

**HOUSATONIC RIVER  
NATURAL RESOURCE RESTORATION  
Massachusetts SubCouncil**

**Date: March 21, 2005**

**To: Review Team Member**

**Re: Review Team Guidance: Project Application Evaluation  
Housatonic River NRD Fund, Round 1**

The Massachusetts (MA) SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees thanks you for serving as a Review Team member for Round 1 of restoration project proposals and ideas to be funded by the Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages (NRD) Fund.

The current schedule is as follows:

- Solicitation for Round 1 Request for Responses and Request for Ideas was posted on the Massachusetts Comm-PASS system on December 21, 2005.
- Project proposals and ideas are due to the MA SubCouncil on March 21, 2006.
- Land appraisals are due on April 21, 2006. All other proposal materials associated with land acquisition are due on March 21, 2006.
- Following the process outlined in the final Restoration Project Selection Procedure (<http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>), the MA SubCouncil will apply Threshold Criteria to all project proposals and ideas received after the close of the solicitation period. Applications that meet Threshold Criteria will be termed "Project Applications."
- Project Applications will be sent to Review Team members on April 10, 2006. Review Team members will then apply Evaluation Criteria to Project Applications. The MA SubCouncil will assign at least three review team members to each Project Application based on reviewers' area(s) of technical expertise and relevant experience. Review team members will not evaluate Project Applications on which they are listed as the applicant or for which they have submitted letters of support.
- After independent review, Review Team members will return completed evaluation forms by May 8, 2006. Consensus based reviews will occur between May 11 and May 29, 2006.

To maintain anonymity of review team members, each reviewer has been assigned a Reviewer ID. **Your Reviewer ID must be noted on all documents provided to the MA SubCouncil.**

YOUR PERSONAL REVIEWER ID IS (Review team number will be provided at a later date)

This packet provides the following information:

1. Project Application Evaluation Procedure
2. Questions and answers on issues relevant to your evaluation of Project Applications.
3. Evaluation and Scoring Guide for Project Application evaluations.
4. Project Application Evaluation Form. One form must be completed for each Project Application assigned to you.

## Project Application Evaluation Procedure

### **Step One – Independent Review**

You will receive copies of Project Applications assigned for your review. Before reviewing, please read the enclosed Evaluation and Scoring Guide, which includes:

- A. Descriptions of evaluation criteria;
- B. Statements to determine which of three possible scores (high, medium, or low) is appropriate for each criterion; and
- C. References to specific sections of the Project Application that address each criterion.

Conduct independent reviews of the Project Applications assigned to you.

**If you have a conflict of interest with scoring a proposal, or believe there may be a perceived conflict of interest, discontinue your review and contact Todd Chadwell of Woodlot (413-442-9389, [tchadwell@woodlotalt.com](mailto:tchadwell@woodlotalt.com)) so the Project Application can be assigned to another review team member.**

1. Do not discuss the project or your review with the applicant or other Review Team members. The MA SubCouncil has evaluated applications for their eligibility and completeness. If a proposal does not appear to benefit the Housatonic River environment, contact Woodlot so further review of ineligible proposals can be halted.
2. Apply the Evaluation Criteria. Each Project Application must be judged on its own merits. Do not compare or rank among Project Applications.
3. Please disregard Criterion C6 (Comparative Cost-Effectiveness). This criterion will be called upon later if necessary.
4. Complete the Evaluation Form. Indicate your score for each criterion. Proposals can only be evaluated based on information provided by the applicant. Only three answers exist as points (i.e., no range of points can be awarded). If you feel a criterion has not been addressed by the applicant, indicate as such by selecting “Not Addressed” (i.e., 0 points).
5. Record the total score for the Project Application in the box at the top of the Evaluation Form. Also note the Project Application ID and your Reviewer ID on all pages of the completed Evaluation Form.
6. Provide brief comments (page 3 of the Evaluation Form) that justify your scoring of the Project Application.
7. Retain a copy for yourself.

Send your completed Evaluation Form(s) by **May 8, 2006** to:

Individual Reviews: Housatonic River NRD Fund  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

Or, via email to [reviews@ma-housatonicrestoration.org](mailto:reviews@ma-housatonicrestoration.org).

## **Step Two – Consensus-Based Evaluation of Project Applications**

All Evaluation Forms and comments for a Project Application will be provided to review team members assigned to that Project Application. This will inform discussions to be conducted by each Project Application's review team:

1. Each Project Application Review Team will meet (in person and/or via phone) to discuss independent reviews, and each review team member will explain their rationale for arriving at their individual score.
2. After discussion of project merits, review team members may revise their individual scores. The revised individual score should represent the review team member's evaluation and not a consensus of the review team. If an individual score is revised, please place an "X" through the old score and circle the new score on the Project Application Evaluation Form. In addition, to facilitate evaluation of the review process, please provide in the form's narrative section a brief (1-sentence) explanation of why the score was changed. Only the revised score will be made available to the public.
3. The review team will then arrive at a single, consensus-based score for each Project Application. The rationale and procedure for the consensus-based score will be documented (e.g., verbal negotiations, average of individual scores). The procedure used to develop the consensus-based score will be left to the discretion of the review team.
4. A staff person from Woodlot will participate in review team meetings to compile an Evaluation Summary Memorandum for each Project Application, which will include:
  - a) A consensus-based score for the Project Application;
  - b) A brief description of the rationale and procedure for arriving at the consensus-based score;
  - c) A table of the final individual scores; and
  - d) The affiliation of each review team member (e.g., agency).

The Evaluation Summary Memo will be subsequently developed by Woodlot for each Project Application and provided to the MA SubCouncil. These summaries will be collated and made available to the public.

	Application ID _____
Reviewer ID _____	TOTAL SCORE _____

**PROJECT APPLICATION EVALUATION FORM**  
**Housatonic River NRD Fund, Round 1**

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

For each evaluation criterion, circle the appropriate number of points to be awarded. Subtotal the points for each category of criteria. Note the total score in the box above.

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
	High	Medium	Low	Score	Not Addressed
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	9	0		
2. Location of Project	15	9	0		
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	9	0		
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	15	9	0		
5. Human Health and Safety	10	6	0		
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	6	0		
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	5	3	0		
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>					
<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
	High	Medium	Low	Score	Not Addressed
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	9	0		
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	9	0		
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	6	0		
4. Measurable Results	10	6	0		
5. Contingency Actions	10	6	0		
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	3	0		
<b>Sub-total (max = 65)</b>					

Reviewer ID \_\_\_\_\_

Application ID \_\_\_\_\_

<b>C. PROJECT BUDGET</b>					
	High	Medium	Low	Score	Not Addressed
1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits	15	9	0		
2. Implementation-oriented	15	9	0		
3. Budget Justification and Understanding	15	9	0		
4. Leveraging of Additional Resources	10	6	3		
5. Coordination and Integration	5	3	0		
6. Comparative Cost-effectiveness	Preferred	Not Preferred			
<b>Sub-total (max = 60)</b>					
<b>D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT</b>					
	High	Medium	Low	Score	Not Addressed
1. Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources	15	9	0		
2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship	15	9	0		
3. Community Involvement	15	9	0		
4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts	10	6	0		
5. Complementary with Community Goals	10	6	0		
6. Public Outreach	5	3	0		
7. Diverse Partnerships	5	3	0		
<b>Sub-total (max = 75)</b>					
<b>GRAND TOTAL (max = 285)</b>					

Reviewer ID _____	Application ID _____
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**PROJECT APPLICATION EVALUATION FORM**  
**Housatonic River NRD Fund, Round 1**

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use the space below to provide brief comments that justify your individual score for the Project Application and any subsequent score revisions. If you require additional pages, please include the Application ID, Reviewer ID, and Project Name at the top of each page. Thank you.

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## EVALUATION AND SCORING GUIDE Housatonic River NRD Fund, Round 1

The following tables provide descriptions of each evaluation criterion; statements to determine which of three possible scores is appropriate; and references to specific sections of the Project Application materials that address each criterion (see “Recommended for Criterion”). However, the information needed to score each criterion may not be limited to the Project Application materials referenced in this guide but could be found in any part of the Project Application.

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>	
<b>(85 point maximum)</b> These criteria ascertain the relevance and applicability of the proposed project to the restoration of injured natural resources and the services they provide.	
<p><b><u>1. Natural Recovery Period</u></b>            The MA SubCouncil seeks to implement projects that will provide restoration benefits to injured natural resources and/or services in advance of the “natural recovery period.” The natural recovery period is the length of time it would take for the injured resource and/or service to recover to an optimal condition in the absence of human intervention. Preferred projects will describe the natural recovery period for the resource and/or service of interest and will demonstrate that the project would provide benefits to that resource and/or service in advance of the natural recovery period. Projects will not be funded if they would require a longer period of time to implement than the natural recovery period for the natural resource and/or service that is the focus of the project. <u>This criterion addresses direction provided to Trustees in the NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(6).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>High</b> (15 points): Project will clearly provide restoration benefits in advance of the natural recovery period.</li> <li>▪ <b>Medium</b> (9 points): Project has the potential to provide restoration benefits in advance of the natural recovery period.</li> <li>▪ <b>Low</b> (0 point): Benefits provided by the project are unlikely to result in restoration benefits in advance of the natural recovery period.</li> </ul> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p><b><u>Recommended for Criterion A-1:</u></b>            Part A: Specific Injured Resources to Benefit            Part C: Project Goals and Objectives            Project Benefits</p>
<p><b><u>2. Location of Project</u></b>            Priority will be given to projects that are within the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts. Proposed projects will only be considered if they have a positive impact on injured natural resources and/or their services located within the Housatonic River watershed.</p>	<p><b>High</b> (15 points): Project takes place within the watershed and will positively affect injured natural resources and/or their services.  <b>Medium</b> (9 points): Project does not take place in the watershed but will positively affect injured natural resources and/or services located within the Housatonic River watershed.  <b>Low</b> (0 point): Project does not take place in the watershed and does not positively affect injured natural resources and/or services located within the Housatonic River watershed.</p>

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>	
	<p><b><u>Recommended for Criterion A-2:</u></b>            Part A: Project Location            Specific Injured Resources to Benefit</p>
<p><b><u>3. Sustainable Benefits</u></b>            Priority will be given to projects that provide long-term sustainable benefits to injured natural resources and/or the services they provide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>High</b> (15 points): Project will clearly result in long-term, self-sustaining and comprehensive benefits. Project does not require recurring human intervention or maintenance.</li> <li>▪ <b>Medium</b> (9 points): Long-term and sustainable benefits are likely to require periodic maintenance or management that represents a relatively small investment to provide continuing benefits.</li> <li>▪ <b>Low</b> (0 point): Benefits provided by the project are likely to be short-term, unsustainable and/or finite. Project requires a significant investment of human intervention, management, and/or maintenance in order to provide continuing benefits.</li> </ul> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><u>Recommended for Criterion A-3:</u></b>            Part C: Project Implementation Plan            Project Benefits</p>
<p><b><u>4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits</u></b>            Priority will be given to projects that maximize the level of ecological benefits provided through NRD funding. For example, ecological benefits could be measured in terms of the increase in an animal population, the increase in native and/or rare plants in to the Housatonic River environment, the increase in prey species provided for another species, or the number of acres of habitat to be restored, enhanced, or protected. This criterion will assist the MA SubCouncil in achieving the greatest possible level of ecological restoration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>High</b> (15 points): Project will provide a high level of ecological benefits.</li> <li>▪ <b>Medium</b> (9 points): Project will provide a moderate level of ecological benefits.</li> <li>▪ <b>Low</b> (0 points): Project will provide no or a low level of ecological benefits.</li> </ul> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><u>Recommended for Criterion A-4:</u></b>            Part C: Project Benefits            Part D: Impact Narrative            Impact Checklist</p>

## A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT

### **5. Human Health and Safety**

Proposed projects will be evaluated for their potential to have adverse effects on human health and safety. A review will focus on the human health and safety of a particular project to determine if protective measures could be added to the project to ensure safety. This criterion addresses the direction provided to Trustees in the NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(8).

- **High** (10 points): Project has minimal or no potential for adverse effects on human health and safety.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project as proposed has the potential for adverse effects on human health and safety, but protective measures could be added to minimize adverse effects.
- **Low** (0 points): Potential for adverse effects to human health and safety is inherent to the proposed project.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion A-5:**

Part D: Impact Narrative  
Impact Checklist

### **6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories**

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the ability to provide benefits to the greatest number of restoration priority categories and, by extension, the greatest number of species, natural resource types, and services.

- **High** (10 points): Project will clearly benefit more than one restoration priority category.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project will clearly benefit one restoration priority category.
- **Low** (0 point): Project does not clearly benefit a restoration priority category.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion A-6:**

Part A: Restoration Project Category  
Part C: Project Benefits

### **7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions**

The MA SubCouncil is interested in projects that explore opportunities to enhance remediation/response actions by concurrently or subsequently implementing restoration projects. Such projects may result in synergistic benefits. For example, a remedial action, such as riverbank excavation, and a proposed restoration project, such as riverside trails for wildlife observation, may jointly benefit by integrating and coordinating the design and construction of the two projects. This criterion addresses in part the direction provided to Trustees in the NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(4).

- **High** (5 points): Project clearly complements completed, ongoing or planned remediation or response actions. A high potential for synergistic benefits is demonstrated.
- **Medium** (3 points): To a limited degree, project complements completed, ongoing or planned remediation or response actions. Synergistic benefits may be possible, but not substantiated.
- **Low** (0 points): Project has no relationship to completed, ongoing or planned remediation or response actions.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion A-7:**

Part C: Project Implementation Plan  
Monitoring/Evaluation and Contingency Plan

## B. TECHNICAL MERIT

**(65 point maximum)** These criteria assess whether the proposed approach is technically sound and likely to succeed using appropriate methods and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. These criteria also ascertain whether the applicant possesses the necessary experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

### **1. Technical/Technological Feasibility**

Priority will be given to projects that employ well-known and accepted techniques/technologies to achieve stated project objectives. The project will be evaluated based on the demonstrated likelihood of success of the proposed method(s) in the proposed project location in an acceptable period of time. The MA SubCouncil may approve projects that are innovative, as long as the approach is based on proven principles and concepts. “Stated project objectives” includes, but is not limited to, ecological, engineering, economic, and social objectives. This criterion addresses direction provided to Trustees in the NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(1).

- **High** (15 points): Methods are widely regarded as being, or based on, proven techniques/technologies for achieving stated project objectives. Likelihood of success in the proposed project location is high. Applicant clearly demonstrates technical/technological feasibility of project.
- **Medium** (9 points): Method has been moderately successful as a technique/technology for achieving stated project objectives. Likelihood of success in the proposed project location is moderate. Applicant provides an adequate demonstration of project’s technical/technological feasibility.
- **Low** (0 point): Method is considered to be technically infeasible for achieving stated project objectives. Likelihood of success is low or unknown. Applicant does not demonstrate technical/technological feasibility of project.

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### **Recommended for Criterion B-1:**

Part C: Technical/Technological Feasibility  
Project Goals and Objectives  
Project Implementation Plan

## B. TECHNICAL MERIT

### **2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team**

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate applicant's capacity to conduct the scope and scale of the project, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing, and effectively managing and overseeing similar projects. Examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the implementation team are encouraged. Communities and/or organizations developing their first restoration projects may not be able to document past experience, and therefore will be evaluated on their potential to effectively manage and oversee all project phases, as evidenced by the explanation of characteristics such as education, training and/or experience of primary project participants.

- **High** (15 points): The applicant demonstrates considerable relevant technical qualifications, experience and capacity. The project team has an established record of success in the implementation of projects of similar technical complexity, and/or they have a record of highly effective management of projects with similar scale and scope.
- **Medium** (9 points): The applicant demonstrates adequate relevant technical qualification, experience and capacity. The project team has successfully implemented and/or managed projects on a smaller scale or with less technical complexity.
- **Low** (0 point): The applicant demonstrates minimal or no qualifications, experience or capacity to implement and/or manage the proposed project.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion B-2:**

Part C: Qualifications of Applicant and Project Team  
Project Implementation Plan

### **3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts**

The MA SubCouncil will weigh whether, and to what degree, a project will result in adverse environmental impacts. This includes a consideration of significant adverse environmental impacts that could arise from a project, short-term or long-term, direct or indirect, including those affecting resources that are not the focus of the project. This criterion addresses the following requirements: NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(5); NEPA, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.; and MEPA, M.G.L. ch. 30, §§ 61-62H.

- **High** (10 points): Project has little to no potential for adverse environmental impacts.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project has potential for adverse environmental impacts, but project could be modified to reduce impacts to acceptable levels and continue to benefit injured natural resources and/or services.
- **Low** (0 points): Project has strong potential for adverse environmental impacts, and modifications to project would considerably decrease benefits to injured natural resources and/or services.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion B-3:**

Part D: Impact Narrative  
Impact Checklist

## B. TECHNICAL MERIT

### **4. Measurable Results**

Priority will be given to projects that deliver tangible, specific ecological, economic, social and/or human use results that are identifiable and measurable, and/or that may be evaluated by professionally accepted methods, so that changes to the Housatonic River watershed can be documented and evaluated. Priority projects will include clear performance criteria, measurable endpoints, and a monitoring plan.

- **High** (10 points): Project success can and will be directly measured using quantitative endpoints or other professionally accepted methods. Project includes a clear budget for monitoring and/or evaluation.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project success can be estimated using meaningful qualitative endpoints or indirect quantitative endpoints.
- **Low** (0 point): Success of proposed project cannot be directly measured or estimated.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion B-4:**

Part C: Monitoring/Evaluation and Contingency Plan

Project Benefits

Part E: Budget Narrative

### **5. Contingency Actions**

Priority will be given to projects that have the ability to correct problems that arise during the course of the project implementation, as well as during post-implementation, maintenance, and monitoring phases.

- **High** (10 points): Project demonstrates foresight for effectively and efficiently addressing potential problems throughout project life. Applicant appears well-prepared and demonstrates clearly how impacts to project goals would be minimized or eradicated, should a problem occur.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project demonstrates limited foresight for addressing potential problems throughout project life. Applicant provides limited explanation of how impacts to project goals would be minimized or eradicated.
- **Low** (0 point): Project does not appear to address potential problems throughout project life, nor does it include plans for how to address such problems.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion B-5:**

Part C: Monitoring/Evaluation and Contingency Plan

Technical/Technological Feasibility

Part E: Budget Narrative

## **B. TECHNICAL MERIT**

### **6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team**

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the necessary facilities and/or administrative resources and capabilities to support and successfully manage the restoration work, including the availability of outside technical expertise to guide the project to a successful completion.

- **High** (5 points): The applicant demonstrates considerable administrative resources, capacity and experience necessary to conduct a project of the proposed complexity, scale, and scope.
- **Medium** (3 points): The applicant demonstrates adequate administrative resources, capacity and experience.
- **Low** (0 point): The applicant demonstrates minimal or no administrative resources, capacity and/or experience to conduct a project of the proposed complexity, scale and scope.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion B-6:**

Part C: Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team

Part E: Budget Narrative

## C. PROJECT BUDGET

**(60 points maximum)** These criteria evaluate the project budget to determine if it is desirable, realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

### **1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits**

The MA SubCouncil will consider whether a project's costs are commensurate with stated benefits it will provide to injured natural resources and/or services. This will be a qualitative cost/benefit analysis that is largely based on information provided by the applicant. Costs should not solely be limited to those used for project implementation. Therefore, applicants should demonstrate economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits. Application of this criterion is not a straight cost/benefit analysis, nor will it lead to the establishment of a specific cost/benefit ratio that is considered to be unacceptable. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate that a significant benefit will be generated for a reasonable cost. This criterion addresses direction provided to Trustees in NRDA regulations 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(2).

- **High** (15 points): The project's qualitative cost-benefit relationship demonstrates high net benefits.
- **Medium** (9 points): The project's qualitative cost-benefit relationship demonstrates net benefits.
- **Low** (0 point): The project's qualitative cost-benefit relationship demonstrates a net cost.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion C-1:**

Part C: Project Goals and Objectives  
Project Benefits  
Part E: Project Budget Tables

### **2. Implementation-oriented**

Preferred projects will have a high ratio of NRD funding allocated to implementing the proposed project (e.g., on-the-ground habitat restoration, science-based monitoring, conducting an environmental educational course) compared to general program support and operation (e.g., administration, overhead, travel). Proposed projects that would result in comparatively high implementation costs will be taken into account.

- **High** (15 points): Project has a high ratio of NRD funding dedicated to implementation relative to general program support.
- **Medium** (9 points): Project shows an approximately equal ratio of NRD funding dedicated to project implementation and general program support.
- **Low** (0 point): Project shows a high ratio of NRD funding dedicated to expanding an existing organization's day-to-day activities.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion C-2:**

Part C: Project Implementation Plan  
Part E: Project Budget Tables

## C. PROJECT BUDGET

### **3. Budget Justification and Understanding**

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate strong budget justification and understanding, including complete descriptions and detailed breakdown of costs for all elements of the project (e.g., design, engineering, permitting, implementation, construction, post-implementation monitoring). For land acquisition projects, the MA SubCouncil will evaluate whether the land, easements, or other property interests proposed to be acquired are being offered for sale at fair market value. Consideration of this criterion requires the applicant to have an independent appraisal of the property conducted.

- **High** (15 points): Budget is highly detailed, reasonable, realistic, and strongly justified for the proposed project.
- **Medium** (9 points): Budget provides adequate detail to determine whether budget is realistic or justified for the project.
- **Low** (0 points): Project does not provide adequate detail to determine whether budget is realistic or justified for project, and/or budget provided demonstrates an unrealistic understanding of project costs.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion C-3:**

Part E: Project Budget Narrative

Project Budget Tables

Part C: Project Implementation Plan

### **4. Leveraging of Additional Resources**

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a strong commitment of matching funds, in-kind services, volunteer assistance, or other such partnering actions. This leveraging of non-NRD funds is preferred by the MA SubCouncil because it extends the availability of restoration funds and therefore increases the resource benefits provided by the funds. The MA SubCouncil will calculate the ratio of matching funds by comparing the total amount of matching funds, as indicated by the applicant in the project budget, with the amount of NRD funds that are requested in the project budget.

Non-NRD funds used for project-related expenditures up to six months prior to the deadline for receipt of applications will be considered. Matching funds should be specific to the proposed project and not include general organizational or operational costs.

- **High** (10 points): Project budget demonstrates an average of \$1.50 or greater in non-NRD funding for every \$1.00 requested.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project budget demonstrates an average of \$1.00 - \$1.49 in non-NRD funding for every \$1.00 requested.
- **Low** (3 points): Project budget demonstrates an average of \$0.10 - \$0.99 in non-NRD funding for every \$1.00 requested.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion C-4:**

Part E: Project Budget Tables

Project Budget Narrative

## C. PROJECT BUDGET

### **5. Coordination and Integration**

This criterion considers whether, how, and to what extent a project is coordinated or integrated with other ongoing or planned actions in the Housatonic River watershed. Restoration projects that applicants will efficiently coordinate with other actions may achieve cost savings. The MA SubCouncil is particularly interested in projects that enable synergistic benefits to injured natural resources and their services (i.e., a combination of activities that produces benefits greater than the sum of the individual activities).

**NOTE:** This criterion is different than coordination with USEPA response actions that is addressed under the “Results of Response Actions” criterion.

- **High** (5 points): Project is clearly coordinated and integrated with other ongoing or planned restoration activities. A high potential for synergistic benefits is demonstrated.
- **Medium** (3 points): Project neither complements nor detracts from other restoration or conservation activities. Synergistic benefits may be possible, but are not substantiated.
- **Low** (0 points): Project detracts from or negates other restoration activities. Synergistic benefits are very unlikely.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion C-5:**

Part C: Project Benefits

### **6. Comparative Cost-effectiveness**

If two or more proposed projects provide the same or a similar level of benefits (including the “no action - natural recovery” alternative), the least costly action may be preferred. This criterion addresses direction provided to Trustees in the NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.14(j); § 11.82(d)(3), and (7).

**NOTE:** This criterion will only be applied if it is determined that two or more projects would provide the same or similar level of benefits. Points are not applicable to this criterion.

No points are associated with this criterion.

- **Preferred:** Project provides same or similar restoration benefit at a lesser cost than another proposed project.
- **Non-preferred:** Project provides same or similar restoration benefit at a greater cost than another proposed project.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion C-6:**

Part C: Project Benefits

Part E: Project Budget Tables

## D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT

**(75 points maximum)** These criteria assess the degree to which the project addresses social and economic issues relevant to the restoration of injured natural resources and the services they provide.

### **1. Enhancement of Public’s Relationship with Natural Resources**

Priority will be given to projects that enhance the public’s ability to use, enjoy, or benefit from the Housatonic River watershed. This may include, but is not limited to, enhancements to aesthetic surroundings and overall beauty of the Housatonic River watershed, place-based education programs, and public access to restoration project locations.

- **High** (15 points): Project will significantly enhance the public’s relationship with, and their ability to utilize, the Housatonic River watershed. Project would result in aesthetic enhancements that are highly likely to be viewed favorably by the public at large.
- **Medium** (9 points): Project will provide some enhancements that would be viewed favorably by some, and not favorably by others.
- **Low** (0 point): Project will provide minimal or no enhancement of the public’s relationship with the watershed. Project proposes aesthetic enhancements that are generally not viewed favorably.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion D-1:**

Part C: Project Goals and Objectives  
Project Benefits  
Project Implementation Plan

### **2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship**

Priority will be given to projects that are likely to result in an “informed citizenry” that will help ensure ongoing environmental stewardship of restored natural resources and their services. This includes projects that serve as “building blocks” for future restoration activities that benefit injured natural resources and their services.

- **High** (15 points): Project will encourage, develop, or influence a specific behavior that has a direct and long-lasting and positive effect on the injured natural resources and their services. Project provides a critical foundation for future restoration activities.
- **Medium** (9 points): Project may provide a positive effect on natural resource stewardship, but for a short period of time. Project provides a limited foundation for future restoration activities.
- **Low** (0 points): Project does not demonstrate an ability to affect public stewardship of natural resources. Project does not provide a foundation for future restoration activities and/or provides a disincentive to future restoration activities.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion D-2:**

Part C: Project Goals and Objectives  
Project Benefits  
Project Implementation Plan

## D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT

### **3. Community Involvement**

Priority will be given to projects that provide opportunities for community involvement. Projects should demonstrate how the community would be involved, such as through hands-on habitat restoration, science-based monitoring and/or training. Projects that sustain public involvement after their completion are of particular interest to the MA SubCouncil.

- **High** (15 points): Project includes significant and meaningful community involvement opportunities throughout the life of the project (e.g., planning, implementing, monitoring, maintaining).
- **Medium** (9 points): Project includes community involvement opportunities in some stages of the project's life. It is not clear whether these opportunities would have a significant effect on the project itself.
- **Low** (0 point): Project includes minimal or no community involvement.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion D-3:**

Part C: Project Implementation Plan

### **4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts**

The MA SubCouncil will consider whether, and to what degree, a project will result in adverse socioeconomic impacts. This includes a consideration of significant adverse socioeconomic impacts that could arise from a project, short term or long term, direct or indirect, including those that involve resources that are not the focus of the project. This criterion addresses NEPA compliance requirements, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.

- **High** (10 points): Project has little to no potential for adverse socioeconomic impacts.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project has potential for adverse socioeconomic impacts, but project could be modified to reduce impacts to acceptable levels and continue to benefit injured natural resources and/or services.
- **Low** (0 points): Project has strong potential for adverse socioeconomic impacts, and modifications to project would considerably decrease benefits to injured natural resources and/or services.

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#### **Recommended for Criterion D-4:**

Part D: Impact Narrative  
Impact Checklist

### **5. Complementary with Community Goals**

Projects will be assessed for their ability to complement goals, needs and/or recommendations in existing plans incorporating public input and involvement in their development (e.g., restoration, watershed, and land use plans, town master plans, BioMaps). This may include project proposals specifically included in plans as well as new projects addressing needs, goals and recommendations stated in existing plans. Applicants are responsible for citing specific plans, goals, needs and/or recommendations the project would complement.

- **High** (10 points): Project will complement one or more community goals, needs and/or recommendations as expressed in existing plans.
- **Medium** (6 points): Project has the potential to complement aspects of community goals, needs and/or recommendations as expressed in existing plans.
- **Low** (0 point): Project does not appear to complement community goals, needs and/or recommendation as expressed in existing plans.

**D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT**

**Recommended for Criterion D-5:**

Part C: Project Goals and Objectives  
Project Benefits  
Project Implementation Plan

**6. Public Outreach**

Priority will be given to projects that include plans to disseminate information on project goals, results, project partners and their roles, sources of funding, and other support provided.

- **High** (5 points): Project includes clear plans for conducting public outreach and demonstrates that a transparent and open process will enable the public to learn the details of the project.
- **Medium** (3 points): Project includes general mention of public outreach, but it is unclear whether this will provide sufficient information to the public on the details of the project.
- **Low** (0 point): Project does not include a public outreach component, and provides minimal or no opportunity for the public to learn the details of the project.

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**Recommended for Criterion D-6:**

Part C: Project Implementation Plan  
Project Goals and Objectives  
Project Benefits

**7. Diverse Partnerships**

Priority will be given to projects that reflect a diversity of contributing project partners and resources. Partner contributions should be reflected in the budget, including donations of cash, equipment and materials, and in-kind services (e.g., volunteer time, technical assistance, materials).

- **High** (5 points): Project demonstrates a considerable diversity of partners contributing directly the project. The partners represent a broad range of community resources (e.g., individuals, municipalities, state and federal agencies, private foundations, conservation organizations, community groups, academia, etc.).
- **Medium** (3 points): Project partnership demonstrates some diversity in direct contributions.
- **Low** (0 point): Project partnership represents a narrow segment of community resources.

**D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT**

**Recommended for Criterion D-7:**

Part C: Project Implementation Plan  
Monitoring/Evaluation and Contingency  
Plan

Part E: Project Budget Narrative

## Questions and Answers on the Evaluation Process

### 1. What natural resources and natural resource services are considered to be “injured” and therefore eligible for the focus of a restoration project?

The MA SubCouncil considers the following natural resources and services to have sustained injury in the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River Watershed:

- surface waters (including sediments) and floodplain soils of the Housatonic River;
- groundwater resources;
- fisheries, reptiles and amphibians, birds, mammals, and invertebrates;
- recreational fishing and boating;
- other general outdoor recreational opportunities including hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing;
- aesthetic value of the river environment; and
- any other services provided by the above-listed natural resources to humans or other natural resources (e.g., food chain foraging opportunities, habitat)

A restoration project must, as its primary goal, *benefit* at least one of the above injured resources or services either *directly or indirectly*. For instance, riparian vegetation may not have been injured, but restoring riparian vegetation would improve the surface waters of the Housatonic River and would therefore be an eligible restoration action.

**Note:** In accordance with NRD regulations, projects that aim to compensate for private losses of property, revenues, or profits CANNOT be funded with NRD funds. Such projects are ineligible for further consideration. If you feel a Project Application should have been determined ineligible under the Threshold Criteria, please notify Woodlot immediately.

### 2. How do I evaluate proposals with feasibility studies?

A feasibility study should be accompanied by a proposed restoration project. Reviewers should evaluate the benefits likely to result from the proposed restoration project. Particular attention should be paid to criteria C1 and C3 in the project budget to ensure there is a high expected benefit-to-cost ratio as well as a comprehensive budget justification and understanding.

### 3. How do I evaluate the benefits to the resource that will result from a land acquisition project?

Applicants requesting funds to acquire a specific parcel of land should demonstrate that the proposed project would provide benefits to an injured natural resource/service. One example is illustrating that the property is under significant threat of development and preservation of the land will provide benefits. Reviewers are advised to consider whether the specific parcel requires implementation of significant restoration activities before the indicated resource benefits would be provided and, if so, whether those restoration activities are a component of the proposed project.

### 4. Can I consult with other review team members during the individual review period?

No, not until after the close of the individual review period. You will have opportunities to discuss Project Applications with other review team members during the consensus-based review period. The MA SubCouncil is interested in your independent evaluation of the Project Applications, as well as the evaluation conducted by consensus.

### 5. How do I evaluate whether a project is complementary with community goals?

Applicants have been advised that they are responsible for citing the specific plans, goals and/or recommendations their project would complement.

### 6. Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns during my independent review or during the consensus-based evaluation?

All questions and concerns should be directed to Todd Chadwell, Woodlot Alternatives, at (413) 442-9389 or [tchadwell@woodlotalt.com](mailto:tchadwell@woodlotalt.com).