

Evaluation Summary Memorandum

Application ID: 002

Project Name: Rising Pond Land Acquisition

Consensus-Based Score: 263

Method Used to Reach Consensus: Average of individual scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

Criteria Discussed:

- **Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period):** Two review team members felt that because this project does not have as much “enhancement” as other projects and it does not include any actual restoration activities they could not award it a high score.
- **Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits):** Review Team agreed that the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) is likely very committed and capable of maintaining the land, but one reviewer felt that the proposal did not adequately address a plan for long term maintenance.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions):** Review Team generally felt that this category is a difficult one to address in Round 1. Since it is not known what other projects will be along the river the reviewers do not feel that the applicants can plan to “concurrently/subsequently” implement restoration with other projects. One review team member felt that there was somewhat of a loophole clause and decided to stick with their five. Since the difference between awarding a low score of zero and a high score of five does not seem as though it will impact whether this project is funded or not, the Review Team recommends the MA SubCouncil examine the merits of this criterion. The Review Team does acknowledge that this criterion may make more sense in Round 2 when some projects will be underway.
- **Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions):** Review Team agreed that there is little that could go wrong with a land acquisition project. The applicant did, however, mention that the purchase of the land could be delayed due to severe winter weather that could delay necessary survey work. However, the applicant recognizes and addresses this problem.
- **Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding):** Review Team discussed this criterion in light of the substantial change in funding necessary to acquire the 161 acres reflected in the appraisal that arrived after the application was submitted. While one review team member felt that it reflected poorly on the applicant that they requested a much larger sum of money than the appraisal warrants, the rest of the Review Team did not agree that this was adequate justification for awarding the project a low score. Most of the Review Team based their score solely on the (lower) amount reflected in the appraisal. Review

Team came to consensus but noted that the MA SubCouncil needs to be vigilant and award only the funds necessary to acquire the land (i.e., the amount reflected in the appraisal).

- Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration): One review team member mentioned that they researched easements in the vicinity of the proposed project and felt that the easement proposed in the application will work well with existing nearby easements. In light of this information, one review team member felt compelled to increase their score.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach): One review team member felt there were no outreach provisions included in the acquisition phase; the primary phase of the project. Another review team member justified the lack of outreach planned during the acquisition phase by pointing out the need to keep land purchase negotiations private prior to finalizing. Review Team agreed to recognize the outreach that is anticipated with future volunteer activities and the planned educational signage.
- Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships): Review Team discussed the partnerships established to carry out the project and the partnerships anticipated to be established later in the project. Since it was pointed out that it is clearly indicated in the application that diverse partnerships will be incorporated at a later date, the two low scoring reviewers increased their scores.

Additional Comments from Review Team:

- Generally, the reviewers felt this was an excellent proposal with tangible, long term benefits through the purchase of land along a stretch of the Housatonic River considered high in ecological value and because it provides considerable public access opportunities.
- Review Team noted that it was gratifying to review this high quality application.
- Review team hopes to see this project rise to the top and highly recommends funding BNRC's proposal to acquire the 161 acres.

Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

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Total Score: 263

A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	9	9	12
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	15
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	9	15	15	13.5
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	15	15	15	15	15
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	10
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	10
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	5	0	5	3.25
Subtotal (max=85)	83	79	74	79	78.75

B. TECHNICAL MERIT					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	15
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	15
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	10
4. Measurable Results	10	10	10	10	10
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	10	10	9
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	5
Subtotal (max=65)	61	65	65	65	64

