

New Definitions for Scoring Criteria

Effective beginning in 2008

County Conservation Grants

33.30(4) Project selection criteria. Under the competitive grants program, a project planning and review committee shall establish criteria and scoring systems to be utilized in project evaluation. Criteria and scoring systems must be distributed to all counties at least 90 days prior to project application deadline. Criteria will be reviewed at least annually to determine if amendments are needed. The committee shall evaluate and rank the resource enhancement and protection (REAP) county conservation grant applications, scoring each criteria from 1 to 10, low to high, and using the following multipliers for each criteria:

a. The committee shall use a multiplier of four for a demonstrated relationship to the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, the Iowa open spaces protection plan, the county resource enhancement plan, and other relevant local, state and federal plans.

b. The committee shall use a multiplier of three for the quality of the site or the project, or both.

(1) Quality of site. For land acquisition projects, the committee shall consider the following characteristics:

1. Level of significance. Relative rarity of the natural resources found on the project site, including but not limited to native vegetation, documented presence of species of greatest conservation need, as defined by the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan as developed by the department and as may be amended from time to time, or other uncommonly occurring but native resources.

2. Resource representation. Quality of the project site, including but not limited to the size and diversity of the project area and the vegetation and wildlife it supports.

3. Relation to public land. Proximity to existing wildlife management areas, existing parks and other public recreation areas, or other greenbelt areas already under public ownership and management.

(2) Quality of project. For construction projects, the committee shall consider plans that demonstrate the highest and best site-specific quality of design, including projects that use materials that incorporate energy savings and adhere to sustainable building principles, including waste minimizations and material re-use; plans for improvements that enhance the restoration or expansion of Iowa's natural resources or that use development principles that benefit the natural ecology of the proposed area; plans that include innovations or construction methods in the design and development of the project; and projects whose actual design and construction will exceed commonly accepted design and construction standards.

c. The committee shall use a multiplier of two for each of the following:

(1) Multiple benefits. Project provides the greatest number of public benefits/services to meet the public's diverse outdoor recreation interests.

(2) Public need. Demonstrated need for the project; increased public use of the project area as a result of the award, as documented through surveys and other testing methods; letters of support; and planning processes that consider social, demographic, ecological and economic considerations.

(3) Urgency of project. Specific factors or immediate threats to the project area that constitute urgency for acquisition or development, including but not limited to urban expansion, residential development, agricultural activities or clearing.

(4) Unique project characteristics. Documented relative rarity or uniqueness of the natural, cultural and historical resources found on the project site, including but not limited to the presence of rare or unique plant and animal species; rare, unique or protected ecosystems; and historical markers and other historically or culturally significant finds.

d. The committee shall use a multiplier of one for each of the following:

(1) Communication plan. Project sponsor's effort to inform and advise constituents and users about the importance of the proposed project and the plans to promote the proposed project to expected user groups.

(2) Economic benefit. Estimate of positive impact to local tourism, existing businesses, encouragement of new businesses, and values to nearby property owners.