

CWMTF - Acquisition Grants – PROGRAM CHANGES 2019

The CWMTF application evaluation system (previously known as the Scoring Criteria) is now called the **Application Rating System (ARS)**.

Land acquisition application guidelines and detailed information on the Application Rating System may be found on the CWMTF website after 12/1/18 at <https://cwmtf.nc.gov/acquisition-questions-guidelines-rating-system>

Important Reminders

Though not reflected by a change in the Rating System, below are several important reminders about the acquisition program:

1. Easements and declaration of restrictive covenants on match areas must be binding, enforceable, recorded, and include a third party right of enforcement to the state.
2. Project management budget items are restricted to activities that are needed immediately to secure property from trespass or protect conservation values that are being impaired. Demolition of structures is not an eligible activity.
3. Administrative costs prior to an award are not eligible for reimbursement or match credit. Time to prepare an application is not eligible for reimbursement.
4. CWMTF does not have a working lands policy. We do our best to accommodate agriculture and silviculture on military and historic sites, but working lands (agriculture, silviculture, horticulture, grazing) should be on the match easement area.

Updates for the 2019 Cycle

The Application Rating System and budget policy for acquisition projects has been modified for the 2019 cycle to reflect the CWMTF Board of Trustee's intent to promote land acquisition applications that will protect the highest value natural and cultural resources and provide the greatest economic and environmental value to the citizens of North Carolina.

Areas of change - summary:

1) Application Rating System (formerly known as the Scoring Criteria)

- a. Reallocated point structure to place higher emphasis on additional resources and lower emphasis on readiness (though a letter of intent is now required).
- b. Adjusted point values on stream classifications and natural heritage to better reflect board priorities and to also take advantage of the full point scale
- c. Revised rating system to consider priorities and input from military personnel
- d. Spread point scale for greenways and added consideration for greenways with unknown construction schedule

- e. Adjusted point value for landowner interest; requires minimum of signed letter of intent; reduces points allocated to funding status
 - f. Minor change to simplify categories of match funding
- 2) **Letter of intent**, signed by the landowner(s) is now required by the application update deadline.
 - 3) **Updated stewardship endowment calculation** to better cover future stewardship costs.

Each area with change is detailed below. The updated Application Rating System document is available [here](#) showing highlights of new or changed text.

APPLICATION RATING SYSTEM CHANGES

Section I. Resource Significance

Increased by 5 points to 60 total. These five points are found within the 'Additional Resource Benefits' section. IE, projects that score well in multiple Resource categories will have a higher score than those that only score in one Resource category.

- **Riparian Buffers**
 - Up to 1 mile downstream will be used for determining water body classification (no longer 5 miles), except where noted when the distance is not extended beyond the boundaries of the property.
 - Water Supply classifications II through IV were elevated, relative to other classifications, to receive more points. Critical Water Supply Areas were also added.
 - Existing and Future water supplies have been incorporated into the list of waterbody classifications.
 - Integrated Ecological Networks is more clearly defined as protected streams buffers adjacent or nearby, OR, the property protects a certain number of miles of stream to receive points. This allows large properties to qualify as their own ecological network.
- **Riparian Greenways**
 - To receive riparian greenways points, parcels must be riparian, vegetated, point-to-point, and incorporate a footpath. Trails may include other uses such as biking and horseback riding. Greenways may be paved or unpaved. Segments of national, state, and regional trails do not qualify as greenways unless CWMTF determines the specific segment qualifies as a greenway.
 - All Greenway Parcels must be identified on an adopted greenway or trail plan
 - Additional benchmarks for points have been added to each section to increase use of full range of points.

- **Natural Heritage**
 - Points have been adjusted to emphasize the importance of natural areas over element occurrences.
 - Integrated Ecological Networks is more clearly defined as having permanently protected lands adjacent or nearby, OR, the property protects a certain number of acres. This allows large properties to qualify as their own ecological network.
- **Historic and Cultural**
 - Grants are considered for the land associated with significant historic sites. If a site contains buildings, structures, or objects, there must be a demonstrated funding source and organization responsible for their maintenance, management, repair, etc.
 - Historic and Cultural sites must demonstrate historic significance and retain the ability to convey such historical significance.
 - To receive points, the property must be, or be directly associated with the site of a specific event or series of events, person(s), building(s), structure(s), and/or object(s).
 - Wording has changed to match descriptions from other criteria used to determine the significance of historic or cultural sites. The take-away is there has to have been something specific that happened there and it has to have been documented by an expert.
- **Additional Resource Benefits**
 - Properties with more than one Primary Resource score will receive additional benefit in the revised rating system. The non-high scoring resource categories will each receive up to 4 points each (compared to two points each in previous years).

Section II. Military Buffers

- Category descriptions have been changed to give greater points to priority based on military installation input rather than solely based on proximity to an installation.

Section III. Other Public Benefits

- Categories have been expanded and further defined to better take advantage of the full point scale and accurately score a larger variety of public benefit levels.

Section IV. Readiness

- A letter of intent is required by the update deadline for the application to be considered for funding.
- Total points for this section were reduced from 10 to 5.

Section V. Matching Resources

- No change.