

Program is responsible for coordinating the review and ranking of proposals according to the established criteria, a process that usually involves a national meeting.

(c) *Proposal selection.* The Review Panel's recommendations are forwarded to the Director of the Service for a final review and project selection. The Director announces the selection by October 1.

§ 84.31 An overview of the ranking criteria.

(a) The primary objective of the proposal will be to acquire, restore, enhance, or manage coastal wetlands to benefit coastal wetlands and the hydrology, water quality, and fish and wildlife dependent upon them. The Program will not provide grants, for example, for construction or repair of boat ramps or docks for recreational purposes and construction or support of research facilities or activities. The purpose of the ranking criteria is to provide a means for selecting the best projects—those that produce the maximum benefits to coastal wetlands and the fish and wildlife that depend on them.

(b) *Proposal ranking factors*—(1) *Ranking criteria.* As explained in § 84.32, we will evaluate proposals according to 13 ranking criteria. These criteria have varying point values. Proposals must address each of these 13 criteria.

(2) *Additional considerations.* Even though the criteria provide the primary evaluation of proposals, we may factor additional considerations into the ranking decision at the national level. In case of a tie, we will use these additional considerations to rank proposals having identical scores.

(c) The criteria in § 84.32 are not listed in priority order.

(d) Points are assigned on the basis of a completed project, rather than current conditions, e.g., count 50 acres of estuarine emergent wetlands if 50 acres of that habitat type will be restored when the project is completed.

(e) A range of points rather than a set point value allows the reviewer to distinguish between, for example, a proposal that provides some foraging habitat for a threatened species versus one that provides critical nesting habi-

tat of several endangered species. Scoring guidance is included with the individual criteria.

(f) A total of 64 points is possible under the scoring system.

(g) If a grant proposal is not selected, the State may resubmit it for reconsideration in subsequent fiscal years. Resubmission of a grant proposal is the responsibility of the applicant.

§ 84.32 What are the ranking criteria?

(a) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will rank proposals using the 13 criteria listed below. In the following list, a description of each criterion is followed by examples and the points they would receive for that criterion.

(1) *Wetlands conservation.* Will the project reverse coastal wetland loss or habitat degradation in decreasing or stable coastal wetland types? Will it conserve wetlands to prevent losses of decreasing or stable wetland types? (Maximum: 7 points)

(i) The majority of the project area (over 50 percent) is nationally decreasing coastal wetland types,² or the majority is regionally decreasing wetlands types in which the case for regionally decreasing is well-documented (Up to 7 points). The nationally decreasing types are estuarine intertidal emergent; estuarine intertidal forested; estuarine intertidal scrub-shrub; marine intertidal; palustrine emergent; palustrine forested; and palustrine scrub-shrub. Describe the wetlands using terms listed above. Include a breakdown showing the percentage of the proposal's total and wetland acreage in decreasing types. Provide National Wetlands Inventory codes/information if available. Information about these can be found on the National Wetland Inventory's web site at <http://wetlands.fws.gov>.

(ii) The majority of the project area (over 50 percent) is nationally stable coastal wetlands types² (Up to 5 points). The nationally stable types are estuarine intertidal non-vegetated and

²These designations are based on the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan. For more information about the plan, or to receive a copy of the document, refer to the contact information provided in § 84.21.