

EXHIBIT AO – To National Instruction 440-310

EQIP Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (SWFL) Ranking Guidance

- 1) States must create ranking pools using the EQIP WLFW SWFL National Ranking Template and guidance in 440-CPM-530-D-530.34 and -530-R-530.401A.
- 2) CART ranking pools and ProTracts subaccounts must have the same name. This ranking pool must be associated with the “SWN Flycatcher WLFW” account type in ProTracts.
- 3) NI-440-307.32 provides the list of required core and optional supporting practices that can be used for SWFL.
- 4) Applicability:
 - a) The following question **must be used** in the “Applicability” section of the ranking pool display group for WLFW SWFL:
 - i) Land unit qualification = ANY
 - ii) Does the PLU intersect the national WLFW SWFL boundary layer? (WLFW_Southwestern_Willow_Flycatcher_ProjectBndy_FY21).
 - iii) States must use the national layer for the WLFW SWFL boundary. (WLFW_Southwestern_Willow_Flycatcher_ProjectBndy_FY21).
- 5) Ranking Questions:
 - a) The following questions must be included in the “Resources” section of the ranking pool display group for WLFW SWFL:
 - i) Is there credible verification of species occurrence (for example, photos, heritage database, USFWS, NRCS, or State fish and wildlife agency documentation)?
 - (1) Yes = 100 points
 - (2) No = 0 points
 - ii) Does the offered area share a common border with an area with known populations of the target species? 150 points
 - (1) Yes = 75 points
 - (2) No = 0 points
 - iii) Is the offered area proximal to an area with a known population of the target species? “Proximal” means within the accepted normal species dispersal ability. Note: NRCS must respect privacy of adjacent landowners.
 - (1) Yes = 25 points
 - (2) No = 0 points
- 6) States must not exceed 200 points per category - Resource and Program Questions.
- 7) Tie Breaker—States must use the efficiency score calculated in the CART ranking when a tie breaker is needed between one or more EQIP applications. When using the tie breaker, NRCS must select the application with the highest efficiency score first.