

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**  
**Application Ranking Summary**  
**Michigan/Indiana St. Joseph River Watershed Conser**  
**Fiscal Year 2017 RCPP EQIP 2014**  
**National Priorities Addressed**

Issue Questions	Responses
<p>If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering “Yes” to the following question. Answering “Yes” to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category.</p>	
<p>1. a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is “Yes”, do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is “No”, proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.</p>	250 Point(s)
<p>Water Quality Degradation – Will the proposed project improve water quality by: (select all that apply)</p>	
<p>2. a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?</p>	15 Point(s)
<p>2. b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?</p>	10 Point(s)
<p>2. c. Reducing impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides on land adjoining a designated “impaired water body” (TMDL, 303d listed waterbody, or other State designation)?</p>	10 Point(s)
<p>2. d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a “non-impaired water body”?</p>	10 Point(s)
<p>2. e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?</p>	10 Point(s)
<p>Water Conservation – Will the proposed project conserve water by: (select all that apply)</p>	
<p>3. a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.</p>	15 Point(s)
<p>3. b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?</p>	10 Point(s)

Issue Questions	Responses
3. c.Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	10 Point(s)
3. d. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm water use as a result of changing to crops with lower water consumptive use, the rotation of crops, or the modification of cultural operations?	10 Point(s)
Air Quality - Will the proposed project improve air quality by: (select all that apply)	
4. a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	10 Point(s)
4. b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	10 Point(s)
4. c.Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?	10 Point(s)
4. d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	10 Point(s)
Soil Health:– Will the proposed project improve soil health by: (select all that apply)	
5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil “T”)?	10 Point(s)
5. b.Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	10 Point(s)
Wildlife Habitat – Will the proposed project improve wildlife habitat by: (select all that apply)	
6. a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern.	10 Point(s)
6. b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?	10 Point(s)
6. c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?	10 Point(s)
6. d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?	10 Point(s)
Plant and Animal Communities: Will the proposed project improve plant and animal communities by: (select all that apply)	

Issue Questions	Responses
7. a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10 Point(s)
7. b. Implementing practice in an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)?	10 Point(s)
Energy Conservation– Will the proposed project reduce energy use by: (select all that apply)	
8. a. Reducing on-farm energy consumption?	10 Point(s)
8. b. Implementing practice(s) identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit, which meet ASABE S612 criteria?	10 Point(s)
Business Lines – Will the practices to be scheduled in the “EQIP Plan of Operations” result in:	
9. a. Enhancement of existing conservation practice(s) or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is received?	10 Point(s)

**State Issues Addressed**

Issue Questions	Responses
<b>WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION CONCERNS</b>	
1. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in practice installation on a land unit that is directly adjacent to surface water (surface water is defined by CP22 in 2-CRP (Rev. 4) Amend. 1 & 2), and result in improved water quality by decreasing nutrients, sediment, pathogens, or agricultural chemicals delivered to surface waters, as documented on the NRCS-CPA-52 and evidenced by a positive CPPE for the resource concern?	60 Point(s)
2. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in the treatment of an animal production system that currently has less than 6 months storage or polluted runoff, and will result in NO winter spreading of animal manures, as evidenced by the CNMP?	50 Point(s)

Issue Questions	Responses
<p>3. Is any portion of the land included in this application within a MDEQ impaired watershed (surface water) as shown on the impaired watersheds map available on the Michigan SharePoint and as an ArcMap layer, and will practices be implemented to address the delivery of sediment, nutrients, pathogens, or agricultural chemicals to the surface waters, as documented on the NRCS-CPA 52 and evidenced by a positive CPPE for the resource concern?</p>	60 Point(s)
SOIL EROSION CONCERNS	
<p>4. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in the treatment of classic or ephemeral gullies, sheet and rill erosion, or wind erosion on land currently eroding above "T?"</p>	50 Point(s)
DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION CONCERNS	
<p>5. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in livestock being excluded from forest land or environmentally sensitive areas, or the treatment of pasture land with a "pasture condition index" of 35 or less with a prescribed grazing system?</p>	50 Point(s)
<p>6. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP specifically address the control (reduce to less than 10% of the stand) of Category A or B species listed on the NRCS-Michigan "Invasive Plant Species List" adapted from the Michigan DNR publication, "Meeting the Challenge of Invasive Plants: A Framework for Action" (Higman and Campbell, 2009)?</p>	10 Point(s)
FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONCERNS	
<p>7. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in the "Wildlife Habitat Inventory Index" being increased from less than 0.70 to greater than 0.70?</p>	10 Point(s)

Issue Questions	Responses
8. Will this application implement any of the following practices to meet the ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT, including pollinators, as listed in the practice standard? 314-Brush Management, 315-Herbaceous Weed Control, 327-Conservation Cover, 380-Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment, 390-Riparian Herbaceous Cover, 391-Riparian Forest Buffer, 393-Filter Strip, 612-Tree/Shrub Establishment, 666-Forest Stand Improvement	35 Point(s)
9. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in additional habitat for a documented Threatened, Endangered, Special Concern Species or a Michigan At-Risk Indicator Species?	10 Point(s)
<b>CONSERVATION PLANNING</b>	
10. Did the applicant request a conservation plan by the end of the NRCS-MI Conservation Plan Sign-up Period? (April 30, 2016)	10 Point(s)
11. Is the treatment to be implemented using EQIP part of an Implementation Schedule or Farmstead/Cropping Improvement Action Plan that will assist in a farm becoming MAEAP verified, Wildlife Risk Mitigated or will result in Risk Reduction of a "high risk," as identified by one of the State of Michigan's "A*Syst" Tools?	35 Point(s)
12. Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in the application of practices associated with a NRCS-approved Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)?	10 Point(s)
13. Has the applicant (or a member with signature authority for the entity who has applied) successfully accessed Conservation Client Gateway?	10 Point(s)

**Local Issues Addressed**

Issue Questions	Responses
1. Will this application address irrigation water use in a stressed watershed, as indicated by the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool (WWAT)? (Refer to FY17 RCPP-EQIP ArcMap Instructions.)	40 Point(s)
2. Will this application result in optimized irrigation system calibration?	25 Point(s)

Issue Questions	Responses
3. Will this application result in optimized irrigation system scheduling?	25 Point(s)
4. Will this application result in enhanced water quality and quantity in a unique or cold water fishery resource, as identified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources? (Refer to FY17 RCPP-EQIP ArcMap Instructions.)	15 Point(s)
5. Will this application result in enhanced wildlife habitat in areas that historically had grasslands or other habitats, as identified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources?(Refer to FY17 RCPP-EQIP ArcMap Instructions.)	15 Point(s)
6. Will this application reduce sediment & nutrient loss in one of the following high-priority watersheds? Nottawa Creek; Little Portage Creek; Portage River; Prairie River (Refer to FY17 RCPP-EQIP ArcMap Instructions.)	15 Point(s)
7. Will this application utilize fall-planted cover crops without the use of tillage?	15 Point(s)
8. Will this application utilize fall-planted legume cover crops that will provide significant plant growth between planting and a killing frost?	15 Point(s)
9. Will this application utilize no-tillage practices for the first time?	15 Point(s)
10. Will this application utilize reduced tillage practices for the first time?	15 Point(s)
11. Will this application utilize fall planted cover crops without the use of tillage and with a filter strip of at least 50 feet?	30 Point(s)
12. Will this application utilize a filter strip that is at least 75 feet in width?	30 Point(s)