

State of Washington, Department of Natural Resources
FY26 Forest Legacy Program Scoring Guidance
 Adapted from National Core Criteria (July 2017 version)
 Revised March 2024

Project Name:

Importance

This criterion focuses on the attributes of the property and the environmental, social, and economic public benefits gained from the protection and management of the property and its resources. This criterion reflects the ecological assets and the economic and social values conserved by the project and its level of significance.

National significance of a project is demonstrated in two ways:

1. A project that solidly represents a majority of the attributes outlined is viewed as nationally significant because of its strong alignment with the purposes and Strategic Direction of the Forest Legacy Program.
2. A project that supports Federal laws, such as Endangered Species Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Clean Water Act, contributes to Federal initiatives, or contains or enhances Federal designations such as Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic Byways, National Recreation Trails, and cultural resources of national importance. When determining Federal importance, interstate/international resources (such as migratory species, or trails and waterways that cross state or international boundaries) should also be considered.

Scoring consists of evaluating a project for the attributes below and identifying a point score. More points will be given to projects that demonstrate multiple public benefits of significance. Significance is demonstrated by the quality and scope of attributes.

Description
High – Attribute is clearly present, is of high quality, and is a significant component of the project.
Medium – Attribute is present or partially present and contributes to project importance.
Low - Attribute is not present or contributes to project importance in a limited or marginal way.

Attributes to consider: The descriptions listed represent the ideal for each attribute. They are not listed in priority order.

1. Economic Benefits from Timber and Potential Forest Productivity - This category includes three components:			
<i>High</i> 8-10	<i>Medium</i> 4-7	<i>Low</i> 0-3	
			(1a) Landowner demonstrates sustainable forest management in accordance with a management plan. Add one extra point if the land is third party certified (such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, and American Tree Farm System).

			(1b) Forestry activities contribute to the resource-based economy for a community or region. (1c) The property contains characteristics (such as highly productive soils) to sustain a productive forest.
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2. Economic Benefits from Non-timber Products			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0 -1	
			Provides non-timber revenue to the local or regional economy through activities such as hunting leases, ranching, non-timber forest products (maple syrup, pine straw, ginseng collection, etc.), guided tours (fishing, hunting, birdwatching, etc.), and recreation and tourism (lodging, rentals, bikes, boats, outdoor gear, etc.).

3. Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0 -1	
			The site has documented threatened or endangered plants and animals or designated habitat. Documented occurrence and use of the property should be given more consideration in point allocation than if it is habitat without documented occurrence or use. Federally listed species should be given more consideration than state-only listed species when evaluating the significance of this attribute.

4. Fish, Wildlife, Plants, Unique Forest Communities			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0 -1	
			The site contains unique forest communities and/or important fish or wildlife habitat as documented by a formal assessment or wildlife conservation plan or strategy developed by a government or a non-governmental organization. The importance of habitat to an international initiative to support and sustain migratory species can be viewed as national importance if conserving the property will make a significant contribution. The mere occasional use of the property or a modest contribution to an international initiative does not raise the property to national importance.

5. Water Supply, Aquatic Habitat, Watershed Protection			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0 -1	
			Property has a direct relationship with protecting the water supply or watershed, such as provides a buffer to public drinking water supply, contains an aquifer recharge area, or protects an ecologically important aquatic or marine area.
			The property contains important riparian areas, wetlands, shorelines, river systems, or sensitive watershed lands. When allocating points, consider the importance of the resource, the

			scope and scale of the contribution, the magnitude of benefits that will result from protection of the property. Merely being located within an aquifer recharge area or in a water supply area should not be given the same consideration as a project that makes a significant conservation contribution to a high-quality project of high value.
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6. Public Access			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0-1	
			Protection of the property will maintain or establish access by the public for recreation; however, restrictions on specific use and location of recreational activities may exist.

7. Scenic			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0-1	
			The site is located within a viewshed of a government designated scenic feature or area (such as trail, river, or highway). Federal designation should be given more consideration than state-only designations when evaluating the significance of this attribute.

8. Historic/Cultural/Tribal			
<i>High</i> 4-5	<i>Medium</i> 2-3	<i>Low</i> 0-1	
			The site contains features of historical, cultural and/or tribal significance, formally documented by a government or a non-governmental organization. A federal designation should receive greater consideration.

Sub-Total _____ (50 possible)

Comments regarding Importance statements:

Threatened

This criterion estimates the likelihood for conversion. More points will be given to projects that demonstrate multiple conditions; however, a project need not have all the conditions listed to receive maximum points for this category.

During the evaluation of threat, a landowner interested in conserving land should not be penalized because they are not actively marketing or subdividing the property. An approved subdivision plan alone does not justify high points; other conditions must also exist that make conversion likely.

Description
<i>Likely</i> - Condition exists, makes conversion to non-forest uses likely.
<i>Possible</i> – Condition exists, makes conversion possible.
<i>Unlikely</i> – Condition not present, or present but conversion is unlikely.

Attributes to consider: (not listed in priority order)

1. Lack of Protection			
<i>Likely</i> 4-5	<i>Possible</i> 1-3	<i>Unlikely</i> 0	
			There are no temporary or permanent protections on the property, such as: current zoning, temporary or permanent easements, moratoriums, and encumbrances that limit subdivision or conversion.

2. Land and Landowners Circumstances			
<i>Likely</i> 4-5	<i>Possible</i> 1-3	<i>Unlikely</i> 0	
			Land and landowner circumstances contribute to conversion risk, such as: property held in an estate, aging landowner, future ownership or management by heirs is uncertain, property is up for sale or has a sale pending, landowner anticipates owning property for a short duration, landowner has received purchase offers, land has an approved subdivision plan, landowner has sold subdivisions of the property, etc.

3. Adjacent Land Use			
<i>Likely</i> 4-5	<i>Possible</i> 1-3	<i>Unlikely</i> 0	
			Adjacent land use characteristics contribute to conversion risk, such as: existing land status, rate of development growth and conversion in the area, rate of population growth (percent change), rate of change in ownership, etc.

4. Ability to Develop			
<i>Likely</i> 4-5	<i>Possible</i> 1-3	<i>Unlikely</i> 0	
			Physical attributes of the property facilitate conversion, such as: access, buildable ground, zoning, slope, water/sewer, electricity, etc

Sub-Total _____ (20 possible)

Comments regarding Threatened statements:

Strategic

This criterion reflects the project’s relevance or relationship to conservation efforts on a broader perspective. When evaluating strategic, four considerations should be made: 1) the scale of a conservation initiative, strategy or plan, 2) the scale of the project’s contribution to that initiative, strategy or plan, and 3) the placement of the parcel within the area of the initiative, strategy or plan and 4) how the project complements protected lands.

Description
High – The property significantly advances a conservation initiative, strategy, or plan and complements protected lands.
Average – The property makes a modest contribution to a conservation initiative, strategy or plan and is near already protected lands.
Low - The property is not part of a conservation initiative, strategy or plan, but will lead to locally-focused conservation effort.

Attributes to consider: (not listed in priority order)

1. <i>Conservation Initiative, Strategy or Plan</i>			
<i>High</i> 10-15	<i>Average</i> 5-9	<i>Low</i> 0-4	
			How the project fits within a larger conservation plan, strategy, or initiative as designated by either a government or non-governmental entity.

2. <i>Complement Protected Lands</i>			
<i>High</i> 10-15	<i>Average</i> 5-9	<i>Low</i> 0-4	
			How the project is strategically linked to enhance already protected lands including past FLP projects, already protected Federal, State, or non- governmental organization lands, or other Federal land protection programs (NRCS, NOAA, etc).

Sub-Total _____ (30 Possible)

Comments regarding Strategic statements:

Readiness

Market Analysis

Has information been documented to support the cost estimate, such as completed market analysis or preliminary appraisal? (A Market Analysis is required to support requested funding level.)

Date completed:

Project readiness is defined as the degree of due diligence completed. To demonstrate project readiness, completed items need to be documented (including completion date) and credit will only be given to those items documented. Projects with multiple tracts will need to have completed the task for the majority of the tracts before a point is given.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Points: 1 Point for each item completed and documented</i>
	1. Landowner and State have general agreement on conservation easement or fee acquisition conditions.
	2. Cost Share commitment has been obtained from a specified source.
	3. A signed option or purchase and sales agreement is held by the State or at the request of the State. OR At the request of the State, conservation easement or fee title is held by a third party.
	4. Title search is completed, including identifying any temporary or permanent protections.
	5. Minerals determination is completed.

Sub-Total _____ (5 possible)

Evaluation

Importance – 50 points possible, 35-50 = high importance

Threatened – 20 points possible, 11-20 = high threat

Strategic – 30 points possible, 21-30 = high strategic importance

Readiness – 5 points possible (these are typically tie-breaker points)

To rank high in the national competition this proposal should have points within the “high” zone of each area.