

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Application Ranking Summary
FY17 Rangeland - Sacramento Valley**

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: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select “Yes,” if applicable)	
2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce stream bank erosion on perennial, intermittent and/or ephemeral streams using conservation practices to maintain vegetative cover and protect banks from erosion caused by livestock impacts.	42
State Category Three 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 . Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes NRCS conservation practice, CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing or 472 – Access Control, to manage livestock access and/or improve riparian vegetative cover to reduce excess nutrients to surface water, where the waterbody is: (Select “Yes” to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
3. a. Listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category ‘Nutrients’.	30

3. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Nutrients'.	20
3. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category "Nutrients".	15
3. d. A ditch or canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category, "Nutrients".	10
3. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round.	5
3. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year.	3
State Category Four Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment 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 Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes NRCS conservation practice, CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing or 472 – Access Control, to manage livestock access and/or improve riparian vegetative cover to reduce excess sediment to surface water, where the waterbody is: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
4. a. Listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	30
4. b. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a surface water body listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	20
4. c. A perennial stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	15
4. d. A ditch, canal or tributary that flows directly into a perennial or intermittent stream not on the 303(d) list as impaired for the pollutant category 'Sediments'.	10
4. e. An intermittent stream or ephemeral creek that flows for more than a month per year, but not year-round.	5
4. f. An ephemeral creek that flows for less than a month per year.	3
State Category Five Ranking Criteria – WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Elevated Water Temperature (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations addresses factors that contribute to high water temperatures on a stream known to support a fishery.	25
5. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations addresses factors that contribute to high water temperatures for a stream waterbody that does not support a fishery.	10
State Category Six Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Productivity and Health (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
6. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes CPS 528 – Prescribed Grazing to design and implement a grazing management plan to control the access, duration and timing of livestock grazing in each field for improved productivity, health and vigor of key forage species. Structural and/or vegetative practices may also be include the EQIP schedule of operations, in addition to CPS 528, if needed to support the grazing management plan.	40

<p>State Category Seven Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will either: 1) includes any combination of practices to increase plant diversity where the planned land unit was invaded by brush species and herbaceous species should dominate, or 2) results in the design and implementation of a grazing management plan according to CPS 528 - Prescribed Grazing, for restoration of the desired plant community by implementing prescribed grazing on –</p> <p>(Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
7. a. At least 75 percent of the ranch/livestock operation.	25
7. b. At least 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation.	15
7. c. Less than 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation.	5
<p>State Category Eight Ranking Criteria – DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure</p> <p>Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will address noxious or invasive weed species through any combination of herbicide, biological, targeted grazing, and/or mechanical treatments on –</p> <p>(Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
8. a. At least 75 percent of the ranch/livestock operation.	25
8. b. At least 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation.	15
8. c. Less than 50 percent of the ranch/livestock operation.	5
<p>State Category Nine Ranking Criteria – INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE: Habitat Degradation</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
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.	20
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.	15
<p>State Category Ten Ranking Criteria – LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Livestock Water</p> <p>(Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
10. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reliable, clean livestock water where access to off-stream water was previously limited. Livestock water will be available through a tank/trough system not creeks, ponds, springs or wetlands.	10
<p>State Category Eleven Ranking Criteria – INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE: Farming/Ranching and Field Operations</p> <p>(Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
11. a. Conservation treatment results in more efficient use of fossil fuels by replacing existing equipment or by implementation energy efficient farming, ranching, and field operations management practices.	3

Local Issues Addressed	
Issue Questions	Point(s)
<p>Local Category One - Conservation Activity Plan</p> <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.</p> <p>Answering "Yes" to this question will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the local ranking category.</p>	
<p>1. a. 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 this question will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the local ranking category.</p>	400
<p>Local Category Two - SOIL EROSION: Classic Gullies (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>2. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural or vegetative practices to stabilize a classic gully and prevent further headcut advancement.</p>	40
<p>Local Category Three - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>3. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will reduce soil loss on channel banks where livestock are impacting streambank stability and integrity to minimize or eliminate sediment delivery to a surface water body; treatment can include structural or vegetative practices such as filter strips, riparian herbaceous cover and/or riparian forest buffer.</p>	30
<p>Local Category Four - SOIL EROSION: Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams, Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>4. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will restrict livestock access to channel banks in order to reduce soil loss where livestock are impacting streambank stability and causing sediment delivery to a surface water body.</p>	10
<p>Local Category Five - SOIL QUALITY DEGRADATION: Compaction (Select "Yes," if applicable)</p>	
<p>5. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reducing compaction due to livestock traffic and heavy use by implementing practices to move livestock away from this site and/or mechanical or vegetative practices to reduce compaction. Soil compaction is evaluated by penetrometer, pin flag test, or evaluation the soil for observation of compaction layer/platy structure in the top 8 inches of the soil surface.</p>	15
<p>Local Category Six - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess Nutrients in Surface Water Treatment area is within the riparian area of the surface water body under consideration; Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural and/ or management practices to control livestock access to: (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)</p>	
<p>6. a. A perennial creek where animal wastes in surface water is observed.</p>	20
<p>6. b. A seasonal creek where sediment animal wastes in surface water is observed.</p>	10
<p>6. c. A pond or spring where sediment and animal wastes in surface water is observed.</p>	10

Local Category Seven - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural and/or vegetative practices to minimize sediment transport in surface water runoff to: (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
7. a. A perennial creek.	40
7. b. An intermittent, seasonal, creek.	40
7. c. A pond or spring.	40
Local Category Eight - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
8. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations stabilizes roads and/or roadsides that are chronic sources of sediment carried in runoff water; treatment on roads and/or roadsides will control erosion and reduce sediment delivery from the road to a surface water body.	10
Local Category Nine - WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Elevated Water Temperature (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
9. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes structural and/or vegetative practices to reduce water temperature on a seasonal or perennial creek. Practices may include livestock exclusionary fencing to promote vegetative growth, tree planting, bio-engineering to establish willows and riparian forest buffer.	30
Local Category Ten - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
10. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in implementation of NRCS conservation management practice, 528 – Prescribed Grazing which includes the design and implementation of a grazing system that will enhance rangeland health and ecosystem function as well as optimize efficiency and economic return 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.	30
10. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations on rangelands results in implementation of structural and/or vegetative practices to improve plant productivity and health, through improved grazing distribution.	10
Local Category Eleven - DEGRADGED PLANT CONDITION: Inadequate Structure and Composition (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)	
11. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations will result in improving desirable plant species composition and/or functional/structural groups.	30
11. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations in the EQIP schedule of operations includes livestock grazing, under a specified grazing plan, to improve desirable plant species composition and or functional/ structural groups.	10
Local Category Twelve - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure (Select "Yes," if applicable)	
12. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations area will result in control and manage CDFA state-listed Category A, B or C listed noxious weeds and minimizes spread to other sites; noxious weeds include, but are not limited to: knapweed, goatgrass, arundo, saltcedar tamarisk, medusa head, Italian thistle, yellow starthistle, and tree-of-heaven.	40

<p>Local Category Thirteen - DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION: Wildfire Hazard, Excess Biomass Accumulation The fire hazard severity zone will be determined from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), "Fire Hazard Severity Zones," map http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/webdata/maps/statewide/fhszs_map.pdf (Select "Yes" to One Answer Only, if applicable)</p>	
<p>13. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations utilizes mechanical, chemical or biological control on sites that have brush canopy cover greater than 70 percent to reduce wildfire hazard; and, the planned treatment is located within a 'Very High' or 'High' Fire Hazard Severity Zone. • Treatment of woody species provides limited improvement for grazed rangeland productivity. These sites typically have shallow or droughty soils.</p>	25
<p>13. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations utilizes mechanical, chemical or biological control on sites that have brush canopy cover between 30 to 70 percent to reduce wildfire hazard; and, the planned treatment is located within a 'Very High', 'High' or 'Moderate' Fire Hazard Severity Zone. • Treatment of woody species provides limited improvement for grazed rangeland productivity. These sites typically have shallow or droughty soils.</p>	15
<p>Local Category Fourteen - LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION: Inadequate Stock Water (Select "Yes" to All Applicable Answers)</p>	
<p>14. a. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations results in reliable water available for livestock and wildlife (including adequate storage) where access to water was previously limited and caused declining rangeland 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.</p>	30
<p>14. b. Conservation treatment in the EQIP schedule of operations includes strategic livestock water that facilitates distribution of livestock for improved grazing utilization and reduces grazing impact around existing water sources.</p>	30