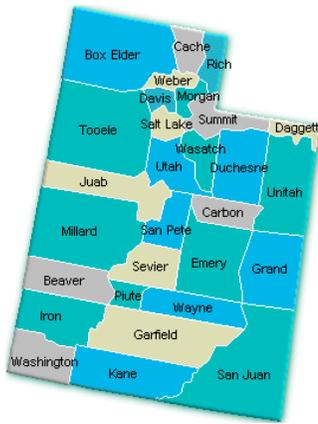


Watershed Improvement—Rangeland Ranking Tool Questions and Instructions



USDA-NRCS—Salt Lake City, Utah

2008-Environmental Quality Incentives Program Note to all users: The official Application and Evaluation Ranking Tools are located in Protracts.

National Priority Issues

In order to answer yes to the National issues/priority questions you must have adequate documentation that the practice(s) will conserve the priority issue. This documentation can be in the form of a list of Threatened and Endangered species that will be impacted by the practices on the UT-CPA-52 or in the Tech Notes. See the species of concern list. Talk with your Area or partner biologist for more information on these species.

QUESTION #1: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in considerable reductions of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with TMDL's where available as well as the reduction of groundwater contamination or point source such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations?

- To claim these points, the proposed project must be expected to meet Quality Criteria for all applicable NRCS Water Quality criteria.

QUESTION #2: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in the conservation of a considerable amount of ground or surface water resources?

- To claim these points, the proposed project must be expected to meet Quality Criteria for all applicable NRCS Water Quantity criteria.

QUESTION #3: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards?

- To claim these points, the proposed project must include one or more of the conservation practices on page 6. (This is NOT the list of eligible practices.)

QUESTION #4: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land?

- To claim these points, soil erosion must go from above T to T or below T as a result of the proposed project OR Quality criteria for Soil Condition must be met as a result of implementing the proposed project.

QUESTION #5: Will the treatment you intend to implement using EQIP result in a considerable increase in the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation?

- To claim these points, the project must be expected to meet quality criteria for one or more of the four national at-risk species resource concerns:

References:

- ◆ Utah Fish and Wildlife Plan
- ◆ 2007 EQIP Ranking Calculators Spreadsheet
- ◆ Rangeland Health Scoresheet
- ◆ EFDTG
- ◆ CWMA plans, other
- ◆ CPM 440—Part 512 CPC Manual
- ◆ CPM 440-Part 515 EQIP Manual
- ◆ TMDL or Listed Watersheds
- ◆ National Planning Procedures Handbook
- ◆ UT Bulletins
- ◆ Area Specialists
- ◆ Technical questions on this ranking tool should be directed to Area Technical and Program Specialists.



National At-Risk Species Resource Concerns

- Plant Condition; Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
- Plant Condition; T&E Plant Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern
- Fish and Wildlife; Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species
- Fish and Wildlife; T&E Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern

At-risk **plant** species are in Appendix C. - Rare Plant Species by Habitat Type

At-risk **animal** species are in Appendix A. - Utah CWCS Tier I, II, and III Species List.

See Utah-NRCS Website—Programs-EQIP tab.

STATE Priority Issues

Question 1: Does the cooperator have a current RMS plan on the CTU for the EQIP project?

- To claim these points, the applicant must have an RMS plan which addresses all resource concerns on the Conservation Treatment Unit (CTU) being offered for EQIP funding. (NPPH Amendment 3, 600.6-4)

Question 2: Does the cooperator have one or more contracts that are behind schedule?

- Review 440-CPM, 512 and CCC-1200 Appendix signed by participant. Behind schedule is defined as an unapplied practice scheduled to have been installed prior to date of ranking.

Question 3: Does the cooperator have one or more contracts that have been cancelled, or terminated, or are in the process of being terminated?

- Answer as appropriate.

Question 4: Is the project in an area that is covered by an approved areawide plan as defined by the National Planning Procedures Handbook?

- Is the planned project in an approved area wide plan as defined by the National Planning Procedures Handbook, and been designated as such by the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations? In order to answer yes to this question all of these REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET.

Question 5: Does the plan address control of an invasive species identified by a state, county, or local government or by a local Cooperative Weed Management Area as being a noxious species?

- Identify if the target species identified by the applicant is listed as noxious and/or invasive. Control of these species must be addressed THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE PRACTICES in the contract if answered yes.

Question 6: Is the project located in a watershed of a nutrient impaired TMDL or 303(d) listed water body (lake, stream, reservoir or TMDL impaired watershed)?

- To claim points for this question, the applicants project must be located within the impaired watershed or upstream of a 303(d) listed stream segment or water body. The project being implemented must provide measurable benefits to the reduction of non-point source pollutants for which the TMDL or 303(d) listing was established.

EQIP National Priorities

- Reduction of **nonpoint source** pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with TMDLs where available as well as the reduction of groundwater contamination and reduction of point sources such as contamination from confined animal feeding operations;
- Conservation of **ground and surface water** resources;
- Reduction of **emissions**, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards;
- Reduction in **soil erosion and sedimentation** from unacceptable levels on agricultural land; and
- Promotion of **at-risk species** habitat conservation.

Questions 7-11: Look up the **Rangeland Health Scoresheet** in the conservation plan. Make sure the scoresheet used represents the majority of the rangeland acres in the contract. Predict the changes that will result from implementing the practices in the contract. Use the **2008 EQIP Ranking Calculators spreadsheet** to calculate the Rangeland Health points, below. Answer yes to only one of the following questions:

7. Is the change in the Rangeland Health score, as calculated using the designated Rangeland Health scoresheet for EQIP, between 1 and 5?
8. Is the change in the Rangeland Health score, as calculated using the designated Rangeland Health scoresheet for EQIP, between 6 and 10?
9. Is the change in the Rangeland Health score, as calculated using the designated Rangeland Health scoresheet for EQIP, between 11 and 15?
10. Is the change in the Rangeland Health score, as calculated using the designated Rangeland Health scoresheet for EQIP, between 16 and 20?
11. Is the change in the Rangeland Health score, as calculated using the designated Rangeland Health scoresheet for EQIP, greater than 20?

Rangeland Health									
	E	M-E	M	S-M	N-S				
Benchmark						0	0	< This value must be 17	
Projected future						0	0	< This value must be 17	
						Rangeland Health	0		
Pasture Condition Score Sheet									
	1	2	3	4	5				
Benchmark						0	0	< This value must be 10	
Projected future						0	0	< This value must be 10	
						Pasture Condition Score	0		
Stand Density Index (SDI)									
Choose the predominant species represented in the stand (from the Forest Stewardship Plan)									
From the Forest Stewardship Plan, what is the Stand Density Index									
							SDI Points	Wrong!	

Explanatory Notes:

STATE Priority Issues, continued

12. Will a management incentive practice be applied to 100% of the contracted acres and will the management practice be applied for 3 years?

- Answer as appropriate

13. Have any partners (UDWR, USFWS, Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited) committed in writing to provide financial AND technical assistance to the project?

- Commitment must be in writing, from an official of the agency or organization that has the authority to designate funds and staff resources for the project.

Question 14-16 Answer yes to only one of these questions. The list of species is found in the Utah Wildlife Plan at <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/UT/EQIP/2006/UTFishWildlifePlan.pdf>. Table 1 on page 11 lists the species. See page 5 of these instructions.

14. Will the project benefit multiple Priority 1 Species and multiple Priority 2 or 3 Species?

15. Will the project benefit at least one Priority 1 or 2 Species?

16. Will the project benefit any Priority 3 Species?

Question 17-19: Answer yes to only one of these questions. The list of habitats is found in the Utah Wildlife Plan at <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/UT/EQIP/2006/UTFishWildlifePlan.pdf>. Table 1 on page 11 lists the habitats. See page 5 of these instructions.

17. Will the project positively affect 3 or more targeted habitat types?

18. Will the project positively affect 2 targeted habitat types?

19. Will the project positively affect 1 targeted habitat type?

Habitat Type/Priority Species Table (Questions 15-20, State)

Habitat Type	Priority 1 Species	Priority 2 Species	Priority 3 Species
Lowland Riparian	Bald Eagle, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Virgin Spinedace, Virgin River Chub	Arizona Toad, Lewis's Woodpecker, Allen's Big-eared Bat, Big Free-tailed Bat, Western Red Bat, Cornsnake, Western Threadsnake	Canyon Treefrog, Abert's Towhee, Bell's Vireo, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Lucy's Warbler, Northern River Otter, Yuma Myotis, Cornsnake
Wetland	Columbia Spotted Frog, Least Chub, fat-whorled pondsnail, Kanab ambersnail	Western Toad, Short-eared Owl	Northern Leopard Frog, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt
Mountain Riparian	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bluehead Sucker, Bonneville Cutthroat Trout, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	Western Toad, Leatherside Chub, Smooth Greensnake	Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Northern River Otter
Shrubsteppe	Gunnison Sage-grouse	Ferruginous Hawk, Greater Sage-grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Pygmy Rabbit	Brewer's Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, Sage Thrasher, Mule Deer
Flowing Water (Lotic)	Bluehead Sucker, Bonneville Cutthroat Trout, Bonytail, Colorado Pikeminnow, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, Flannelmouth Sucker, June Sucker, Humpback Chub, Razorback Sucker, Roundtail Chub, Virgin Spinedace, Virgin River Chub, Woundfin	Desert Sucker, Leatherside Chub	Canyon Treefrog
Wet Meadow	Columbia Spotted Frog	Bobolink, Smooth Greensnake	
Grassland	Utah Prairie-dog	Burrowing Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow, Long-billed Curlew, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Short-eared Owl, Gunnison's Prairie-dog, White-tailed Prairie-dog	Great Plains Toad

Conservation Practices—to claim points for National Priority Question #3, the proposed project must include one or more of the following practices:

Access Road (560)
 Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface (443)
 Alley Cropping (311)
 Irrigation Water Management (449)
 Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste (591)
 Mulching (484)
 Anaerobic Digester, Controlled Temperature (366)
 Nutrient Management (590)
 Animal Mortality Facility (316)
 Pasture and Hay Planting (512)
 Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Erosion Control (450)
 Pest Management (595)
 Atmospheric Resource Quality Management (370)
 Prescribed Burning (338)
 Closure of Waste Impoundment (360)
 Prescribed Grazing (528)
 Composting Facility (317)
 Pumping Plant (533)
 Conservation Cover (327)
 Range Planting (550)
 Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
 Recreation Area Improvement (562)
 Constructed Wetland (656)
 Recreation Land Grading and Shaping (566)
 Contour Buffer Strips (332)
 Recreation Trail and Walkway (568)
 Contour Farming (330)
 Residue Management, Seasonal (344)
 Contour Orchard and Other Fruit Area (331)
 Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats (643)
 Cover Crop (340)
 Riparian Forest Buffer (391)
 Critical Area Planting (342)
 Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)
 Cross Wind Ridges (589A)
 Rock Barrier (555)
 Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C)

Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
 Deep Tillage (324)
 Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)
 Drainage Water Management (554)
 Stripcropping (585)
 Feed Management (592)
 Surface Roughening (609)
 Field Border (386)
 Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
 Filter Strip (393)
 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
 Firebreak (394)
 Use Exclusion (472)
 Forest Site Preparation (490)
 Vegetative Barrier (601)
 Forest Stand Improvement (666)
 Waste Facility Cover (367)
 Fuel Break (383)
 Waste Storage Facility (313)
 Grassed Waterway (412)
 Waste Treatment Lagoon (359)
 Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548)
 Waste Utilization (633)
 Heavy Use Area Protection (561)
 Wastewater Treatment Strip (635)
 Hedgerow Planting (422)
 Wetland Creation (658)
 Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603)
 Wetland Enhancement (659)
 Irrigation Canal or Lateral (320)
 Wetland Restoration (657)
 Irrigation Field Ditch (388)
 Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
 Irrigation System, Microirrigation (441)
 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)
 Irrigation System, Sprinkler (442)
 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (650)