

EXHIBIT CS – To National Instruction 440-310

Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Nearshore Ranking Guidance

- 1) A single national ranking template has been developed for EWPP-FPE-GLRI enrollments. States must create at least one ranking pool in CART based on the available national ranking template for EWPP-FPE-GLRI enrollments. Alternatively, States may create separate ranking pools in CART from the EWPP-FPE-GLRI national ranking template for the applicable EWPP-FPE-GLRI enrollment options offered within the State, such as one ranking pool for agricultural lands, which only include incidental agricultural structures, and a separate ranking pool for lands in residential use (see NI 440-310.1D).
- 2) Applicability Question
 - (i) States must use the following question to determine applicability for GLRI:
 - Does at least one PLU in the project area intersect the GLRI priority watersheds layer by 50% or greater?
 - (ii) States will use the national approved GLRI priority watersheds layer, Initiative_GLRI_HUC8_Priority, and choose “ANY” for the land unit qualification.
- 3) States also have the option to create categories within a single funding pool instead of creating separate ranking pools (see NI 440-310.1D).
- 4) Points for ranking questions in the Program Priority and Resource Priority sections cannot exceed a total of 400 points and a total of 200 points for each section.
- 5) For EWPP-FPE-GLRI, a combination of nationally required ranking questions and State-developed ranking questions will be used to address the required ranking criteria. State-developed ranking questions must be included in the Program Priority or Resource Priority sections as identified below.
 - (i) Nationally required program priority ranking questions are as follows:
 - Is 100% of the proposed easement area within a GLRI phosphorus priority watershed (Initiative_GLRI_HUC12_Phosphorus_Priority)? (Yes/No) (50 points)
 - Is the program application located within an existing State agency or other non-USDA water quality project area (Example: State or county watershed plan, NGO focus watershed) that addresses excess nutrients or sediment? (Yes/No) (50 points)
 - (ii) The following ranking criteria must be addressed in the State-developed program priority ranking questions (100 points):
 - Cost effectiveness of enrolling the land to maximize the environmental benefits per dollar expended, applications that have a lower cost per environmental benefit ratio will receive additional points.
 - Whether a partner is offering to contribute financially to the cost of the easement acquisition or restoration, operation, repairs, maintenance, monitoring, or other complementary interest in the land to leverage Federal funds.
 - The estimated easement acquisition cost per acre.
 - The estimated easement restoration costs.
 - The potential near- and long-term management, repair, replacement, or operation and maintenance costs.
 - The estimated structure removal or relocation costs, if applicable.
 - The likelihood that the site will retain its floodplain functions and values in perpetuity. This should consider the physical site conditions and ownership pattern that may result in some form of increased protection, such as adjacent or nearby protected areas (existing conservation or flowage easements) that preclude development or incompatible land uses throughout the floodplain.

(iii) Nationally required resource priority ranking questions are as follows:

- What percent of the proposed easement area is cropland? (Select only one response)
 - i. 75% or greater (35 points)
 - ii. 50% or greater (20 points)
 - iii. Less than 50% (0 points)
- Is there potential for areas within the easement to be annually hayed for the water quality purpose of removing phosphorus? (Yes/No) 30 points
Note: This is limited to planned, open grass areas where the management action is consistent with the easement purpose and not for the purpose of forage production.
- What percent of the proposed easement area is within the 100-year floodplain? (Select only one response)
 - i. 90% or greater (35 points)
 - ii. 75% or greater (20 points)
 - iii. Less than 75% (0 points)

(iv) The following ranking criteria must be addressed in State-developed resource priority ranking questions:

- The environmental benefits of obtaining an easement in the land, including but not limited to—
 - Restoration of waterways' historic floodplain connectivity;
 - Attenuation of floodwater flows that provide protection to adjacent or downstream lands from future flood events;
 - Water quality protection or improvement;
 - Water quantity benefits through increased water storage in the soil profile or through groundwater recharge;
 - Habitat for migratory birds and wetland-dependent wildlife;
 - Habitat for threatened, endangered, or other special-status species;
 - Protection or restoration of native vegetative communities;
 - Habitat diversity and complexity.
- The extent to which the original floodplain functions and values can be restored.
- The alleviation of current or future threats to health, life or property caused by natural disasters, including frequency of damaging floods, extent of impacts from flooding, and risk of future or continued development of a site.

(v) States may also include ranking questions in the Program Priority section that address the following considerations:

- Priority floodplain or wetland habitat types. The State Conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, has the authority to prioritize certain habitat types to receive additional ranking consideration. Unique, rare, or declining habitat types, identified for protection and restoration, may be identified and prioritized in the State's ranking criteria.
- Projects in special water-quality target areas.
- Promoting adjacent landowner participation.
- Enhancing long-term protection of previously restored floodplains or wetlands.
- Excessive permitting requirements or permitting requirements that require excessive time to secure. Higher priority should be given to areas where successful restoration work will not be complicated by unusual permit problems.
- The level of complexity for engineering design, practice application, and operation and maintenance.

- (vi) States may also include ranking questions in the Resource Priority section that address the following considerations:
- Creating contiguous floodplain areas under easement protection, such as along river corridors or within drainage districts.
 - Enhancing effective restoration or protection of previously enrolled land.
 - Reducing habitat fragmentation and boundary management problems.
 - Restoration of functions and values of identified priority flood or wildlife habitat, including rare and declining habitat.
- (vii) See 390-CPM-514-C-514.20 for additional information on EWPP-FPE ranking procedures.