

Ranking Criteria for NRCS Programs

Application Overview

An applicant may submit an application to participate in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), or Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The NRCS state conservationist or area director, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, Tribal Conservation Advisory Councils, local workgroups, and other stakeholders, has developed the following ranking criteria to prioritize and select applications that best address the applicable program purposes and priority natural resource concerns in **Missouri**.

The state conservationist or area director will establish application batching periods and select the highest ranked applications for funding based on applicant eligibility and the NRCS ranking process. NRCS will use the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) to assess and rank all eligible applications for NRCS conservation programs.

Inventory and Assessment in CART

CART is a decision support system that provides a consistent, replicable framework for the conservation planning process based on geospatially referenced information, client-provided information, field observations, and NRCS conservation planner expertise. CART helps NRCS conservation planners assess site vulnerability and existing conditions and identify natural resource concerns.

CART assessments of existing management and conservation efforts are compared against conservation planning criteria thresholds to determine the additional level of conservation efforts needed for addressing natural resource concerns. NRCS uses the results to identify conservation planning activities for the client. CART consolidates resource data and program information to prioritize program delivery and report outcomes of NRCS investments in conservation.

In general, resource concerns fall into one of three categories used to assess and document a resource concern:

- **Client Input/Planner Observation:** A streamlined list of options is presented to the planner to document the client's activities and the planner's observation of the resource concerns.
- **Procedural/Deductive:** A large group of resource concerns fall into this category and are assessed using a resource concern-specific evaluation tool or a list of inventory-like criteria. Due to the variability in state tools, assessment questions and answers will be broad in nature to allow states to align them with state conditions.
- **Predictive:** The remaining resource concerns are assessed using a predictive interactive model. The CART system attempts to replicate the outcomes related to the assessment threshold outcomes compared to the model outputs.

After identifying resource concerns and describing existing conditions, planned conservation practices and activities can be added to the existing condition to determine the state of the proposed management system. Practices needed to support primary conservation practices and activities are also added but do not increase conservation management points.

If the client is interested in financial assistance through an NRCS conservation program, the inventory and assessment information, along with client decisions related to conservation practice adoption, are transferred from the assessment portion to the ranking portion of CART. CART identifies the appropriate program ranking pools based on the transferred assessment information and the conservation practices proposed for implementation.

Ranking in CART

In general, the ranking criteria uses the following guiding principles:

- Degree of cost effectiveness of the proposed conservation practices and activities;
- The level of performance of proposed conservation practices and activities;
- Treatment of resource concerns or national priority resource concerns;
- Magnitude of the environmental benefits resulting from the treatment of resource concerns reflecting the level of performance of the proposed conservation practices and activities; and
- Compliance with federal, state, local, or tribal regulatory requirements for natural resources.

CART uses national ranking templates developed for each NRCS program and initiative. The templates have four parameters that are customized for each program. The four parameters are:

1. **Land Uses.** NRCS has developed land use designations to be used by planners and modelers at the field and landscape level. Land use modifiers more accurately define the land's actual use and how it is managed. Land use designations and modifiers are defined in Title 180 National Planning Procedures Handbook, Part 600.
2. **Resource Concerns.** The resource condition that does not meet minimum acceptable condition levels of the resource planning criteria. This implies an expected degradation of the soil, water, air, plant, or animal resource base that will impair the sustainability or intended use of the resource. Because NRCS quantifies or describes resource concerns as part of a comprehensive conservation planning process, which includes client objectives, human and energy resources are considered components of the resource base.
3. **Practices.** A specific treatment used to address resource concerns, or management techniques that are planned and implemented per applicable standards and specifications.
4. **Ranking Component Weights.** A set of five components that form the ranking score for an individual land-based assessment. The five components are:
 - a. **Vulnerability.** Site vulnerability is determined by subtracting the existing condition and existing practice scores from the thresholds. This score is weighted based on the resource concerns prioritized by that ranking pool.

- b. **Planned Practice Effects.** The planned practice effect score is based on the sum of the planned practice addressing the resource concern on a land unit. This score is weighted by ranking pool to address the resource concerns prioritized by that ranking pool.
- c. **Resource Priorities.** National and state resource priorities are established to address the most critical land and resource considerations and are based on NRCS national and state priorities identified with input from national, state, and local stakeholders.
- d. **Program Priorities.** National and state program priorities are established to maximize program effectiveness and advance program purposes and are based on NRCS national and state priorities identified with input from national, state, and local stakeholders.
- e. **Cost Efficiency.** Sum of planned practice points divided by the log of the practice efficiency factor, which is assigned for each asset-narrative.

Note: The points for vulnerability, planned practice effects, and cost efficiency are from the assessment portion of CART.

Missouri created state-specific ranking pools within these national ranking template parameters. The state ranking pools include questions that are divided by sections: applicability, category, program questions, and resource questions. Ranking pool customization allows states to focus funding on priority resource concerns and initiatives identified at the state level with input from NRCS stakeholders. Each eligible application may be considered for funding in all applicable ranking pools.

NRCS Resource Concerns

The NRCS resource concerns for conservation planning are:

Soil

- Soil Erosion (Sheet and rill erosion)
- Wind erosion)
- Soil Erosion (Ephemeral gully erosion)
- Soil Erosion (Classic gully erosion)
- Soil Erosion (Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels)
- Soil Health (Subsidence)
- Soil Health (Compaction)
- Soil Health (Organic matter depletion)
- Soil Health (Concentration of salts or other chemicals)
- Soil Health (Soil organism habitat loss or degradation)
- Soil Health (Aggregate instability)

Air

- Air Quality (Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors)

- Air Quality (Emissions of greenhouse gasses-GHGs)
- Air Quality (Emissions of ozone precursors)
- Air Quality (Objectionable odors)
- Air Quality (Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen)

Plants

- Plant Health (Plant productivity and health)
- Plant Health (Plant structure and composition)
- Plant Health (Plant pest pressure)
- Wildfire Hazard (Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation)

Animals

- Terrestrial Habitat (Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates)

- Aquatic Habitat (Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms)
- Aquatic Habitat (Elevated Water Temperature)
- Livestock Health (Feed and forage imbalance)
- Livestock Health (Inadequate livestock shelter)
- Livestock Health (Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality, and distribution)

Energy

- Energy Use (Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities)
- Energy Use (Energy efficiency of field operations)

Water

- Water Quantity (Ponding and flooding)
- Water Quantity (Seasonal high-water table)
- Water Quantity (Seeps)
- Water Quantity (Drifted snow)
- Water Quantity (Surface water depletion)
- Water Quantity (Groundwater depletion)
- Naturally available moisture use

- Water Quantity (Inefficient irrigation water use)
- Water Quality (Nutrients transported to surface water)
- Water Quality (Nutrients transported to groundwater)
- Water Quality (Pesticides transported to surface water)
- Water Quality (Pesticides transported to groundwater)
- Water Quality (Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water)
- Water Quality (Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to groundwater)
- Water Quality (Salts transported to surface water)
- Water Quality (Salts transported to groundwater)
- Water Quality (Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to surface water)
- Water Quality (Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to groundwater)
- Water Quality (Sediment transported to surface water)



Ranking Pool Report

Ranking Pool FY26 MO - CSP Classic
NIPF

Program CStwP

Pool Status Active

Tags

Template CStwP

Template Status Active

Existing Practice Included No

Last Modified By Susan Mammen

Last Modified 04/06/2026

National Pool No

Include States MO (Admin)

Land Uses and Modifiers

Land Use	Grazed	Wildlife	Irrigated	Hayed	Drained	Organic	Water Feature	Protected	Urban	Aquaculture
Associated Ag Land	--	--	--	--	N/A	--	--	--	--	--
Farmstead	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	--	--
Forest	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	--	--

Resource Concern Categories

Categories			
Category	Min %	Default %	Max %
Air (Air quality emissions)	0	5	30
Animals (Aquatic habitat)	0	5	30
Animals (Livestock production limitation)	0	--	30
Animals (Terrestrial habitat)	0	10	30
Energy (Inefficient energy use)	0	5	30
Plants (Degraded plant condition)	0	10	30
Plants (Fire management)	0	10	30
Plants (Pest pressure)	0	15	30
Soil (Concentrated erosion)	0	10	30
Soil (Soil quality limitations)	0	10	30
Soil (Wind and water erosion)	0	10	30
Water (Field pesticide loss)	0	--	30
Water (Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss)	0	--	30
Water (Salt losses to water)	0	--	30
Water (Source water depletion)	0	5	30
Water (Storage and handling of pollutants)	0	5	30

Categories

Category	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water (Weather resilience)	0	--	30

Air (Air quality emissions)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Air Quality (Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen)	0	5	50
Air Quality (Emissions of greenhouse gases - GHGs)	0	50	50
Air Quality (Emissions of ozone precursors)	0	10	50
Air Quality (Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors)	0	15	50
Air Quality (Objectionable odor)	0	20	50

Animals (Aquatic habitat)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Aquatic Habitat (Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms)	0	50	100
Aquatic Habitat (Elevated water temperature)	0	50	100

Animals (Livestock production limitation)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Livestock Health (Feed and forage balance)	0	30	50
Livestock Health (Inadequate livestock shelter)	0	30	50
Livestock Health (Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality and distribution)	0	40	50

Animals (Terrestrial habitat)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Terrestrial Habitat (Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates)	0	100	100

Energy (Inefficient energy use)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Energy Use (Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities)	0	--	100
Energy Use (Energy efficiency of farming/ranching practices and field operations)	0	100	100

Plants (Degraded plant condition)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Plant Health (Plant productivity and health)	0	50	100
Plant Health (Plant structure and composition)	0	50	100

Plants (Fire management)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Wildfire Hazard (Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation)	0	100	100

Plants (Pest pressure)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Plant Health (Plant pest pressure)	0	100	100

Soil (Concentrated erosion)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Soil Erosion (Bank erosion from streams, shorelines or water conveyance channels)	0	30	50
Soil Erosion (Classic gully erosion)	0	50	50
Soil Erosion (Ephemeral gully erosion)	0	20	50

Soil (Soil quality limitations)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Soil Health (Aggregate instability)	0	25	50
Soil Health (Compaction)	0	25	50
Soil Health (Concentration of salts or other chemicals)	0	--	50
Soil Health (Organic matter depletion)	0	25	50
Soil Health (Soil organism habitat loss or degradation)	0	25	50
Soil Health (Subsidence)	0	--	50

Soil (Wind and water erosion)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Soil Erosion (Sheet and rill erosion)	0	90	100
Soil Erosion (Wind erosion)	0	10	100

Water (Field pesticide loss)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quality (Pesticides transported to groundwater)	0	50	100
Water Quality (Pesticides transported to surface water)	0	50	100

Water (Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quality (Nutrients transported to groundwater)	0	20	50
Water Quality (Nutrients transported to surface water)	0	20	50

Water (Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quality (Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications transported to groundwater)	0	20	50
Water Quality (Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications transported to surface water)	0	20	50
Water Quality (Sediment transported to surface water)	0	20	50

Water (Salt losses to water)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quality (Salts transported to groundwater)	0	50	100
Water Quality (Salts transported to surface water)	0	50	100

Water (Source water depletion)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quantity (Groundwater depletion)	0	45	50
Water Quantity (Inefficient irrigation water use)	0	5	50
Water Quantity (Surface water depletion)	0	50	50

Water (Storage and handling of pollutants)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quality (Nutrients transported to groundwater)	0	10	50
Water Quality (Nutrients transported to surface water)	0	40	50
Water Quality (Petroleum, heavy metals and other pollutants transported to groundwater)	0	10	50
Water Quality (Petroleum, heavy metals and other pollutants transported to surface water)	0	40	50

Water (Weather resilience)

Resource Concern	Min %	Default %	Max %
Water Quantity (Drifted snow)	0	20	50
Water Quantity (Naturally available moisture use)	0	20	50
Water Quantity (Ponding and flooding)	0	20	50
Water Quantity (Seasonal high water table)	0	20	50
Water Quantity (Seeps)	0	20	50

Practices

Practice Name	Practice Code	Practice Narratives	Practice Type
Soil Health Management Plan	116	00N	Activities

Practice Name	Practice Code	Practice Narratives	Practice Type
Agricultural Energy Design	120	00N	Activities
Soil Health Management System Design	162	00N	Activities
Conservation Plan	199	00N	Activities
Adaptive Management for Soil Health	204	00N	Activities
Soil Health Testing	216	00N	Activities
Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management	217	00N	Activities
Agricultural Energy Assessment	228	00N	Activities
Alley Cropping	311	00N	Conservation Practices
Brush Management	314	00N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Herbaceous Weed Treatment	315	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Conservation Cover	327	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Conservation Crop Rotation	328	00N, 03N, 04N	Conservation Practices
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till	329	00N, 01N, 02N	Conservation Practices
Contour Farming	330	00N	Conservation Practices
Contour Buffer Strips	332	00N	Conservation Practices
Soil Carbon Amendment	336	00N, 01N, 02N	Conservation Practices
Prescribed Burning	338	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Cover Crop	340	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Critical Area Planting	342	00N	Conservation Practices
Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till	345	00N	Conservation Practices
Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation	374	00N, 01N, 02N, 03N, 04N, 05N, 06N	Conservation Practices
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	380	00N	Conservation Practices
Fence	382	00N, 03N, 04N	Conservation Practices
Field Border	386	00N	Conservation Practices
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390	00N, 01N, 02N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Riparian Forest Buffer	391	00N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Filter Strip	393	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Firebreak	394	00N	Conservation Practices

Practice Name	Practice Code	Practice Narratives	Practice Type
Wildlife Habitat Planting	420	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Hedgerow Planting	422	00N, 01N, 02N	Conservation Practices
Irrigation Water Management	449	00N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Access Control	472	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Mulching	484	00N, 02N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	490	00N	Conservation Practices
Forage Harvest Management	511	00N, 02N	Conservation Practices
Pasture and Hay Planting	512	00N, 02N	Conservation Practices
Livestock Pipeline	516	00N	Conservation Practices
Grazing Management	528	00N, 02N, 03N, 04N	Conservation Practices
Pumping Plant	533	00N, 02N	Conservation Practices
Drainage Water Management	554	00N, 02N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Heavy Use Area Protection	561	00N	Conservation Practices
Stormwater Runoff Control	570	00N	Conservation Practices
Spring Development	574	00N	Conservation Practices
Livestock Shelter Structure	576	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Stripcropping	585	00N	Conservation Practices
Nutrient Management	590	00N, 06N, 07N, 08N	Conservation Practices
Pest Management Conservation System	595	00N, 05N, 06N, 07N	Conservation Practices
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Watering Facility	614	00N	Conservation Practices
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	644	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	645	00N, 01N	Conservation Practices
Seasonal Water Management for Wildlife	646	00N	Conservation Practices
Early Successional Habitat Development-Mgt	647	00N	Conservation Practices
Structures for Wildlife	649	00N	Conservation Practices
Forest Trails and Landings	655	00N	Conservation Practices

Practice Name	Practice Code	Practice Narratives	Practice Type
Forest Stand Improvement	666	00N	Conservation Practices
Energy Efficient Lighting System	670	00N, 01N, 02N, 03N	Conservation Practices
Energy Efficient Building Envelope	672	00N, 01N, 02N, 03N, 04N	Conservation Practices
Existing Activity Payment	E300EAP	00N	CStwP Enhancements (2018)

Ranking Weights

Factors	Algorithm	Allowable Min	Default	Allowable Max
Vulnerabilities	Adjustment (A)	5	10	10
Planned Practice Effects	Adjustment (C)	35	35	50
Resource Priorities	Default	15	30	35
Program Priorities	Default	15	15	35
Efficiencies	Default	10	10	10

Display Group: FY26 MO CSP Classic NIPF (Active)



An asterisk will be displayed to show that it is a conditional section or conditional question.

Survey: FY26 MO Applicability

Section: FY26 MO Applicability		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Does the assessment include land units within the state of Missouri?	Yes	--
	Otherwise	--

Survey: FY26 MO Category

Section: Category		
Question	Answer Choices	Points

Section: Category

Question	Answer Choices	Points
Select all categories that apply to the application.	Beginning Farmer (BF)	--
	Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher (SDFR)	--
	Regenerative Pilot Program	--
	NIPF Statewide	--
	Organic	--
	Reserve 1	--
	Reserve 2	--
	Reserve 3	--

Survey: FY26 MO Program

Section: FY26 Program

Question	Answer Choices	Points
P1: Does the applicant meet the NRCS definition of veteran farmer or rancher (VFR)?*	YES	10
	NO	0
P2: Did the applicant participate in the CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP), and has the land in the CSP application come out of CRP within the last 2 years? *	YES	5
	NO	0
P3: Does the Producer have an active CSP contract(s) but chooses not to include the newly acquired/newly eligible land? If the contract is IRA funded, answer no.	YES	-200
	NO	0
P4: Of the Planned Land Unit (PLU) acres within the operation, select the total percentage of acres that has a new conservation activity or activities that the applicant agrees to implement to achieve additional conservation performance through the CSP Contract.	0%-33%	25
	34%-66%	100
	67%-100%	150
P5: All new vegetative and structural conservation activities that the applicant agrees to implement to achieve additional conservation performance through the CSP Contract are scheduled for Implementation by the end of the third year of the contract.	YES	25
	NO	0
P6 RPP: Does the assessment address the Soil and Water Resource Concerns with the following PLANNED activity/practice: 666 Forest Stand Improvement?*	YES	10
	NO	0

Survey: FY26 MO CSP NIPF Resource

Section: FY 26 MO NIPF

Question	Answer Choices	Points
----------	----------------	--------

Section: FY 26 MO NIPF

Question	Answer Choices	Points
R1: Please select all new conservation activities that the applicant agrees to implement to achieve additional conservation performance through the CSP Contract on forestland acres.	666-Forest Stand Improvement	10
	338-Prescribed Burning	20
	612- Tree and Shrub Establishment	5
	314- Brush Management	25
	Not Applicable	0
R2: Does the application include Brush Management (CPS 314) to treat invasive exotic species that developed after Forest Stand Improvement treatment (CPS 666) was applied?	YES	30
	NO	0
R3: Does the application include practices to further enhance white oak (Q. alba) or shortleaf pine (P. echinata) regeneration after a forest stand improvement (Code 666) treatment has been completed?	YES	30
	NO	0
R4: The intended treatment in this application will address improvements in the appropriate WHAG/WHEG for the land use. Please select all new conservation activities that the applicant agrees to implement to achieve additional conservation performance through the CSP Contract on forestland, and/or AAL acres.	666-Forest Stand Improvement (woodland or glade restoration only, formerly planned using 643-Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities)	8
	314-Brush Management (prairie or savanna restoration or non-native species treatment)	8
	420-Wildlife Habitat Planting	8
	649-Structures for Wildlife	8
	315-Herbaceous Weed Control (non-native species treatment)	12
	645-Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Monitoring and Management only)	4
	391-Riparian Forest Buffer	12
	Not Applicable	0
R5: Do greater than or equal to 50% of the NIPF PLU acres in this application fall within a Forest and Woodland Conservation Opportunity Area (COA)?	Yes	20
	Otherwise	0

Detailed Assessments

Name	Type	Jurisdiction	Status
------	------	--------------	--------