

## Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Private Forest Accord Grant Program

### *Appendix O: Conservation Easement Evaluation Criteria & Scoring Matrix*

Criteria Category	Criteria Descriptor	Max Points	Scoring Considerations
Applicant Stewardship Capacity	Evaluation of the applicant's or proposed holder's readiness and legal capacity to enforce a perpetual easement.	5	Eligibility per the Grant Guidelines for Conservation Easements, staff experience handling partial interest real estate transactions, monitoring history, and structural viability of the organization's written policy for tracking and curing easement violations.
Clarity and Technical Precision	Completeness, internal consistency, and professional thoroughness of the application materials.	5	Evaluate whether all target deliverables, specific tasks, task responsibilities, budgets, and project timelines are explicitly defined, justified, and mutually consistent
Conservation Value & Ecological Uplift	Biological importance, uniqueness, and habitat function for targeted PFA HCP-covered species.	10	Evaluate if activities occur exclusively on land other than forestland, prioritizing critical riparian management zones. Assess documented presence by PFA HCP covered species, baseline habitat quality, and long-term projection of conservation uplift.

Landscape Context & Connectivity	Contribution of the parcel to regional habitat corridors and contiguous ecosystem resilience models.	5	Evaluate physical adjacency to existing protected areas, state or federal public lands, and migratory pathways. Grade alignment with regional recovery plans or other State Conservation Strategies.
Project Feasibility & Closing Readiness	Operational readiness, transactional security, and probability of closeout within program constraints.	5	Assess landowner willingness via executed Landowner Acknowledgement Forms, progress of initial title reviews, and ability of the parties to execute the final Conservation Easement within the mandatory 18 month performance window.
Water Rights Integrity & Protection	Security, legal classification, and non-forfeiture status of real property water assets.	5	Evaluate whether associated surface or groundwater rights have documented beneficial use within the past 5 consecutive years, preventing legal forfeiture.
Subsurface & Mitigation Compliance	Adherence to prohibitions regarding industrial use, resource development, and offset banking.	1	Verify bans on subsurface drilling and any energy exploration. Confirm complete restriction against generating, selling, or transferring environmental credits, carbon offsets, or compensatory mitigation banking units.
Long-Term Management & Durability	Sufficiency of long-term strategic frameworks, update cycles, and property care protocols.	8	Grade the thoroughness of the initial Draft Property Management Plan. Assess alignment with the 20 year stewardship term, integration of the mandatory 5 year adaptive management review cycle, and technical baseline metrics.
Cost Effectiveness & Stewardship Funds	Fiscal proportionality of the transaction and permanent viability of monitoring endowments.	4	Review any dedicated financial reserves allocated to guarantee long-term/stewardship enforcement capacity of the Conservation Easement.

**Administrative Review Guidance:**

Advisory Committee members may assign fractional scoring assessments, such as 3.5 points, if an applicant meets criteria parameters only partially.

Reviewers must provide objective narrative comments summarizing critical project risks, identified title defects, outstanding hazard liabilities, or clear performance recommendations to support final funding selection or denial determinations.