

Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages Fund

Round 3, SubRound 1 Restoration Project Proposals for
Land Acquisition to Conserve Habitat

Doc. No. BWSC-NRD-2014-02

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Project Name: Hinsdale Flats – Duquette (Proposal No. 303)

Consensus-Based Score: 227

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (2), Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (1), Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (1), and Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (1).

Summary of Criteria Discussed:

- **Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period):** One reviewer expressed the opinion that, because the objective of Round 3 funding is to protect land for habitat conservation (and does not fund further active, habitat restoration actions), Round 3 projects do not speed or slow the natural recovery period. Other reviewers felt that protection of land in perpetuity provides restoration benefits in advance of the natural recovery period because protection in perpetuity is not otherwise guaranteed. One reviewer agreed with this rationale and raised their score accordingly. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits):** The reviewers discussed that the proposed project includes mowing to maintain habitat and thus would require "maintenance or management that represents a relatively small investment to provide continuing benefits". Two reviewers had previously not taken this into account in their scoring and changed their scores to acknowledge the proposed periodic maintenance.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation / Response Actions):** The reviewers discussed that the proposed project did not appear to have a nexus with remediation or response actions. One reviewer indicated that they had initially misunderstood the criterion and lowered their score accordingly.
- **Criterion B4 (Measurable Results):** The reviewers discussed that future monitoring or evaluation of project success is not identified in the application. One reviewer lowered their score in agreement with this assessment. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions):** The reviewers discussed that the applicant has demonstrated strong relevant experience and a record of successfully navigating the land acquisition process. Reviewers noted that the application does not state how potential impacts to project goals might be minimized, but that the experience of the project team suggests the ability to address potential problems throughout the project life. One reviewer lowered their score noting that the application itself provides limited explanation regarding how impacts to project goals would be minimized or avoided. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion C2 (Implementation Oriented):** The reviewers discussed that the application indicated that all requested NRD funding would be allocated to project implementation. One reviewer raised their score stating that they'd misunderstood the question.

- **Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding):** The reviewers discussed that the budget appears detailed, reasonable, and justified. One reviewer noted they would have preferred to see stewardship included in the budget. Other reviewers noted that this wasn't requested in the Grant Application. No reviewers changed their scores in the course of this discussion. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration):** Reviewers discussed and identified minor differences of opinion regarding the potential for synergistic benefits. Some reviewers noted that the proposed project would increase the aerial extents of an existing Wildlife Management Area (WMA), expanding protection of natural systems and habitat types only partially protected within the existing WMA. One reviewer stated that the opinion that the potential for synergistic benefits is only assumed and is not clearly apparent. No reviewers changed their scores in the course of this discussion. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D2 (Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship):** Two reviewers expressed the opinion that the proposed project would help foster stewardship, a behavior that may have a "direct or long lasting and positive effect on the injured natural resources and their services". Other reviewers indicated they felt that the proposed project might provide only limited or no foundation for future restoration activities. No reviewers changed their scores in the course of this discussion. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D3 (Community Involvement):** The reviewers discussed that the application does not identify community involvement (e.g., planning, implementing, monitoring, maintaining) in any stages of the project life. Two reviewers lowered their scores in agreement with this assessment.
- **Criterion D5 (Complementary with Community Goals):** The reviewers discussed varying interpretations of this criterion. Multiple reviewers noted that the project appears to complement an existing plan (BioMap2) which is listed as an example in the Criterion's scoring information. One reviewer expressed an opinion that the inclusion of BioMaps as an example in the scoring information was an inconsistency and that a proposed project nexus with BioMaps does not, by itself, indicate a project's ability to complement community goals. Two reviewers lowered their scores in agreement with this assessment. Another reviewer expressed that the expansion of an existing WMA suggested compatibility with community goals. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D6 (Public Outreach):** The reviewers generally agreed that the proposed project does not appear to incorporate public outreach. One reviewer lowered their score in agreement with this assessment. Another reviewer suggested that some public outreach might be provided through a public announcement and/or an opening ceremony. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships):** The reviewers discussed that the application did not identify contributing partners beyond the project applicant. One reviewer noted that the proposed budget includes committed funds from the applicant and expressed the opinion that this demonstrates some project partnership diversity. Other reviewers stated that they did not feel that contributions by the applicant demonstrated partnership diversity. No reviewers changed their scores in the course of this discussion. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.

Consensus-Based Evaluation Scoring Summary

Project Name: **Hinsdale Flats - Duquette**

Project Score: **227**

CATEGORY & CRITERIA	EVALUATION SCORES						
	GR-1	GR-2	GR-3	GR-4	GR-5	GR-6	Average
A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT							
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	15	15	9	15	14
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal (max=85)	74	74	74	74	68	74	73
B. TECHNICAL MERIT							
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
4. Measurable Results	6	6	6	6	6	10	7
5. Contingency Actions	6	6	10	10	6	10	8
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Subtotal (max=65)	57	57	61	61	57	65	60
C. PROJECT BUDGET							
1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
2. Implementation-Oriented	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3. Budget Justification and Understanding	15	15	15	15	9	15	14
4. Leveraging of Additional Resources	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5. Coordination and Integration	3	5	5	5	3	5	4
Subtotal (max=60)	51	53	53	53	45	53	51
D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT							
1. Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship	15	9	9	9	9	15	11
3. Community Involvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
5. Complementary with Community Goals	6	0	6	0	10	10	5
6. Public Outreach	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
7. Diverse Partnerships	0	3	3	0	0	0	1
Subtotal (max=75)	49	37	43	34	44	50	43
Total Score (max=285)	231	221	231	222	214	242	227