

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Transition Organic

National Priorities Addressed

Issue Questions	Point(s)
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.	
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.	250
Water Quality Degradation – Will the proposed project improve water quality by: (select all that apply)	
2. a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?	15
2. b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?	10
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)?	10
2. d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a "non-impaired water body"?	10
2. e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?	10
Water Conservation – Will the proposed project conserve water by: (select all that apply)	
3. a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.	15
3. b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?	10
3. c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	10
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
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
4. b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	10
4. c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?	10
4. d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	10
Soil Health:- Will the proposed project improve soil health by: (select all that apply)	
5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	10
5. b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	10
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

6. b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?	10
6. c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?	10
6. d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?	10
Plant and Animal Communities: Will the proposed project improve plant and animal communities by: (select all that apply)	
7. a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10
7. b. Implementing practice in an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)?	10
Energy Conservation– Will the proposed project reduce energy use by: (select all that apply)	
8. a. Reducing on-farm energy consumption?	10
8. b. Implementing practice(s) identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit, which meet ASABE S612 criteria?	10
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
State Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
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 state priority category.	
1. a Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Transition to Organic Plan (138)? If answer is “Yes”, do not answer any other state level questions. If answer is “No”, proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	400
Soil Quality Degradation: Maximum 60 points.	
2. Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations includes implementation of one or more soil quality or enhancing practice(s) that addresses soil tilth, crusting, water infiltration, organic matter, compaction, etc.?	60
Soil Erosion: Maximum of 60 points	
3. Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include practices that will result in reduction of erosion?	60
Water Quality Degradation: Maximum of 70 points.	
4. a Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include practices that will result in creation of buffer zones that will mitigate offsite contaminates from entering the farm?	35
4. b Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include implementation of Nutrient management for management of soil fertility, plant nutrients, and soil amendments?	35
Degraded Habitat : Maximum of 90 points	
5. a Does the EQIP Schedule of operations include implementation of practices for the management of noxious and invasive species ONLY on “non-cropland” acreage?	20
5. b Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include practices with the intent of increasing habitat for pollinators and/or beneficial insects?	50
5. c Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include practices that will improve wildlife habitat?	20
Insufficient Water: Maximum of 50 points.	
6. Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include practices that will improve the efficiency of an existing irrigation system and/or conserve soil moisture?	50

Livestock Production Limitation: Maximum of 70 points	
7. a Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include implementation of practices to improve the management of plant species, livestock, residues, feed, and other identified resource needs?	40
7. b Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include implementation of practices that limit and manage domestic livestock access to streams, creeks, and other natural water bodies?	20
7. c Does the EQIP Schedule of Operations include implementation of practices to assure adequate domestic livestock drinking water sources (not including streams) are available in the treatment unit?	10
Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
Local Ranking Criteria One - Conservation Activity Plan 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 local priority category.	
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 local level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
Local Ranking Criteria Two - SOIL EROSION: Sheet and Rill Soil loss tolerance, T, is based on soil type. Use RUSLE2 to evaluate soil loss for ranking criteria 2.a and 2.b. (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable).	
2. a. Conservation treatment decreases soil loss from greater than T to less than T.	15
2. b. Conservation treatment results in soil loss reduced by 50 percent from the benchmark condition.	10
2. c. Conservation treatment includes practices that address sheet and rill erosion.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Three - SOIL EROSION: Wind Wind is observed to degrade soil quality and/or damage plants due to detachment and transport of soil particles. Use WEPS to evaluate wind erosion for ranking criteria 3.a and 3.b. (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable).	
3. a. Conservation treatment decreases soil loss from greater than T to less than T.	15
3. b. Conservation treatment results in soil loss reduced by 50 percent from the benchmark condition.	10
3. c. Conservation treatment includes practices that address wind erosion.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Four - SOIL EROSION: Ephemeral Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
4. a. Conservation treatment includes vegetative, structural or management practices for actively eroding ephemeral gullies that will result in control of surface water runoff to stabilize small channels and prevent reoccurrence of new channels.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Five - SOIL EROSION: Classic Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
5. a. Conservation treatment includes vegetative, structural or management practices for actively eroding classic gullies that will result in control of surface water runoff to stop progression of head cutting and widening of existing gully.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Six - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
6. a. Conservation treatment will reduce soil loss on channel banks where current agricultural management activities are impacting streambank stability and integrity.	10

Local Ranking Criteria Seven - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Compaction Compaction has been identified as a resource concern as determined by the following methods: the Soil Quality Test Kit, Penetrometer, pin-flag test or observation of soil and/or plant condition, and treatment will result in: (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
7. a. Conservation treatment will include implementation of one or more practices, to physically break up a compacted layer or reduce soil compacting activities, such as, (324) Deep Tillage (not more than once every 5 years), (329) Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till, or (340) Cover Crop, etc.	20
Local Ranking Criteria Eight - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Organic Matter Depletion (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
8. a. Conservation treatment will increase soil organic matter using vegetative or management practices. Practices may include (329) Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till, (340) Cover Crop, (484) Mulching, (528) Prescribed Grazing, etc.	30
8. b. Conservation treatment will increase soil organic matter on a histosol soil in an area where soil subsidence has been identified.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Nine - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Concentration of Salts and Other Chemicals Evidence of saline soil conditions are evident such as white crusting or streaking on the soil surface, poor soil structure and infiltration, presence of salt tolerant weeds, and/or electroconductivity (EC) values that reduce productivity or limit desired use. (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
9. a. Conservation treatment implements a management plan utilizing NRCS conservation practice, such as, 610 - Salinity and Sodic Soil Management, 449-Irrigation Water Management, 328 - Conservation Crop Rotation and 590 - Nutrient Management, to address concentration of salts.	7
Local Ranking Criteria Ten - INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water [California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools.] Conservation treatment includes implementation of IWM and/or an irrigation system that results in a water savings of: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
10. a. more than 20 percent annual water savings.	15
10. b. 16 to 20 percent annual water savings.	10
10. c. 10 to 15 percent annual water savings.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Eleven - INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water [California Irrigation Water Savings Tool found in the California eFOTG Section 1, Resource Assessment Tools. Level I = Basic Irrigation Water Management; Level 2 = Intermediate Irrigation Water Management; Level III = Advanced Irrigation Water Management] Conservation treatment (structural and/or management) results in attainment of 449 – Irrigation Water Management: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
11. a. Conservation treatment will achieve Level II or III irrigation water management according to NRCS CA Bulletin 201-11-3, and the farm operation ranks as "High" in need for 449 – Irrigation Water Management as determined from the Irrigation Scheduling planning tool.	15
11. b. Conservation treatment will achieve Level II or III irrigation water management according to NRCS CA Bulletin 201-11-3, and the farm operation ranks as "Medium" or "Low" in need for 449 – Irrigation Water Management as determined from the Irrigation Scheduling planning tool.	10
11. c. Conservation treatment will achieve Level I irrigation water management according to NRCS CA Bulletin 201-11-3.	5

Local Ranking Criteria Twelve - INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water Conservation treatment results in decreased withdrawals from: (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
12. a. A groundwater basin that has been identified by a local, state or federal authority as declining or in overdraft status.	15
Local Ranking Criteria Thirteen - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water Conservation treatment includes vegetative, management, or structural practices that will minimize the transport of nutrients to the following surface waterbodies where an existing pathway exists: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
13. a. A surface water body on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category, "Nutrient." The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml	10
13. b. A permanent water body, perennial creek, or an intermittent creek that flows for greater than one month.	7
13. c. An intermittent or ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Fourteen - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Groundwater The California State Water Resources Control Board map, "Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Areas and High Use Groundwater Basins," map is available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/docs/hydro_areas.pdf Conservation treatment includes vegetative and/or management practice(s) and the treatment area is located within: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
14. a. A Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	6
14. b. A High Use Ground Water Basin Area, but not a Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	4
Local Ranking Criteria Fifteen - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water Conservation treatment includes vegetative, management, or structural practices that will minimize the transport of nutrients to the following surface waterbodies: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
15. a. A surface water body on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category, "Sediment". The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml	10
15. b. A permanent water body, perennial creek, or an intermittent creek that flows for greater than one month.	7
15. c. An intermittent or ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month.	5
Local Ranking Criteria Sixteen - AIR QUALITY IMPACTS: Emission of Particulate Matter (PM) and PM Precursors (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
16. a. Conservation treatment will treat frequently-used roads to provide for substantial PM reduction, using organically-acceptable methods such as grading to design slopes, road base construction, Lignosulfonate application or other NRCS approved dust suppressant for unpaved roads.	10
Local Ranking Criteria Seventeen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
17. a. Conservation treatment results in implementation of NRCS conservation management practice, 528 – Prescribed Grazing, which includes the design and implementation of a grazing system through monitoring and record keeping (e.g. photo points, stubble height after grazing, etc); if needed to support the grazing management plan, treatment also includes structural and/or vegetative practices.	10

Local Ranking Criteria Eighteen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health (Select 'Yes' to All Applicable Answers)	
18. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes a seasonal high tunnel which will assist the producer to extend the growing season of seasonal crops.	3
18. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes a seasonal high tunnel which will assist the producer to grow plants in areas where they are not typically suited or adapted to grow.	2
Local Ranking Criteria Nineteen - INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space is evaluated using either the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). The 'planned' assessment score must be greater than or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5) for the WHEG or greater than or equal to 90 points (≥ 90 points) for the PHA. (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
19. a. Fish or wildlife habitat improvements in the EQIP schedule of operations directly benefit Federal or State threatened, endangered, rare, proposed, candidate, fully protected and selected species (selected species included: Tricolored blackbird, Western burrowing owl, Foothill yellow-legged frog, Steelhead, Western pond turtle and pollinators) and the WHEG or PHA the 'planned assessment score is met.	9
19. b. Fish or wildlife habitat improvements in the EQIP schedule of operations directly benefit habitat for Species of Special Concern (as identified in Section II under Special Environmental Concerns) animals and the WHEG or PHA the 'planned assessment score is met.	7
Local Ranking Criteria Twenty - LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Livestock Water (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
20. a. Conservation results in reliable year-round water available for livestock and wildlife (including adequate storage) where access to water was previously limited and caused declining forage health conditions due to inability to properly manage grazing. Water must be available to livestock through a tank/ trough system not through creeks or ponds.	15
Local Ranking Criteria Twenty-One - INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Equipment and Facilities (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
21. a. Conservation treatment will reduce energy use by at least 15 percent.	10
Local Ranking Criteria Twenty-Two - INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching Practices and Field Operations (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
22. a. Conservation treatment will reduce energy use by at least 15 percent.	10