

571—23.7(483A) Project review and selection.**23.7(1) Review and selection committee.**

a. A review and selection committee, hereinafter referred to as the committee, composed of one person appointed by the director to represent the department and designated by the director as chairperson and four persons appointed by the director to represent county conservation boards shall determine which grant applications and amendment requests shall be selected for funding. Additionally, there shall be at least two alternates designated by the director to represent the county conservation boards in the event of a conflict of interest.

b. Conflict of interest. An individual who is a member, volunteer, or employee of a county conservation board that has submitted a project shall not serve on the scoring committee during that award cycle. Instead, one of the alternates shall review and score in the individual's place.

23.7(2) Consideration withheld. The committee will not consider any application which, on the date of the selection session, is not complete, or for which additional pertinent information has been requested and not received.

23.7(3) Application rating system. The committee will apply a numerical rating system to each grant application which is considered for fund assistance. The following criteria, with a weight factor for each, will be considered:

Wildlife habitat needs	2
Existing or potential habitat quality	3
Cost-effectiveness	1 if at least 35 percent less than appraised amount 2 if at least 45 percent less than appraised amount
Species diversity	1

Each criterion will be given a score of from 0 to 10 which is then multiplied by the weight factor. Three additional criteria will be considered in the rating system:

a. Prior assistance. Any applicant who has never received a prior grant for acquisition of land will be given a bonus of 5 points.

b. Active projects. Any applicant who has one or more active projects at the time of application rating will be assessed 5 penalty points for each one that has not been completed by the date specified in the project agreement. A project is deemed closed after the project has had a final inspection, all funds have been paid and, in the case of acquisition, the title has been transferred from the seller.

c. Urgency. Projects may be given 1 or 2 bonus points if there is a strong urgency to acquire lands which might otherwise be lost.

All points will be totaled for each application, and those applications receiving the highest scores will be selected for fund assistance to the extent of the allotment for each semiannual period, except that any project scoring a total of not more than 45 points will not be funded.

23.7(4) Applications not selected for fund assistance. All applications not selected for fund assistance will be retained on file for consideration and possible funding during subsequent review periods or until a request for withdrawal is received from the applicant. Applications which have been considered and not selected for funding during three consecutive review periods will be returned to the applicant.

23.7(5) Rating system not used. The rating system will not be applied during any semiannual period in which the total grant request, including backlogged applications, is less than the allotment. Applications will be reviewed only to determine eligibility and overall desirability, and to ascertain that they meet minimum scoring requirements.

23.7(6) Rating of scores for tie breakers. If two or more projects receive the same score, the committee shall use the points awarded to existing or potential habitat quality to determine which project has a higher rank. If after considering the existing or potential habitat quality points the project scores remain tied, the committee will then consider the points awarded for species diversity. If after

considering the species diversity points the project scores remain tied, the committee will then consider the points awarded for wildlife habitat needs.

[**ARC 8885B**, IAB 6/30/10, effective 8/18/10; **ARC 6789C**, IAB 1/11/23, effective 2/15/23]