



Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program GRANT SCORING CRITERIA

Only projects that are on working lands (in general, lands that are under special ad valorem tax valuation for farming, ranching, timber production or wildlife), and propose to (1) conserve water or protect water quality, (2) conserve native wildlife species through protection of their habitat, (3) conserve rare or sensitive species, (4) demonstrably contribute to preservation of a landscape of conservation lands, or (5) protect productive open-space land threatened by fragmentation or development, may receive funding from the Program. The Council will not consider any applications that are administratively incomplete. At the Program Coordinator's discretion, administratively incomplete applications may be returned with a request for additional information.

In accordance with Texas Natural Resources Code § 183.060, the Council has adopted scoring criteria that will be used in evaluating applications. The Council may emphasize factors of special interest during the project selection process. Points are awarded for those values which will clearly be protected by the conservation easement.

Applications will be assigned a score in accordance with the following criteria. The bullets listed for each scoring category provide guidance.

- **Threat of development or other conversion to productive working lands (30)** _____
 - Near a population center
 - In an area experiencing or expected to experience rapid development
 - Demonstrable pressure to sell for development
 - Conversion would result in significant loss of productivity

- **Value (20)** _____
 - Cost effective for conservation benefits and region
 - Conservation easement donated or offered at bargain sale price
 - Applicant, donor, grant, or other funding source contributing to project
 - Significant preservation of natural resources and/or agricultural productivity for the money

- **Watershed value (20)** _____
 - Protects headwaters systems, springs, creeks, wetlands, riparian buffers, or other sensitive watershed features
 - Has quantifiable aquifer recharge value
 - Land uses, and/or landscape position contribute to maintenance of watershed processes that protect water quality, quantity and seasonality
 - Water quality best management practices are in place. Examples include:
 - Buffer zones adjacent to streams/riparian/wetland areas
 - BMPs to minimize sediment and nutrient loading in runoff
 - Agricultural practices that minimize water consumption

- **Fish and wildlife value (15)** _____
 - Protects habitat(s) that are considered to be a high priority for conservation due to rarity or rate of decline
 - No or few examples of target habitats are currently in conservation
 - Supports conservation or recovery of federal or state listed species, Texas Conservation Action Plan (TCAP) species of greatest conservation need, or species in decline
 - Conserves particularly mature, diverse or healthy habitat(s)
 - Fish and wildlife best management practices are in place. Examples include:
 - Designation and protection of sensitive habitat zones
 - Bank stabilization; erosion control
 - Consolidation of infrastructure

- **Contribution to a conservation landscape (10)**

- Contiguous with lands already protected for conservation
- Offers additive watershed, habitat, agricultural viability, or aesthetic values
- Conserves migration routes, terrestrial or aquatic corridors or critical habitat buffers

- **Terms of the conservation easement (5)**

- Conservation easement is perpetual
- Easement holder is accredited and stable
- Conservation easement prohibits fragmentation and encourages stewardship

Total
