located directly adjacent to 320-639 acres of primarily native habitat?	10	
c) Easement area is located directly adjacent to 160-319 acres of primarily native habitat?	5	
d) Easement area is located directly adjacent to less than 160 acres of primarily native habitat.	0	

*Professional judgement should be used to evaluate conditions of surrounding land and their likelihood of providing reasonable habitat quality.

D. Proximity to other protected lands?

Score

- | | |
|---|----|
| a) Easement is located adjacent to permanently protected lands (other conservation easements, NWR, WMA, etc). | 15 |
| b) Easement is located within 1/2 a mile of permanently protected lands (other conservation easements, NWR, WMA, etc). | 10 |
| c) Easement is located within 1 mile of permanently protected lands (other conservation easements, NWR, WMA, etc). | 5 |
| d) Easement is located greater than 1 mile permanently protected lands (other conservation easements, NWR, WMA, etc). | 0 |

Water Quality Effects

*Restored or enhanced wetlands will serve as a filter to remove sediments and associated pollutants.

A. Wetland surface area after restoration/enhancement will be:

Score

- | | |
|--------------------------|----|
| a) Greater than 75 acres | 15 |
| b) Greater than 50 acres | 10 |
| c) Greater than 25 acres | 5 |
| d) Less than 25 acres | 0 |

Other Environmental Considerations

A. Percent of Easement that will be wetland?

*Use a weighted average if more than one wetland type exists on project site

1. Depressional Wetlands:

Score

- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| a) Less than 60% | 20 |
| b) 60-79% | 15 |
| c) 80% or greater | 10 |

2. All other Wetland types:

Score

- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| a) 75% or greater | 10 |
| b) 51% or greater | 5 |
| c) Less than 50% | 0 |

Economic Considerations

A. Restoration and Enhancement costs to NRCS?

Score

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| a) Less than \$500/ acre | 50 |
| b) \$500 - \$1,000 per acre | 25 |
| c) Greater than \$1,000 per acre | 10 |

B. Operation and Maintenance	Score	<input type="text"/>
a) Low: Easement area will have passive water management and minimal operation and maintenance characteristics post restoration.	25	
b) Medium: Easement will exhibit moderate to high operation and maintenance characteristics post restoration. A qualifying entity will sign a long term Operations and Maintenance 5 agreement for the easement.	15	
c) High: Easement will exhibit moderate to high operation and maintenance characteristics post restoration. NRCS will perform operation and maintenance activities.	5	

Special Considerations

A. Easement Size?	Score	<input type="text"/>
a) Greater than 400 acres	50	
b) Greater than 150 acres	30	
c) Greater than 50 acres	10	
d) Less than 50 acres	0	

Bonus Points

A. Is project a Permanent Easement?	Score	<input type="text"/>
	50	
B. Is project located in region or watershed that has active locally led conservation effort? (Describe below)	Score	<input type="text"/>
	30	

Total Points Scored:

Point Summary	Total	Max
Environmental Considerations	0	195
Economic Considerations	0	75
Special Considerations	0	50
Bonus	0	80
TOTAL	0	400