



PROPOSED: Critical Habitat and Natural Areas Policy Changes

Public Comments requested by December 15, 2025

Background

In preparation for the 2026 spring grant round, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff worked with the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to identify and consider policy changes to [Manual 10b: WWRP Habitat Conservation Account](#). To date, there have been multiple public meetings where these policy changes have been discussed:

- **April 22, 2025 (Item 13)** – RCO staff provided an initial briefing on the key context for the effort and a description of the proposed approach and timeline.
- **June 24, 2025 (Item 3)** – RCO staff requested initial board direction on core concepts and issues noted during initial outreach.
- **October 28, 2025 (Item 3)** – RCO staff requested board direction on proposed changes to intent language and evaluation criteria.

Scope of Potential Changes

Public comment is being sought on the following items:

- Proposed changes to intent language and evaluation criteria for the WWRP-Critical Habitat category.
- Proposed changes to intent language and evaluation criteria for the WWRP-Natural Areas category.

The key goals of this intent and criteria update are to:

- Provide additional clarity in funding intent for Natural Areas and Critical Habitat categories to support decision-making by prospective applicants.
- Better align evaluation criteria with the unique statutory definitions of Natural Areas and Critical Habitat to ensure strategic funding.
- Reduce complexity of existing criteria to support usability for applicants and consistent evaluation by advisory committee members.

Links to current language, description of changes, and proposed language for both the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories can be found in the **Proposed Policies** section below. In addition, a summary of the new proposed evaluation criteria for both Critical Habitat and Natural Areas can be found in the **Proposed Evaluation Summaries** section below.

How to Comment

RCO is requesting public comment on the proposed policies in this document. Comments can be submitted by completing the web form at this link: <https://forms.office.com/g/ZUm8h8rbkL>.

The **Proposed Policies** section below is specifically formatted and designed to serve as a companion for completion of the web form.

Comments will be accepted until **11:59 pm on Monday, December 15, 2025**.

Questions?

Questions about the proposed policy changes can be emailed to Nicholas Norton, Policy and Planning Specialist, at nicholas.norton@rcowa.gov.

Next Steps

RCO staff will utilize public feedback to inform the final proposed policy changes and associated staff recommendations to the board. The current timeline is for the board to review public comments, receive staff recommendations, and make final decisions on these policy items during their January 27-28 meeting. The public will also have an opportunity to comment on the final proposed changes during the board meeting.

If the board adopts the proposed changes, RCO staff will incorporate the new policy language and other administrative changes into updated policy manuals that will be published as soon as possible on the RCO website.

Proposed Policies

Section 1: Critical Habitat Intent

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 17	Provide addition clarity on the purpose and types of wildlife species that would form the basis of a proposal Add 5 examples of eligible projects based on the new criteria	4. Overall, do you like the inclusion of example Critical Habitat projects within the intent section? 5. Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed changes to Critical Habitat intent language?

Proposed Language

Critical Habitat Category

This category provides grants to acquire lands critical for the long-term benefit of wildlife species. This includes a diversity of different types of wildlife, such as game and non-game species; upland, freshwater, and marine species; and endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. Examples of eligible critical habitat projects include, but are not limited to:

- Eastside steppe habitat that provides breeding and nesting grounds for multiple Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- Oak woodland habitat that secures a key migratory corridor for state-threatened mammals
- Wetland complex that provides stop-over habitat and popular public viewing opportunities for state-endangered waterfowl
- Riparian or nearshore zones that support critical rearing and feeding habitat for federally listed anadromous fish
- Lowland forest habitat that provides winter range for priority ungulates of recreational and/or tribal importance

Critical habitat projects:

- May include public use for both consumptive and non-consumptive activities.
- May include acquisition for species protection or enhancement.

- May include limited development of public facilities such as roads, trails, parking, restrooms, signs and kiosks, and fences.
- Must be accessible for public recreation and outdoor education. See the board's public access policy for allowed limitations to public access.
- May include costs for developing stewardship plans.
- Does not allow for habitat creation, enhancement, or restoration.
- Does not allow renovation of facilities.

Section 2: Critical Habitat Evaluation Criteria

Project Introduction (0 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 59	Request information about scope (acquisition type, acreage, etc.) Request information about target species and environmental benefits	7. Critical Habitat - Project Introduction: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 8. Critical Habitat – Project Introduction: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed changes or new language?

Proposed Language

Project Introduction. Set the stage for the project and orient evaluators to the project site. The project introduction should include the following:

- **Scope.** The type of acquisition, number of acres, any proposed development, and connection to past or future phases (if applicable).
- **Goals and Objectives.** A brief overview of the project's goals, objectives, target wildlife species¹, and environmental benefits.
- **Location Maps.** Statewide and vicinity maps, as well as site maps that demonstrate how the project supports connectivity to other important landscapes and shows other sites in the area with similar habitat components.

▲ Project introduction is not scored.

Ecological and Biological Characteristics (20 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
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¹A target wildlife species is the project's primary objective(s) for protection and stands to gain the greatest benefit from the acquisition. Target species may or may not be special status species, and there may be multiple target species depending on the nature of the project and priorities of the applicant.

Manual 10b: Page 59	Reframe to focus more clearly on how the habitat will support target species Re-title as “Habitat Impact” Reduce length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts for each element Keep same total points, but reduce point range to ten with a multiplier of two	9. Critical Habitat – Ecological and Biological Characteristics: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 10. Critical Habitat – Project Introduction: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed switch to a "Habitat Impact" criterion and any of the proposed elements?
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Proposed Language

1. Habitat Impact²

To what extent does the site represent critical habitat that directly benefits target wildlife species? How is this demonstrated through current plans, such as the State Wildlife Action Plan, as well as other analyses or prioritization efforts?³ A complete response should address the following:

- **Landscape Significance.** The uniqueness and significance of the project site in the broader landscape, watershed or statewide picture, importance for overall ecosystem function, and impact to other project phases.
- **Ecological Role.** The importance of the site in relation to habitat quality, diversity, or rarity, and the specific roles the site plays in supporting the target wildlife species on the site (connectivity, breeding and nesting grounds, food and water access, etc.).
- **Adequacy.** The extent to which the size, quality, and other characteristics of the habitat are adequate to support the target wildlife species within the context of adjacent protected lands.
- **Distribution and Range.** The distribution, range, and abundance of the target

² Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(v, vii, ix, xiii, xv, xvi)

³ Examples include the State Wildlife Action Plan, Priority Habitat and Species, State Natural Heritage Plan, Puget Sound Action Agenda, local land use plan, local comprehensive plan, local shoreline master plan, watershed plan, statewide recreation or resource plan, habitat conservation plan, species recovery plan, limiting factors or critical pathways analysis, other coordinated regionwide prioritization effort, etc.

wildlife species relative to the site and adjacent lands, as well as the potential and likelihood for target wildlife species to use the site in the future (naturally or via reintroduction).

- **Acquisition Importance.** The importance of habitat acquisition compared to other protection or recovery tasks identified for the target wildlife species (i.e. captive breeding, regulatory protection, etc.), and the role of the acquisition in enabling habitat restoration or other recovery efforts for the benefit of target wildlife species.

▲ Point Range: zero to 10 points, which are multiplied later by two

Species and Communities with Special Status (10 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 61	Reframe to focus more broadly on fish and wildlife species, rather than special status species and communities Re-title "Species Significance" Reduce lengths of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts for each element	11. Critical Habitat – Species and Communities with Special Status: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 12. Critical Habitat – Species and Communities with Special Status: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed switch to a "Species Significance" criterion and any of the proposed elements?

Proposed Language

2. Species Significance⁴

What is the collective significance of the target wildlife species and other groups of wildlife species that will benefit from the project? A complete response should address the following:

- **Diversity.** Overall diversity of different wildlife species using the site and adjacent protected lands.

⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(viii, xi)

- **Special Status.** The presence of endangered, threatened, sensitive, or other special status wildlife species, as further demonstrated on the required Species and Communities Status table (see appendix A).
- **Vulnerability.** The population condition, rarity, and/or taxonomic distinctness of target wildlife species.
- **Ecosystem Impact.** The importance of the target wildlife species in supporting overall ecosystem function.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points

Manageability and Viability (15 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 62	Reduce the relative point value from 15 to 10 points Removed reference to site-specific management plan for livestock grazing Added clarity on important information needed relative to proposed livestock uses Reduce length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts for each element	13. Critical Habitat – Manageability and Viability: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 14. Critical Habitat – Manageability and Viability: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed changes or new language?

Proposed Language

3. Manageability and Viability⁵

To what extent can the site be managed to protect the target species or communities over the long term and why is it important to secure the site now? A complete response should address the following:

- **Threat.** How protection of the site will address new, ongoing, or imminent

⁵ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(ii, iv, vi, x, xii)

threats to the site (i.e., inherent, ecological, human, conversion, abatable or non-abatable threats).

- **Restoration and Management.** Planned near-term restoration or management to support desired habitat function and how such efforts are proposed to be funded.
- **Stewardship.** The proposed ongoing stewardship program for the project area (annual maintenance and operations, noxious weed and invasive species control, site monitoring, etc.) and the source of funding for this work.
- **Existing Public Property.** How the site enhances other lands (public and private) near the site with complimentary or compatible management and stewardship needs relative to the target species or communities.
- **Conservation Easement.** Whether a conservation easement provides an appropriate level of protection for this habitat, and (as applicable) the reasons why a conservation easement is not being pursued.
- **Regulatory Protections.** Regulatory protections already afforded the site (critical areas ordinances, zoning, development regulations, shoreline management rules, forest practice rules, habitat conservation plans, etc.).
- **Livestock Grazing.** The amount, location, and seasonal duration of livestock grazing that would occur if the property were acquired, planned efforts to mitigate impacts to wildlife, and an evidence-based rationale for how the proposed grazing approach protects or enhances desired habitat function.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points

Public Benefit and Community Support (5 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 64	Reframe to focus more specifically on partnership and support Re-title as “Partnerships and Community Support” Add elements related to tribal government support, impact of local input, and significance of	15. Critical Habitat – Public Benefits and Community Support: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 16. Critical Habitat – Public Benefits and Community Support: Do you have any specific feedback

	existing partnerships in the community Move element related to education and scientific value into other criteria	on the proposed switch to a "Partnerships and Community Support" criterion and any of the proposed elements?
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Proposed Language

4. Partnerships and Community Support⁶

To what degree do the community (local citizens, local organizations, local governments and elected officials, or others) and tribal governments support, and benefit from, the project? A complete response should address the following:

- **Engagement.** Which people most impacted by the project were engaged, how they were engaged, and how local input influenced the project scope and approach.
- **Partnerships.** Any partnerships that are providing support for the project through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means, and the significance of the partnerships within the local community or service area.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Multiple Benefits (5 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
<u>Manual 10b: Page 65</u>	Re-title " Public Benefits " Add elements relating to educational and scientific benefits, geological and historical landscape features, as well as ecosystem services Increase point value from 3 to 5 points	17. Critical Habitat – Multiple Benefits: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 18. Critical Habitat – Multiple Benefits: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed switch to

⁶ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(iii)

	Reduce length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts	a "Public Benefits" criterion and any of the proposed elements?
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Proposed Language

5. Public Benefits⁷

What additional public benefits will the property provide when protected as critical habitat? A complete response should address the following, as applicable:

- **Recreation.** How recreational uses will be managed on the landscape, the quality of the recreational experience, and an evidence-based explanation of compatibility with the habitat conservation objectives of the project
- **Resource Uses.** Resource uses and/or management practices compatible with the habitat conservation objectives of the project and how additional conservation benefits will be achieved
- **Research and Education.** Opportunity for new or ongoing scientific research and education
- **Landscape Features.** Preservation of geological or historical landscape features of public interest (lava tubes, inland dunes, waterfalls, fossil sites, coulees, etc.)
- **Ecosystem Services.** Ecosystem services such as aquifer recharge, flood control, or habitat benefits for the feeding, nesting, and reproduction of pollinators

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

⁷ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(i, xiv)

Part 3: Natural Areas Intent

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 18	Provide addition clarity on the purpose and types of wildlife species that would form the basis of a proposal Add 5 examples of eligible projects based on the new criteria Clarify grant requirements relative to inclusion into Washington Natural Areas Register.	19. Overall, do you like the inclusion of example Natural Areas projects within the intent section? 20. Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed changes to Natural Areas intent language?

Proposed Language

Natural Areas Category

These grants provide funding to acquire lands specifically for the preservation of rare and vanishing natural features. This includes a diversity of natural features such as ecologically intact native ecosystems, at-risk plant communities, special status plant and animal species, as well as unique geological or historic landscape features. Examples of eligible natural areas projects include, but are not limited to:

- A rare steptoe with one of the largest remaining tracts of state-endangered grassland to support conservation of biodiversity and proactive management
- Montane forest to protect ecologically intact ecosystems of high priority for representation according to Washington's Natural Heritage Plan
- Lava tubes to support public education and appreciation of Washington's unique geological history
- Shrub-steppe habitat to protect most of the entire global population of a state-endangered endemic plant found on the property
- Important fossil sites to secure youth educational opportunities and ongoing paleontological research

Natural Areas projects:

- Must have retained most of its natural character.
- Must be managed primarily for resource preservation, protection, and study.
- Are not required to be included in the Washington Registration of Natural Areas as a condition of funding.
- May include limited development of public facilities, such as trails, roads, parking, restrooms, signs and kiosks, and fences.
- Must be accessible for public recreation and outdoor education. See the board's public access policy for allowed limitations to public access.
- May include costs for developing stewardship plans.
- Does not allow for habitat creation, enhancement, or restoration.
- Does not allow renovation of facilities.

Part 4: Natural Areas Evaluation Criteria

Project Introduction (0 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 68	Request information about key metrics (acquisition type, acreage, etc.) Request information about target ecosystems, species and environmental benefits	22. Natural Areas - Project Introduction: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 23. Natural Areas – Project Introduction: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed changes or new language?

Proposed Language

Project Introduction. Set the stage for the project and orient evaluators to the project site. The project introduction should include the following:

- **Scope.** The type of acquisition, number of acres, any proposed development, and connection to past or future phases (if applicable).
- **Goals and Objectives.** A brief overview of the project's goals, objectives, target ecosystems, species and/or landscapes, as well as environmental benefits.
- **Location Maps.** Statewide and vicinity maps, as well as site maps that demonstrate how the project supports connectivity to other important landscapes and shows other sites in the area with similar ecosystem components.

▲ Project introduction is not scored.

Ecological and Biological Characteristics (20 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
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<u>Manual 10b: Page 68</u>	Remove this criterion as currently written and replace with a “Program Priority” criterion. This criterion would ask about what makes the project a priority for protection as a natural area Add sub-bullets that specifically align with the Natural Areas statutory definition (native ecosystems, special status species, and landscape features) Reduce length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts for each element Increase number of points from 20 to 25	24. Natural Areas – Ecological and Biological Characteristics: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 25. Natural Areas – Ecological and Biological Characteristics: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed switch to a "Program Priority" criterion and any of the proposed elements?
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Proposed Language

1. Program Priority⁸

What features make this a priority site for protection as a natural area? How is this need demonstrated through current plans, such as the State Natural Heritage Plan, as well as other analyses or prioritization efforts?⁹ A complete response should address the following, as applicable:

- **Landscape Significance.** The uniqueness and significance of the project site in the broader landscape, watershed or statewide picture, importance for overall ecosystem function, and impact to other project phases.
- **Native Ecosystems.** How the proposed project will protect ecologically intact, functional native ecosystems, and the extent to which these ecosystems are unique and prioritized for conservation at multiple levels (local, state, national,

⁸ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(v, vii, viii, ix, xi, xv, xiv, xvi)

⁹ Examples include the State Natural Heritage Plan, Priority Habitat and Species, State Wildlife Action Plan, Puget Sound Action Agenda, local land use plan, local comprehensive plan, local shoreline master plan, watershed plan, statewide recreation or resource plan, habitat conservation plan, species recovery plan, limiting factors or critical pathways analysis, other coordinated regionwide prioritization effort, etc.

global).

- **Special Status Species.** How the proposed project supports native biodiversity by protecting populations of special status plant and animal species, or by integrating with recovery efforts for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species.
- **Landscape Features.** The presence of rare or vanishing geological or historical landscape features of public interest (lava tubes, inland dunes, waterfalls, fossil sites, coulees, etc.).

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by two and a half

Species and Communities with Special Status (10 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 70	Remove this as a separate criterion and incorporate as a key component of the new "Program Priority" criterion.	26. Natural Areas – Species and Communities with Special Status: This proposal would remove this as a separate question and incorporate into the "Program Priority" that asks about native ecosystems, species status species, and landscape features. What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 27. Critical Habitat – Species and Communities with Special Status: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed removal of this as a separate criterion and incorporation into a "Program Priority" criterion?

Proposed Language

See above language for "Program Priority" criterion.

Natural Areas – Science and Education (5 points) NEW CRITERION

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
<u>Manual 10b: Page 74</u>	Pull science and education from “ Partnerships and Community Support ” to create a separate criterion.	28. Natural Areas –Science and Education: This proposal would pull out elements related to science and educational value from other criterion and make them a separate criterion. What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 29. Natural Areas – Science and Education: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed development of a new criterion specific to science and educational value?

Proposed Language

2. Science and Education

To what extent does the site provide significant scientific and educational opportunities, and how likely are these opportunities to come to fruition? A complete response should address the following, as applicable:

- **Science.** How the proposed project would directly support a documented research need in a management plan, thesis, or scientific journal related to the ecosystems, landscape features or species at the site.
- **Education.** How the proposed project would directly support youth education through an existing or planned partnership or secure a unique and accessible opportunity for public appreciation of natural history.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Manageability and Viability (15 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
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<u>Manual 10b: Page 71</u>	Reduce the relative point value from 15 to 10 points Reduce length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts for each element	30. Natural Areas – Manageability and Viability: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 31. Natural Areas – Manageability and Viability: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed changes or new language?
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Proposed Language

3. Manageability and Viability¹⁰

To what extent can the site be managed to protect the target ecosystems, species, and/or landscape features over the long-term and why is it important to secure it now? A complete response should address the following:

- **Threat.** How protection of the site will address new, ongoing, or imminent threats to the site (i.e., inherent, ecological, human, conversion, abatable or non-abatable threats).
- **Restoration and Management.** Planned near-term restoration or management to support desired ecosystem and habitat function and how such efforts are proposed to be funded.
- **Stewardship.** The proposed ongoing stewardship program for the project area (annual maintenance and operations, noxious weed and invasive species control, site monitoring, etc.) and the source of funding for this work.
- **Existing Public Property.** How the site enhances other lands (public and private) near the site with complimentary or compatible management and stewardship needs relative to the target ecosystems and species.
- **Conservation Easement.** Whether a conservation easement provides an appropriate level of protection for this habitat, and (as applicable) the reasons why a conservation easement is not being pursued.
- **Regulatory Protections.** Regulatory protections already afforded the site (critical

¹⁰ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(ii, iv, vi, x, xii)

areas ordinances, zoning, development regulations, shoreline management rules, forest practice rules, habitat conservation plans, etc.).

▲ Point Range: zero to 10 points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

Public Benefit and Community Support (5 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 73	Reframe to focus more specifically on partnership and support Re-title as “Partnerships and Community Support” Add elements related to tribal government support, impact of local input, and significance of existing partnerships in the community Move element related to education and scientific value into a separate criterion	32. Natural Areas – Public Benefits and Community Support: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 33. Natural Areas – Public Benefits and Community Support: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed switch to a "Partnerships and Community Support" criterion and any of the proposed elements?

Proposed Language

4. Partnerships and Community Support¹¹

To what degree do the community (local citizens, local organizations, local governments and elected officials, or others) and tribal governments support, and benefit from, the project? A complete response should address the following:

- **Engagement.** Which people most impacted by the project were engaged, how they were engaged, and how local input influenced the project scope and approach.
- **Partnerships.** Any partnerships that are providing support for the project through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means, and the significance

¹¹ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(iii)

of the partnerships within the local community or service area.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Multiple Benefits (5 points)

Current Language	Proposed Changes	Form Survey Questions
Manual 10b: Page 74	Re-title " Public Benefits " Add elements relating to ecosystem services Increase point value from 3 to 5 points Reduce length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts	34. Natural Areas – Multiple Benefits: What best describes your level of support for the proposed changes and new language? 35. Natural Areas – Multiple Benefits: Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed switch to a "Public Benefits" criterion and any of the proposed elements?

Proposed Language

5. Public Benefits¹²

What additional public benefits will the property provide when protected as a natural area? A complete response should address the following, as applicable:

- **Recreation.** How recreational uses will be managed on the landscape, the quality of the recreational experience, and an evidence-based explanation of compatibility with the conservation objectives of the project
- **Resource Uses.** Resource uses or management practices compatible with the conservation objectives of the project that provide the ability to achieve additional conservation benefits.
- **Ecosystem Services.** Ecosystem services such as aquifer recharge, flood control, or habitat benefits for the feeding, nesting, and reproduction of pollinators

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

¹² Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(i, xiv, xvii)

Proposed Evaluation Summaries

Critical Habitat

Critical Habitat Category Evaluation Summary		
Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Possible Points
Unscored		
Project Introduction	• Scope • Project goals and objectives • Location maps	Not scored
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
1. Habitat Impact	• Landscape significance • Ecological role • Adequacy • Distribution and range • Acquisition importance	20 points
2. Species Significance	• Diversity • Special status • Vulnerability • Ecosystem impact	10 points
3. Manageability and Viability	• Threat • Restoration and management • Stewardship • Existing public property • Conservation easement • Regulatory protections • Livestock grazing	10 points
4. Partnerships and Community Support	• Engagement • Partnerships	5 points
5. Public Benefits	• Recreation • Resource uses • Research and education • Landscape features • Ecosystem services	5 points
Total Points Possible		50

Natural Areas

Natural Areas Category Evaluation Summary		
Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Possible Points
Unscored		
Project Introduction	• Scope • Project goals and objectives • Location maps	Not scored
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
1. Program Priority	• Landscape significance • Native ecosystems • Special status species • Landscape features	25 points
2. Science and Education	• Science • Education	5 points
3. Manageability and Viability	• Threat • Restoration and management • Stewardship • Existing public property • Conservation easement • Regulatory protections	10 points
4. Partnerships and Community Support	• Engagement • Partnerships	5 points
5. Public Benefits	• Recreation • Resource uses • Ecosystem services	5 points
Total Points Possible		50