

307.22 Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership

Initiative Name and Acronym: Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP)

Initiative Description/Summary

Under the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP), NRCS and the Forest Service are working together to target conservation and restoration to measurably improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet to provide for long-term natural resources and production benefits. Priorities for the effort are—

- Reducing and mitigating wildfire threats to communities and landowners.
- Protecting water quality and supply for communities and industry.
- Improving habitat quality for at-risk or ecosystem surrogate species.

Approved or Participating States

Joint Chiefs' LRP funds will be allocated to States for use consistent with approved LRP projects.

Program Contact Information

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ProTracts Requirements

1. Subaccount Guidance

State Conservationist (STCs) will select the "Forest Service Partnership" account type in Protracts for administration of funds related to the Joint Chiefs' LRP.

2. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT) Guidance – Choice Lists and Matrix Data

- **Approved Land Types to be Populated in ProTracts AERT**

Required Land Use
Crop
Forest
Range
Farmstead
Pasture
Associated Agriculture Lands

- **Approved Natural Resource Concerns to be Populated in ProTracts AERT**

States should assign at least one of the following natural resource concerns for this initiative. (Other resource concerns will be allowed; however, contracts approved through this initiative must address at least one of the following resource concerns.)

DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION
Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health
Inadequate Structure and Composition
Excessive Plant Pest Pressure
Wildfire Hazard, Excessive Biomass Accumulation

INSUFFICIENT WATER
Inefficient Moisture Management
WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION
Excess Nutrients in Surface and Ground waters
Excessive Sediment in Surface Waters
Elevated Water Temperature
FISH AND WILDLIFE INADEQUATE HABITAT
Inadequate Habitat - Food
Inadequate Habitat - Cover/Shelter
Inadequate Habitat - Water
Inadequate Habitat - Habitat Continuity (Space)

- **Approved Conservation Practices and Impacts on Resource Concerns to be Populated in ProTracts AERT Matrix**

There are no required practices for this initiative. States may offer any conservation practices that are included in applicable approved LRP projects.

3. AERT Guidance – Ranking Criteria Questions

The total ranking points associated with the initiative are to be distributed in AERT as follows:

AERT Level	Maximum Points	Point Percentage
National Ranking Questions	250	25%
State Ranking Questions	400	40%
Local Ranking Questions	250	25%
Efficiency Score	100	10%
Total points for this initiative:	1,000	100%

National Ranking Criteria Requirements

National ranking questions are established in ProTracts by National Headquarters (NHQ).

State Ranking Criteria Requirements

State ranking questions for this initiative are established jointly by NHQ and State offices and will be entered into ProTracts by State offices. States may use the four questions below and add additional questions specific to the project to account for an additional 205 points. State-level ranking questions must account for a total of 400 points. Set AERT to a maximum of 400 points for this category.

In order to address State-Level Ranking Question 2, States may provide field offices with a map, GIS data layer, list of locations, or other information, as necessary, that identifies where complementary conservation activities are being implemented on public lands as documented in the State’s approved LRP project.

EQIP Landscape Restoration Partnership State-Level Ranking Questions	Points
1. If the application is for development of a conservation activity plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering “Yes” to the following question. Answering “Yes” to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the State priority category.	

1a. Is the program application for development of a CAP? <u>If answer is "Yes," do not answer any other State-level questions.</u> If answer is "No," proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	400
2. Does the EQIP contract leverage the management of natural resources across land ownership (public-private) boundaries? Maximum points 65.	
2a EQIP project is located in an area that is adjacent to high priority projects on public land as identified in your State's LRP proposal.	65
2b EQIP project is located in an area that is within the same 12-digit hydrologic unit as high priority projects on public land as identified in your State's LRP proposal.	30
2c EQIP project is located in an area that is within the same 8-digit hydrologic unit as high priority projects on public land as identified in your State's LRP proposal.	10
3. Does the EQIP contract address one or more conservation priorities identified in the approved State project proposal for the Landscape Restoration Partnership? Maximum points 65.	
3a EQIP project addresses three or more key priorities of the approved State project proposal for the Landscape Restoration Partnership.	65
3b EQIP project addresses two key priorities of the approved State project proposal for the Landscape Restoration Partnership.	40
3c EQIP project addresses one key priority of the approved State project proposal for the Landscape Restoration Partnership.	25
4. Does the EQIP contract address one or more high priority resource concerns (see ProTracts Requirements, section 2)? Maximum points 65.	
4a EQIP project addresses all four of the following resource concerns: degraded plant condition, insufficient water, and inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife, and water quality degradation	65
4b EQIP project addresses two or three of the following resource concerns: degraded plant condition, insufficient water, and inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife, and water quality degradation	40
4b EQIP project addresses one of the following resource concerns: degraded plant condition, insufficient water, and inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife, and water quality degradation	25
Total Required Points:	195
Total State Points:	205
Total Points:	400

Local-Level Ranking Criteria Requirements

Local ranking questions are approved and entered into ProTracts at the State level.

Examples of other local ranking questions that States may use to support this initiative are as follows:

EXAMPLE LOCAL QUESTIONS

For the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, States are encouraged to use questions that address State and local priorities that are associated with the approved natural resource concerns and questions that encourage use of a "systems approach." Following are examples of questions that might be utilized for each of the recommended categories.

Examples of questions that address wildfire potential, forest health, water quality/quantity and/or wildlife habitat resource concerns:

- Species Presence
 - a. Is there credible verification of species occurrence (for example, photos, Heritage Database, USFWS, NRCS or State fish and wildlife agency documentation)? This should not be taken to imply that a site visit is required.
 - b. Based upon available species occurrence data and information, can the target species reasonably be assumed to occur within the offered area?
- Distance to Known Populations
 - a. The offered area shares a common border with an area with known populations of the target species.
 - b. The offered area is proximal to an area with a known population of the target species. "Proximal" means within the accepted normal species dispersal ability.
- Forest Health and Hazardous Fuels
 - a. EQIP project will result in implementation of at least one conservation practice that decrease hazardous fuel loads or infestations of nonnative invasive plants, or treats harmful insects or diseases on greater than 80 percent of the contracted acres.
 - b. EQIP project will result in implementation of at least one conservation practice that decrease hazardous fuel loads or infestations of nonnative invasive plants, or treats harmful insects or diseases on 50 percent to 80 percent of the contracted acres.
 - c. EQIP project will result in implementation of at least one conservation practice that decrease hazardous fuel loads or infestations of nonnative invasive plants, or treats harmful insects or diseases on less than 50 percent of the contracted acres.

Examples of questions that address geographic related resource concern issues:

- EQIP project is located within ¼ mile of a water body that is used as or feeds into a public drinking water source.
- EQIP project is located within ½ mile of a water body that is used as or feeds into a public drinking water source.

Examples of questions that use a systems approach:

- Will the implementation of three planned conservation practices on at least ___ percent of the offered acres result in the existence of a conservation system where at least one practice exists in each of the project's priority resource concern categories (as documented in an approved project proposal)? 60 Points.
- Will the implementation of two planned conservation practices on at least ___ percent of the offered acres result in the existence of a conservation system where at least one practice exists in each of the project's priority resource concern categories (as documented in an approved project proposal)? 40 Points.
- Will the implementation of one planned conservation practices on at least ___ percent of the offered acres result in the existence of a conservation system where at least one practice exists in each of the project's priority resource concern categories (as documented in an approved project proposal)? 20 Points.

4. Allocation Guidance

Following the receipt of State allocation letters, Joint Chiefs' LRP States will receive a breakdown of the LRP allocation by approved project. If it is determined that funds cannot be used as allocated, funds may be moved between approved projects within the State. LRP funds may not be used as general program funding. In the event a State cannot use their LRP financial assistance allocation, funds are to be returned to NHQ with the appropriate technical assistance funds.