



RAVALLI COUNTY OPEN LANDS BOND PROGRAM
 c/o Ravalli County Planning Department
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Project Scoring Worksheet
 (To be completed by Applicant)

Project Name: _____
Applicant(s): _____
OLBP Member: _____

This Project Scoring Worksheet uses a numeric system and standard criteria to quantify aspects of an application. It is only one piece of the evaluation process, and the entire application will be considered when determining suitability for approval. There may be circumstances where the Project Scoring Worksheet does not truly reflect the value or uniqueness of a project, or where the scoring over-values a project. Higher scoring projects are not guaranteed to be approved, nor are lower scoring projects guaranteed to be denied. Please see the Ravalli County Open Lands Guidelines document for more information.

Issue	Criteria	Possible points	Score	Comments
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General Attributes

GA 1	Size of property to be put in an easement				
		More than 400 acres	4		
		100 to 400 acres	3		
		25 to 99 acres	2		
		Less than 25 acres	1		

GA1 Applicants Guide:
 How many acres of the deeded land are proposed to be put in conservation easement?

GA 2	Water rights				
		Retains senior water rights or adequate irrigation district shares and well-maintained conveyance system to sustain	4		

	production/ conservation values			
	Retains junior water rights or some irrigation district shares and an adequate conveyance system that generally maintains conservation values.	2		
	There are insufficient water rights or irrigation district shares and no conveyance system or the system is in disrepair.	0		

GA2 Applicants Guide:

What water rights or irrigation district shares will remain with the property?

GA 3	Percent of land reserved for future home sites	<1%	4		
		1%	3		
		2%	2		
		3%	1		
		>4 %	0		

GA3 Applicants Guide:

Excluding existing home sites on the property, what percent of property is planned for future home sites?

GA 4	Weed management	Property has effective weed management practices	4		
		Property has partially effective weed management practices	2		
		Property has ineffective weed management practices	0		

GA4 Applicants Guide:

To what degree is there effective weed management on the property?

Total General Attributes Category Score: __ out of possible 16

Agricultural Resources

AR 1	Percent of soils classified as Prime, Statewide or Locally Significant	Over 50%	4		
		10 to 49%	2		
		0 to 9%	0		

AR1 Applicants Guide:

What percentage of the soils in the deeded portion of the property are identified as having prime/statewide importance and/or unique/local significance according to NRCS criteria? Please see <http://soils.usda.gov/> for more information.

AR 2	Amount of Irrigated or Potentially Irrigated Land	60 to 100%	4		
		20 to 59%	2		
		0 to 19%	0		

AR2 Applicants Guide:

What percentage of the proposed conservation easement area is or could potentially be irrigated with existing water rights/shares and/or sub-irrigated pasture/cropland?

AR 3	Irrigation	Sprinkled by gravity or pump, or flood irrigated	4		
		Sub-irrigated	2		
		No irrigation	0		

AR3 Applicants Guide:

Is the property irrigated, sub-irrigated or not irrigated?

AR 4	Max. Animal Unit Potential Over 6-month Growing Season	More than 75	3	
		25 to 75	2	
		1 to 25	1	
		No grazing potential	0	

AR4 Applicants Guide:

What is the maximum number of Animal Units that can be grazed on the property under ideal management conditions for a six month period. An Animal Unit is defined as a 1,000 pound cow with calf, or equivalent. Applicant should provide supporting evidence from NRCS soils data and/or on-the-ground experience of landowner(s). *Note: To convert to Animal Unit Months (AUMs), multiply the number of Animal Units (AUs) by 6.*

AR 5	Annual crop/hay/timber production potential per acre	>3 tons hay/acre or >60 bushels grain/acre or >60 cubic feet timber/acre	4	
		1.5 - 3 tons hay/acre or 25 - 60 bushels grain/acre or 20 - 60 cu ft timber/acre	2	
		<1.5 tons hay/acre or <25 bushels of grain/acre or <20 cu ft timber/acre	0	

AR5 Applicants Guide:

What is the potential annual production of hay and/or alfalfa (tons/acre), wheat and/or barley (bushels/acre), timber (cu ft/acre), or other crops produced on the property, per acre? Scoring calculations should be limited to those areas that are currently, or could potentially, be utilized for this type of production (e.g., only those areas currently or potentially growing merchantable timber). Applicants should provide supporting evidence from NRCS soils data, landowner experience and/or other applicable sources (e.g., forestry professional).

AR 6	Management that enhances, or maintains, agricultural resources and production potential	Management that enhances agr. resources and production potential	3	

Management that maintains agr. resources and production potential	2	
No agr. resources present, or management that does not maintain them	0	

AR6 Applicants Guide:

Please provide documentation, and/or a narrative explanation, of the use of agricultural management practices that enhance, or maintain, the agricultural resources, and/or production potential, of the subject property. See NRCS Resource Management System (RMS) for some examples of management practices that enhance or maintain agricultural resources.

AR 7	Proximity to other operating farms/ranches
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Surrounded by other farms/ranches	4	
Contiguous to one or more farms/ranches	3	
Within 1/4 mile of other farms/ranches	2	
Within 1 mile of other farms/ranches	1	
More than 1 mile to other farms/ranches	0	

AR7 Applicants Guide:

Is the property close to other farms/ranches and, if so, how close (in miles)?

AR 8	Proximity to other farms/ranches protected by conservation easement
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Contiguous with other protected farms/ranches	4	
Within 1/4 mile of other protected farms/ranches	3	
Within 1/2 mile of other protected farms/ranches	2	
Within 1 mile of other protected farms/ranches	1	
More than 1 mile to other protected farms/ranches	0	

AR8 Applicants Guide:

Is the property close to other farms/ranches that are protected by conservation easements?

Total Agricultural Resources Category Score: __ out of possible 30

Natural Attributes

NA 1	Percent of soils classified as hydric or typically associated with wetland or riparian areas				
		More than 50%	3		
		10% to 50%	2		
		Less than 10%	0		

NA1 Applicants Guide:

Does the property have soils rated as ‘severe’ or described as alluvium or colluvium? Often, these soils are associated with lands able to support wetland or riparian areas. (Note: BRLT typically identifies hydric soils, riparian areas, and wetlands using NRCS soils data and USFWS National Wetland Inventory data)

NA 2	Wildlife habitat				
	Property contains riparian areas, elk and mule deer winter range, special habitats, or provides linkage between such habitats.	4			
	Property contains riparian areas or habitat for common species such as waterfowl, coyotes, or whitetail deer	2			
	Property contains little or no habitat for native species	0			

NA2 Applicants Guide:

Does the property contain important wildlife habitat? Attributes that are desirable for wildlife habitat include the presence of multiple native plant communities, healthy wetland or riparian communities, habitat for Montana Species of Concern, habitat that is limited in the Bitterroot Valley (e.g., sagebrush), or areas that provide linkage between important habitats. For example, a property adjacent to the National Forest on elk winter range with a mix of rolling forested and sagebrush foothills, a healthy stream and riparian area, a healthy wetland, and connected to another large block of undeveloped and protected habitat would have high value as wildlife habitat. Properties that contain habitats of rare plant associations or communities (Montana Ranking of S1, S2 or S3) are also beneficial for wildlife and

should be given a high score. Conversely, a property surrounded by development with an open pasture of non-native vegetation or weeds would have less value as wildlife habitat and therefore would score lower in this category. Maps of elk and mule deer winter range are on file with the Ravalli County Planning Department; and information about Montana Species of Concern can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program website <http://mtnhp.org>.

NA 3	Wildlife			
	Property is occupied seasonally or year-round by elk and mule deer, or animal species of concern.	4		
	Property is occupied by common species such as waterfowl, coyotes, or whitetail deer	2		
	Property is occupied by few or no wildlife	0		

NA3 Applicants Guide :

Is the property occupied seasonally or year-round by a diversity of wildlife, including species of high social value (e.g., elk, mule deer), or animal species of concern. Animal species of concern may include federally Threatened or Endangered Species, any Montana Animal Species of Concern (S1, S2 or S3 rating), a species with limited local or regional distribution, or a native non-game species dependent on a single plant community. For example, a property that provides winter range for several hundred elk and mule deer plus a diversity of other wildlife, especially species of concern, would score higher than a property with potential habitat but occupied by relatively few animals. For more information about Montana Animal Species of Concern can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program website <http://mtnhp.org>

NA 4	Protection of river/stream/creek quality			
	Property contains buffered native riparian systems	4		
	Property contains natural perennial streams or watercourses.	3		
	Property contains perennial streams or buffers to adjacent watercourses.	2		
	Property contains natural ephemeral streams or watercourses.	1		
	Property contains little or no natural streams or watercourses.	0		

NA4 Applicants Guide:

Does the property contain a perennial river or stream that is an important fishery (according to Montana FWP) or aquifer recharge area? Water resources may include water from artificial distribution systems (e.g., irrigation ditches) if it has natural attributes; however, no artificial water source may receive more than 2 points. For more information, please see fish distribution maps: <http://fwp.mt.gov>

NA 5	Protection of wetlands and open water quality (e.g. lake, pond, marsh)	Property contains buffered native wetland or open water.	4		
		Property contains natural perennial wetlands or open water sources.	3		
		Property contains perennial wetlands or open water, or it buffers adjacent water sources.	2		
		Property contains natural seasonal wetlands or open water.	1		
		Property contains little or no natural wetlands or open water.	0		

NA5 Applicants Guide:

Does the property contain a water body or wetlands that constitute an important water resource, fishery (according to MT FWP) or aquifer recharge area? Water resources may include water from artificial distribution systems or ponds (e.g., irrigation pond) if it has natural attributes; however, no artificial water source or pond may receive more than 2 points. For more info please see: <http://fwp.mt.gov>

NA 6	Management that enhances or maintains habitat/wildlife/ water	Management that enhances habitat, wildlife, and/or water	3		
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Management that maintains habitat, wildlife, and/or water	2	
Little or no habitat, wildlife, and/or water; or no management to maintain it	0	

NA6 Applicants Guide:

If there is little or no habitat/wildlife/water of consequence on the property, or if present but management degrades it, the score will be 0. If there are some viable habitat/wildlife/water resources and the landowner has actively managed to enhance wildlife habitat or populations, three points should be awarded. Examples of active management would be: active weed management on big game winter ranges, wildlife food plantings excluded from livestock grazing, wetland or riparian habitat enhancement, etc. These may include incorporation of any wildlife-related Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as those found at <http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/nongame/index.asp>.

If the landowner has maintained and not degraded wildlife habitat two points should be awarded. If the land has no viable wildlife habitat or potential habitat has been degraded by management practices, no points should be awarded.

NA 7	Close to or a part of identified wildlife or fisheries habitat, natural areas, or Important Bird Areas
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Part of or contiguous to one or more	4	
Within 1/4 mile	3	
Within 1/2 mile	2	
Within 1 mile	1	
Greater than a mile	0	

NA7 Applicants Guide:

Is the property part of or close to other identified wildlife /natural areas and if so, how close (in miles)? A natural area is defined as an area protected with the intent to conserve and enhance native plant communities and/or native ecosystem processes. Examples include Important Bird Areas (recognized by the Audubon Society), elk or mule deer winter range (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP)), predicted habitat of Montana Animal Species of Concern (S1, S2, or S3 rating), important fisheries (MFWP, or other data), or other important habitat areas. See resources appendix for examples and maps identifying these wildlife and natural areas.

NA 8	Proximity to other natural areas protected by conservation easement or to public lands	Contiguous	4		
		Within a 1/4 mile	3		
		Within a 1/2 mile	2		
		Within a mile	1		
		Greater than a mile	0		

NA8 Applicants Guide:

Is the proposed conservation easement close to public lands managed for natural resources (e.g., U.S. National Forests, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, State Trust Lands, Wildlife Management Areas (MFWP), some County/City Parks), other protected wildlife areas, or private lands that have a conservation easement that lists wildlife habitat as a conservation value.

Total Natural Attributes Category Score: ___ out of possible 30

Additional Community Benefits

CB 1	Scenic values	The property is adjacent to a federal or state highway, a navigable river, or a public recreation area	4		
		The property is adjacent to a major county road and/or visible from a federal or state highway, a navigable river, or a public recreation area	3		
		The property is visible from a major or minor county road	2		
		The property can only be viewed from a private road	0		

CB1 Applicants Guide:

Is the property adjacent to and/or visible from a federal or state, highway, adjacent to a major county road, and/or visible from a minor county road, a navigable river, or a public recreation area? Please use the 'Ravalli County Road and Bridge Department Functional Classification of County Roadways' list available at the Ravalli County Planning Department or Road and Bridge Department (Document No. 558089, Ravalli County Records).

CB 2	Public policy			
	Management of the property consistently conforms with the intent and goals of federal, state, county and local land use regulations, plans and policies.	3		
	Management of the somewhat conforms with the intent and goals of federal, state, county and local land use regulations, plans and policies.	2		
	Management of the property in no way conforms with the intent and goals of federal, state, county and local land use regulations, plans and policies.	0		

CB2 Applicants Guide:

Is the property located in an area where the preservation of open space, agricultural or rural character is encourage by an adopted land use plan or regulation, and is the property managed consistent with the intent and goals of federal, state, county and local land use regulations, plans and policies, such as the Ravalli County Growth Policy, County or local zoning regulations, or other planning documents?

CB 3	Public access			
	Establishes or maintains public access to trails, public lands, or hunting and/or fishing	3		
	Establishes or maintains public access to 2 of the 3: trails, public lands, or hunting and/or fishing	2		
	Establishes or maintains public access to 1 of the 3: trails, public lands, or hunting and/or fishing	1		
	Does not establish or maintain public access	0		

CB3 Applicants Guide:

Does the property provide public access to trails, public lands or hunting and/or fishing?

Total Additional Community Benefits Category Score: __ out of possible 10

Proposed Funding

PF 1	Landowner contribution			
	>50% of the value	3		
	21 to 50% of the value	2		
	1-20% of the value	1		
	no contribution	0		

PF1 Applicants Guide:

How much of the value of the conservation easement will be contributed by the landowner?

PF 2	Proposal partners			
	>81% of the cost	3		
	40 to 80% of the cost	2		
	20 to 39% of the cost	1		
	<20% of the cost	0		

PF2 Applicants Guide:

What proportion of the total purchase price of the conservation easement will be contributed by partners, including: local governments, state and federal governments, charitable foundations and non-profit land conservation organizations? The calculation of the proposal partner contribution should not include requested Open Lands Bond Program money or the contribution by the landowner.

PF 3	Matching “neighborhood” conservation easements			
	>100 acres contiguous to the proposed project	3		
	>100 acres within ¼ mile of the proposed project	2		
	<100 acres and/or >1/2 mile from the proposed project	1		
	No matching easement	0		

PF3 Applicants Guide:

Are there other conservation easement on adjoining or nearby lands being donated with your proposal that would enhance the purpose of your application? The purpose of this attribute is to encourage "neighborhood easements."

Total Proposed Funding Category Score: __ out of possible 9

Special Attributes

Describe any other unique or exceptional features of the property that should be considered as open land values. Up to five points may be awarded for special attributes.

Total Special Attributes Category Score: __ out of possible 5

TOTAL COMBINED PROJECT SCORE

Project Name: _____

General Attributes: ___

Agricultural Resources: ___

Natural Attributes: ___

Community Benefits: ___

Project Funding: ___

Special Attributes: ___

Total Score: ___

FORM COMPLETED BY OLB MEMBER: _____