

WWRP Local Parks Category Evaluation Criteria
Questions on Ecological and Biological Characteristics and Management and Viability
Adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
February 9, 2016
Resolution #2016-02

| WWRP Critical Habitat Evaluation Summary | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|---------------|
| Criteria | Evaluation Elements | Possible Points | Weight |
| Project Introduction | Locate the project on statewide, vicinity, and site maps. Brief summary of the project (goals and objectives statement) | Not scored | 0% |
| 1. Ecological and Biological Characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bigger picture • Uniqueness and significance of the site • Fish and wildlife species or communities • Quality of habitat | 20 | 40% |
| 2. Species and Communities with Special Status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to species or communities • Importance of acquisitions • Ecological roles • Taxonomic distinctness • Rarity | 10 | 20% |
| 3. Manageability and Viability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediacy of threat to the site • Long-term viability • Enhancement of existing protected land • Ongoing stewardship • Livestock grazing uses | 15 | 30% |
| 4. Public Benefit and Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project support • Educational and/or scientific value | 5 | 10% |
| Total Points Possible | | 50 | |

Evaluation Question #1: Ecological and Biological Characteristics

1. Ecological and Biological Characteristics

Why is the site worthy of long-term conservation?¹

“Paint a picture” of your project for the evaluators – the what, where, and why. This is the “heart” of your presentation and evaluators will draw conclusions based on the information presented about the quality and function of the habitat and the demonstrated need to protect it for fish and wildlife.

¹ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (6)(a)(iii, v - vii, xi, xiv); (6)(b)(ii)

The Bigger Picture

How is this project supported by a current plan (i.e., species management population plan, habitat conservation, local, conservation futures, watershed, statewide, agency, or conservation), or a coordinated region-wide prioritization effort? What is the status of the plan? Does this project assist in implementation of a local shoreline master program, updated according to Revised Code of Washington 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130? What process was used to identify this project as a priority? What specific role does this project play in a broader watershed or landscape picture? Is it part of a phased project? Is it a stand-alone site or habitat? For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The *Action Agenda* can be found online at www.psp.wa.gov. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

Local agencies only: What is the statewide significance of the project site? Does it meet priorities identified in a state plan? What elevates this site to a state significance level in addition to needs identified for the local community?

Uniqueness and Significance

Explain how the site is unique or significant on a global, regional, state, ecosystem, and/or watershed level. How unique is the site in relation to habitat quality, connectivity, diversity, and rarity? How is the site important in providing critical habitat or biological function for wildlife species or communities? How does this site compare to others of the same type?

Fish and Wildlife Species or Communities

Which, if any, are the target species or communities²? (Target species may or may not be special status species.) Are the target species or communities geographically isolated to this particular site? Explain the condition of the population of target species. Which species have the potential and likelihood to use the site in the future and will reintroduction occur naturally or otherwise?

Quality of Habitat

Describe the ecological and biological quality of the habitat. What specific role does the habitat play in supporting the species or communities using the site? How is this habitat important in providing food, water, cover, connectivity, and resting areas? Are the size, quality, and other characteristics of the habitat adequate to support the target species or communities within the context of the project areas? Has the habitat or characteristics of the site been identified as limiting factors or critical pathways to the target species and communities?

▲ Maximum Points = 20

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² A target species or community is the project's primary objective for protection and stands to gain the greatest benefit from the acquisition. For example, a project's primary objective may be to acquire and protect high quality shrub-steppe. This is the "target community" but that community also provides important habitat for shrub-steppe-dependent species.

Evaluation Question #3: Management and Viability

3. Manageability and Viability

What is the likelihood of the site remaining viable over the long term and why is it important to secure it now?³ This question's intent is to determine whether the site can be managed, and how it will be managed, to protect the target species or communities.

Immediacy of Threat of the Habitat

What, and how immediate or imminent, are the threats to the habitat at the site (i.e., inherent, ecological, human, conversion, abatable or non-abatable threats)? Are these new threats or ongoing threats? How do or will these threats affect the function of the habitat? How will protection of the site affect these threats? What steps already have been taken to secure the land or reduce the threats?

Long-Term Viability

What regulatory protections currently are afforded the site (i.e., county comprehensive plan, critical areas ordinances, zoning, development regulation, shoreline management rules, forest practice rules including landowner landscape plans, habitat conservation plans, etc.)? Demonstrate how the site will be managed over time to maintain the desired characteristics. Who will maintain it and what human and financial resources are available to do it? What management needs are there? Is the habitat recoverable? What restorative efforts, if any, are needed and planned? What is happening across the landscape or watershed that may affect the viability of the site? Describe any long-term site monitoring plans and identify who will implement monitoring?

Enhancement of Existing Protected Land

Are there other protected lands (public and private) near or adjoining this site that have complementary or compatible land uses for the target species (consider wide-ranging or migratory species)? Are they managed in a manner consistent with the needs of the target species or communities? Is this site part of a larger ownership? If so, describe the connectivity and management of the other land.

Ongoing Stewardship

Describe the ongoing stewardship program for the site that includes control of noxious weeds and detrimental invasive species, and that identifies the source of funds from which the program will be funded.

Livestock Grazing Uses

Livestock grazing may not diminish the essential purposes of the proposed project. Describe livestock grazing uses of the property that would occur if the property is acquired. Describe the site-specific management plan for livestock grazing that protects or enhances the health of the species targeted in the grant proposal. The site-specific management plan must incorporate current laws, rules, and guidelines for wildlife species protection and include a duration and periodic renewal schedule.

▲ Maximum Points = 15

³ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (6)(a)(ii, iv, viii, x)

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