

## **Habitat and Angler Access Program Proposal Scoring Rubric**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Inland Fisheries' Habitat and Angler Access Program (HAAP) will fund freshwater fish habitat enhancement and restoration as well as bank and shoreline angler access projects. Submitted project proposals should be listed under one of two project types: 1) *Bank and Shoreline Access* and 2) *Fish Habitat Restoration and Enhancement*. Projects that incorporate *Bank and Shoreline Access* as well as *Habitat Restoration and Enhancement* in nearly equal proportions (approximately 50:50) will be indicated as *Both*. Contracts initiated for approved projects will be conducted within a grant cycle (e.g., planning/design, delivery/construction, etc.). Multi-phased projects will need to re-apply for additional funding during the subsequent proposal submission periods. Total individual project costs are limited to maximum of \$50,000 per grant cycle.

Proposals will be evaluated by the criteria presented below:

NOTE: Nos. 1 and 2 evaluated for **Bank and Shoreline Access** projects only;

Nos. 3 and 4 evaluated for Fish Habitat Restoration and Enhancement projects only;

Nos. 5-10 will be evaluated for all projects;

- 1. Customer Service - Maximum Criterion Points: 20**
  - a) Would the project occur within 50 miles or 1-hour drive-time of a metropolitan area (populations over 100,000 people; e.g., Houston, Austin, DFW, San Antonio)?
  - b) Would the project promote conservation of fish and aquatic resources to our customers?
  - c) Does this project serve a verifiable, highly utilized fishery (relative to its location) or an underutilized fishery with strong growth potential via improvements through HAAP?
  - d) Does this project serve our diverse resource users, especially persons belonging to under-represented groups and/or with special needs (i.e., ADA compliance)?
  - e) Would this project result in commitment for maintenance and provision of resources to ensure reliability of angler access for at least 15 years?
- 2. Angling Access - Maximum Criterion Points: 20**
  - a) Would this project enhance the quality of available access to the angling resource?
  - b) Would this project generate new or expand on existing angler access points on the system?
  - c) Would the proximity of the project site to other public access points on this system be adequate to prevent crowding or fairly distribute amenities?

- d) Would this project site be supplemented by other angler-friendly amenities (e.g., fish cleaning station, fish attractors, angling line recycling, interpretive signage, restrooms, trash bins, etc.)?
  - e) Would this project include addition of safety features for access (e.g., guide rails, grab bars, tie-down cleats, lighting, etc.)?
- 3. Fish Habitat** - Maximum Criterion Points: 20
- a) Would this project be occurring in a system that is currently deficient in structural habitat and/or aquatic vegetation required to sustain a healthy fishery?
  - b) Does this project address major habitat impairments to Texas' streams and reservoirs such as erosion, sedimentation, nutrient-loading, changes in water regimes, and loss of connectivity to other aquatic systems?
  - c) Would project outcomes result in improvements of water quality or quantity for ecological health of the aquatic system and for recreational use?
  - d) Does the project employ sustainable methods for habitat enhancement (e.g., use of natural, recycled, and/or repurposed materials)?
  - e) Does the project enhance recreational angling success (i.e., angler catch rates)?
- 4. Conservation** - Maximum Criterion Points: 20
- a) Does this project improve or maintain protections of existing habitats and/or increase suitable habitat for a recreationally important species and/or group?
  - b) Does this project entail strategies to protect or enhance habitats to be considered high priority for conservation because they are rare or in decline?
  - c) Does this project intend to use methods to improve connectivity (e.g., dredging, sediment catchment, fish passage improvements, channel improvements, etc.) to aquatic systems, thus supporting functioning life cycles for transient recreationally important fishes?
  - d) Does this project combat and/or prevent expansion of invasive species that are detrimental to aquatic ecosystems, and does it consider the protection of other important non-recreational aquatic species?
  - e) Does the proposed project fit into larger conservation efforts, such as the National Fish Habitat Partnership action plan, state wildlife action plans, Native Fish Conservation Areas, multi-species conservation plans, habitat conservation plans, recovery plans, or other local plans?
- 5. Angling Quality** - Maximum Criterion Points: 8
- a) Would the project outcomes be readily accessible to anglers and improve their angling experiences and/or success?
  - b) Does this project engage and inform local communities and visiting public on the values and benefits of angling and healthy aquatic systems?
- 6. Merit** - Maximum Criterion Points: 16

- a) Does the project have high likelihood of providing long-term benefits for Texas' fisheries?
  - b) Does the project use appropriate methodology and design for restoration, enhancement, and management of freshwater fish habitat and/or the development of bank OR shoreline-based freshwater angler access?
  - c) Does the proposal demonstrate adequate planning and qualifications to ensure project implementation and completion and consideration of unintended outcomes?
  - d) Does the proposed project align with current fisheries management/conservation objectives for the system as determined by TPWD biologists?
- 7. Regulatory Compliance - Maximum Criterion Points: 4**
- a) Are the necessary permissions as well as state and federal permits (e.g., NEPA and 404) needed to execute the project identified in the proposal?
- 8. Measurable Objectives and Monitoring - Maximum Criterion Points: 8**
- a) Does the project have a sound monitoring plan with measurable objectives and suitable methodologies for evaluating the success of the project, and does it include monitoring plan include both pre- and post-project monitoring activities?
  - b) Do the activities proposed include a description and timeline of the long-term maintenance responsibilities that assure the project will be successful and the results sustainable?
- 9. Partnerships and Outreach - Maximum Criterion Points: 12**
- a) Does the project currently have additional partners working in collaboration and/or the ability to attract new partnerships (i.e., Fish Habitat Partnerships, controlling authorities, angling groups, civic and youth organizations, and other stakeholders, etc.)?
  - b) Does the project have a plan for outreach involving press releases, interviews, and/or social media, static outreach (i.e., signage) and educational events?
  - c) Does this project promote the recruitment, retention, or reactivation of anglers?
- 10. Budget - Maximum Criterion Points: 12**
- a) Are cost estimates appropriate, justified, and reasonable for meeting the desired project objectives and required timelines for the HAAP?
  - b) Does the project leverage other government funding, private funding, and/or in-kind resources that will work into a cost-share system?
  - c) Is this proposal part of a multi-phase project that has had previous phases funded by the HAAP before? (Award maximum points if "Yes"; no points if "No")

**Total Point Score: 100**

Each criterion should be addressed in the body of the project proposal. Both *Bank and Shoreline Access Projects* as well as *Fish Habitat Restoration and Enhancement* will have unique criteria pertaining to their respective project types. There are also criteria that apply to both project types. If the proposal is being submitted for a phased project, responses should primarily focus on the applicable proposed scope of work reflected in the budget and not the larger project.

Projects specified as solely *Bank and Shoreline Access* or *Fish Habitat Restoration or Enhancement* will be scored by totaling points from eight (8) criteria. Each project type has two separate criteria, but all sum to the same number of possible points. Proposals designated as *Both* will be scored from all 10 criteria. Questions supporting each criterion are worth a specified number of points to be totaled for the maximum points that can be awarded. These proposals will have the point totals for *Bank and Shoreline Access* criteria (#1-2) and *Fish Habitat Restoration and Enhancement* criteria (#3-4) scored as independent sections and averaged. The average points will be added to the points for the remaining criteria to determine the total point score. The maximum score that can be achieved is equal to the other project types. Each proposal's final score will be determined by calculating the average of all total point scores awarded by committee members. All proposals will then be ranked from highest to lowest final scores. Proposals with the highest final scores will represent the strongest proposals.

Proposals will be prioritized by a Scoring Committee to ensure balance of tasks and to meet objectives and goals of the HAAP. The strongest proposals will be reviewed and awarded funding will be based on the final score rankings, available money, as well as priorities and objectives for the HAAP. Modifications to a submitted project may be requested to ensure that it better fits the HAAP priorities. While such requested changes to projects may result in modifications to funding allocations, these requests will only be made to ensure effective allocation of funds to selected proposals. A final scope of work with the requested changes and updates will be required to be submitted to the Scoring Committee prior to the start of the project.