

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Cropland - South Coast**

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)
State Category One Ranking Criteria – 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 state 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 state level questions. If answer is “No”, proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
State Category Two Ranking Criteria – SOIL EROSION: Sheet and Rill Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations promotes soil health and reduces sheet and rill erosion, as estimated by RUSLE2; and, includes a combination of vegetative and management practices such as residue and tillage management, cover crop, or conservation crop rotation where erosion is estimated at – (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
2. a. Greater than 2T; after treatment estimated soil loss will not exceed T.	20
2. b. Less than 2T; after treatment estimated soil loss will not exceed T.	5
State Category Three Ranking Criteria – SOIL EROSION: Wind Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations may include practices such as windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, windbreak/shelterbelt renovation or herbaceous wind barriers; or, may include practices that promote soil health such as residue and tillage management, cover crop, or conservation crop rotation. Treatment will reduce wind erosion as estimated by WEPS by – (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
3. a. Greater than 50 percent; and, total annual soil loss is estimated to not exceed T after treatment.	20

3. b. 20 to 49 percent; and, total annual soil loss is estimated to not exceed T after treatment.	10
3. c. Less than 20 percent; and, total annual soil loss is estimated to not exceed T after treatment.	5
State Category Four Ranking Criteria – SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Organic Matter Depletion (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
4. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in a STIR value reduced from a conventional tillage value to 20 or less. (If 'Yes' to 4.a. then 4.b. must be 'No').	40
4. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in a STIR value is reduced from a conventional tillage value to 80 or less. (If 'Yes' to 4.b. then 4.c. must be 'No').	35
4. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in SCI increased from a negative value to a positive value.	30
4. d. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes cover crops during times in the crop rotation that are seasonally fallowed, or when a cash crop is normally planted.	30
State Category Five Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml (Select "Yes, if applicable)	
5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will minimize the transport of nutrients to a surface waterbody on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category, "Nutrients," where an existing pathway to the surface water exists; and, conservation treatment includes management	15
State Category Six Ranking Criteria – 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 in the EQIP schedule of operations includes management practice(s) and the treatment area is located within: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
6. a. A Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	10
6. b. A High Use Ground Water Basin Area, but not a Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	5
State Category Seven Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pesticides Transported to Surface Water NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5 (February 2011) is found at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1043138.pdf (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes any combination of NRCS conservation practices or IPM techniques from NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5, Tables 1 and 2 (February 2011) that results in a reduction of the WIN-PST surface water hazard rating for at least one pesticide to 'Low' or 'Very Low' and adoption of a Year-Round University of California Integrated Pest Management (UC IPM), when available for the crop or other comparable protocol.	15

7. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes any combination of NRCS conservation practices or IPM techniques from NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5, Tables 1 and 2 (February 2011) that results in a reduction of the WIN-PST surface water hazard rating to 'Low' or 'Very Low' for at least one pesticide.	10
State Category Eight Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program website: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/agriculture/ The Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List is found at the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
8. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will minimize and mitigate water quality impacts associated with sediments in runoff water from the treatment unit to a surface water body on the 303(d) list for the pollutant category 'Sediments' or to a surface water body under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.	15
8. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes vegetative practices to minimize the potential of sediment delivery into a surface water body.	15
8. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural practices to minimize the potential of sediment delivery into a surface water body.	15
State Category Nine Ranking Criteria – INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space 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)	
9. 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.	10
9. 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.	5
State Category Ten Ranking Criteria – INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching and Field Operations (Select "Yes," if applicable).	
10. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of farming, ranching, and field operations practices that result in at least 10 percent reduction in energy use. Practices include those that state "reduce energy use" in the purpose section of the standard.	15
Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
Local Category One - SOIL EROSION: Sheet and Rill Soil loss tolerance, T, is based on soil type. (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	

1. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations decreases soil loss from greater than T to less than T.	40
1. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in soil loss reduced by 50 percent from the benchmark condition.	25
1. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations reduces sheet and rill erosion.	17
Local Category Two - SOIL EROSION: Wind (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations decreases soil loss from greater than T to less than T.	40
2. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in soil loss reduced by 50 percent from the benchmark condition.	25
2. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes practices that address wind erosion.	17
Local Category Three - SOIL EROSION: Ephemeral Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
3. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations 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.	17
Local Category Four - SOIL EROSION: Classic Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
4. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations 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.	17
Local Category Five - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce soil loss on channel banks where current agricultural management activities are impacting streambank stability and integrity.	17
Local Category Six - 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 conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in: (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
6. a. Implementation of one or more practices to physically break up a compacted layer or reduce soil compacting activities, such as, (329) Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till, (324) Deep Tillage (not more than once every 5 years), or (340) Cover Crop, etc.	34
Local Category Seven - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Organic Matter Depletion Soil organic matter is assessed through the Soil Condition Index (SCI) score. (Select "Yes," to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
7. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations increases a Soil Condition Index (SCI) score from a negative score to a positive score.	35
7. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations increases SCI and includes at least one of the following: Cover Crop, Mulch, Residue and Tillage Management, Conservation Crop Rotation or Conservation Cover.	17

Local Category Eight - INSUFFICIENT WATER: Inefficient Use of Irrigation Will the Treatment result in improved distribution uniformity (DU) through improved management and/or installation of appropriate structural practices? Improvements are based on an Irrigation Evaluation, Audit or approved guidance materials. Conservation treatment results in improved distribution uniformity above the benchmark condition by: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
8. a. Greater than 70 percent.	70
8. b. Between 10 and 15 percent.	35
8. c. Less than 10 percent.	17
Local Category Nine - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water The Runoff Water Quality Index (WQI) evaluates the effectiveness of planned conservation practices. The tool can be accessed at http://199.133.175.81/WQIndex/ (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
9. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in a WQI score greater than 30 percent above the benchmark WQI score.	35
9. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in a WQI score between 30 and 10 percent above the benchmark WQI score.	17
9. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in a WQI score less than 10 percent above the benchmark WQI score.	9
Local Category Ten - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Pesticides Transported to Groundwater The Windows Pesticide Screening Tool (WIN-PST) hazard rating is greater than 'Low' for the treatment unit and mitigation strategies are needed. NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5 (February 2011) is found at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1043138.pdf Conservation treatment includes any combination of NRCS conservation practices or IPM techniques from NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5, Tables 1 and 2, (February 2011) to reduce hazard rating for ground water to 'Low' or 'Very Low'. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will sufficiently mitigate the pesticide leaching hazard and the treatment area is located within one of the following areas as determined by the California State Water Resources Control, "Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Areas and High Use Groundwater Basins," map (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/docs/hydro_areas.pdf) (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only)	
10. a. A Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area.	24
10. b. A High Use Ground Water Basin Area.	17
10. c. Not a Hydrogeologically Vulnerable Area or a High Use Ground Water Basin Area.	9
Local Category Eleven - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water The Runoff Water Quality Index (WQI) evaluates the effectiveness of planned conservation practices; the tool can be accessed at http://199.133.175.81/WQIndex/ (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
11. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in a WQI score greater than 30 percent above the benchmark WQI score.	35
11. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in a WQI score between 30 and 10 percent above the benchmark WQI score.	17
11. c. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in a WQI score less than 10 percent above the benchmark WQI score.	9

Local Category Twelve - INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation Food, Water, Cover/Shelter, Habitat Continuity/Space Evaluated using the following assessment protocols: Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) or Pollinator Habitat Assessment (PHA). (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)	
12. a. Riparian Zone: As documented in the Conservation Plan, the conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will improve the riparian zone that directly benefits fish or wildlife, where the riparian WHEG 'planned' worksheet is greater or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5).	3
12. b. Multiple Habitat Types: As documented in the Conservation Plan, the conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will improve multiple habitat types that directly benefits fish or wildlife, improving habitat elements for both upland/riparian, based on the appropriate WHEG that benefit both terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species. The score on the WHEG worksheet for the Land Use/Cover Type is greater than or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5).	3
12. c. Pollinator Habitat: Conservation treatment using Hedgerow Planting, Cover Crop or Conservation Cover, in the EQIP schedule of operations will restore or enhance habitat for pollinators using the PHA with a minimum 'planned' score of 110 points or greater.	3
12. d. Invasive Species: Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce invasive species identified by the local work group, Cal-IPC, or Weed Management Area where the planned score in the respective plant community WHEG is $\leq 15\%$ estimated percent cover, but appear controlled (exceptions are Arundo, Tamarisk or Eucalyptus, where percent cover needs to be $< 5\%$).	3
12. e. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations that improves necessary habitat element of an identified fish and wildlife species through implementation of a structural practice.	3
12. f. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes a fish screen that will eliminate entrainment of fish into the water delivery system (pipe or ditch) on a native fish-bearing stream where life history stages susceptible to entrainment are present concurrent with water diversions seasonally or year round.	3
Local Category Thirteen - INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/ Ranching Practices and Field Operations Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes conservation practices that will result in: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
13. a. At least 30 percent or greater reduction in energy use.	18
13. b. At least 20 percent reduction in energy use.	8
13. c. At least 10 percent reduction in energy use.	6