

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2017
GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE 16/17
RANKING QUESTIONS**

NATIONAL RANKING QUESTIONS

Number		Question
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.
2		a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?
2		b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?
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)?
2		d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a "non-impaired water body"?
2		e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?
3		a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.
3		b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?
3		c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?
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?
4		a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?
4		b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?
4		c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?
4		d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?

5		a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?
5		b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?
6		a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern.
6		b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?
6		c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?
6		d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?
7		a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?
7		b. Implementing practice in an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)?
8		a. Reducing on-farm energy consumption?
8		b. Implementing practice(s) identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit, which meet ASABE S612 criteria?
9		a. Enhancement of existing conservation practice(s) or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is received?

STATE RANKING QUESTIONS

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question
1		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 1 will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the state priority category.
	1	Is the 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.
2		Phosphorus Priority
	2	Is the program application located in a phosphorus priority watershed? Yes = 100 points No= 0 points.
3		Watershed Impacts:
	3	Does the program application include core conservation practices planned for phosphorus reduction within an existing State agency or other non-USDA water quality project area (Example: State or county watershed plan. NGO focus watershed) that addresses the same or similar watershed impairments (excess nutrients or sediment)? Yes = 100 Points No= 0 Points.
4		Collaborative Efforts - Edge of Field Monitoring:
	4	Does the application include core conservation practices planned for phosphorus reduction within a phosphorus priority watershed that has a joint NRCS.USGS edge of field and stream monitoring project in place (or scheduled to be in place) and located upstream of the stream gauge? Yes = 75 Points No = 0 Points.
5		Soil Health - Will the program application result in improved soil health by (select all that apply):
	5	Implementing Residue Management (329 and/or 345 for all crops), and basic, enhanced, or advanced nutrient management on acres not previously using these practices or if being implemented to reach a higher level of nutrient reduction than previously achieved within GLRI-identified priority watersheds? Yes to both criteria = 50 Points No to any = 0 Points.
	6	Implementing Cover Crops (340) on acres not previously using this practice within GLRI-identified priority watersheds? Yes = 50 Points No = 0 Points.
6		Drainage Water Management:
	7	Will the program application include practices that result in lowered phosphorus loading through Drainage Water Management - 554? Yes = 25 Points No = 0 Points.

LOCAL RANKING QUESTIONS

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question
1		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	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.
2		Other local questions
	2	Will a cover crop (340) be utilized on at least 25 percent of the offered acres?
	3	Will this application include Drainage Water Management (554)?
	4	Will this application utilize EQIP funds to implement a Basic Level of the Nutrient Management (590) on all contracted acres for three (3) consecutive years? -OR-
	5	Will this application utilize EQIP funds to implement a Enhanced Level of the Nutrient Management (590) on all contracted acres for three (3) consecutive years
	6	Will this application include conservation practices that will reduce the STIR rating to 10 or less over 50 percent of the offered acres?
	7	Will this application include conservation practices that will result in a positive Soil Conditioning Index (SCI)?
	8	Will this application include a Forest Stand Improvement (666), Tree and Shrub Establishment (612), and/or Windbreak/Shelter Establishment (380)?
	9	Will this application include Prescribe Grazing (528) that will improve the forage quality?
	10	Will this application include one of the following practices; Field Border (386), Filter Strip (393) and/or Grassed Waterway (412)?
	11	Will the producer implement conservation practices with the intent of demonstrating the water quality benefits through a series of organized public events for the farming community and the general public?