

District 16 Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC)
Round 15 Project Scoring Methodology & Supplemental Instructions
Approved: January 08, 2021

Supplemental Instructions:

All applications will be submitted to the District 16 Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC) using the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) application forms. Submission requirements will be updated when OPWC online portal becomes functional.

Projects shall incorporate aesthetically pleasing and ecologically informed design including sensitivity to the terrain, natural resources and heritage of the property. Any proposed improvements must be on the parcel being acquired or previously acquired using Clean Ohio funds

District 16 will evaluate project proposals with the guidance of the "Glossary of Terms" provided by the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) for use with this program. Three (3) specific definitions in this Glossary are of particular note, and will guide decision-making in District 16. They are:

Open space

Any area of land the preservation of which would 1) maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources; 2) protect natural streams or water supply; 3) promote conservation of wetlands, marshes, bogs, fens, forests, prairies, lakes, streams or other naturally occurring communities; 4) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, stream corridors, forests, wildlife areas, natural areas or other natural open spaces; 5) enhance passive public recreation opportunities.

Natural areas

"Natural area" means an area of land or water which either retains to some degree or has re-established its natural character, although it need not be completely undisturbed, or has unusual flora, fauna, geological, archeological, scenic, or similar features of scientific or educational interest.

Natural features

A physical or biological feature of the landscape which has resulted from and is maintained by natural processes. Examples: waterfall, river oxbow, gorge, natural bridge, cave, etc.

Applications involving land that will be extensively maintained and managed by other than natural means, forces or processes are not ideal projects for this program. The presumption is that when more than 15 percent of the land area associated with a project is maintained or managed by other than natural means, forces or processes, it is not a suitable project for District 16. It is also required that at least 85 percent of the grant funds requested for acquisition will be for the purchase of land to be maintained as a natural area, as opposed to the costs associated with purchasing pre-existing structures on the land, regardless of whether they are to be maintained to serve the project or demolished. If there are existing structures on the property being proposed for acquisition, applicants must provide the appraised value of the structure, proportion of value to the overall value and the intended actions for the structures (e.g. demolition, re-use). The NRAC will consider applications in excess of the 85%-15% threshold if the development project is for the construction and enhancement of facilities that are necessary to make the open space accessible and useable by the general public. The District 16 NRAC will not consider or approve funding for the demolition of buildings. The District 16 NRAC will not consider or approve the purchase of a conservation easement that will not have public access.

Applications are required to submit a Restricted Appraisal Report or Appraisal Report with the application. In case of a Restricted Appraisal Report, if approved for funding, an Appraisal Report prepared according to the advisory from OPWC regarding standards & procedures for appraisal reporting will be required.

District 16 Natural Resources Assistance Council - Scoring Methodology

A District 16 NRAC Scoring Methodology has been included; which must be completed for, and attached to each application along with all supporting documentation. Part II, III & IV of the form must be annotated by the applicant, placing a page number in the space provided for each scoring factor for which the applicant believes points should be awarded. The page number entered will indicate the place or places in the application materials that document the applicant's entitlement to points for that factor. The page number reference will assist the District 16 NRAC rating team score the project.

*Please assemble the application material, in sequence, as follows: (you may use this as a checklist to insure your application is complete.) An item with * is required with the application to be considered.*

Yes	No	Material
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*The application form with pages in numerical order with appropriate information included as outlined in O.R.C. Section 164.23 (enclosed in application packet). If multiple applications are submitted by an agency, they should be prioritized with a priority number placed in the upper left hand corner of page one of the application. Number all subsequent pages (Scoring methodology, agreements, certifications, estimates, etc.) beginning with page number seven (#7).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*The Scoring Methodology Form (with all relevant supporting documentation). <u>The applicant must propose a score for each item on the District's form and provide a page number reference that supports the suggest number of points.</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*Copies of all participating agreements or Resolutions of Support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*A certification of availability of funds for the local fund match.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*A detailed certified estimate for improvements (if applicable) and/or a Restricted Appraisal Report or Appraisal Report (for property acquisition) must be attached. Estimates for improvements must separately show non-eligible cost items.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*Include supplemental information, photos, a project area map, etc. that will aid in the evaluation of the application.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Include a statement of project management experience of similar or related projects. List projects and date completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*Applicants must submit an original and <u>twelve (12) copies</u> of each application to District 16. The original application, containing the required original signatures, should be noted as such in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. Please <u>do not</u> present applications in notebooks or oversized bindings that may increase the difficulty and expense of distributing applications to committee members.

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The Code number on the application is a number assigned to the applicant by OPWC. A list for District 16 jurisdictions & organizations currently assigned numbers is available from OPWC. A qualifying organization not yet assigned a number may call OPWC (614-466-0880) for a number.

Applications are to be submitted to	Questions may be addressed to:
Richland County Regional Planning 19 N Main Street Mansfield, Ohio 44902	Jotika Shetty, District 16 Liaison Telephone: (419) 774-6202 Fax: (419) 774-5685 e-mail: jshetty@rcrpc.org

Applicant Name: _____

Rating By: _____

Project: _____

YES	NO	PART I: PRELIMINARY SCREENING – Required
		Applicant is eligible entity
		Complete application received by deadline
Project purpose must involve at least one of the following from A. or B. below:		
✓ if it applies		A. Open Space (Sec. 164.22 A)
		acquires land for parks
		acquires land for public forests
		acquires land for wetland preservation or restoration
		acquires land for natural areas protecting endangered species
		acquires land for other natural areas
		acquires land for connecting corridors for natural areas
		open space acquisition
		permanent conservation easement
		constructs or enhances facilities necessary to make open space area accessible & useable by the general public
✓ if applies		B. Riparian Corridors or Watersheds (Sec. 164.22 B)
		Protects or enhances riparian corridors or watersheds including the protection and enhancement of streams rivers and other waters of the state.
YES	NO	C. Would the project:
		Initiate or perpetuate hydromodification projects such as dams ditch development or channelization?
		Fund current legal obligations (such as fines penalties litigation expenses mitigation or reclamation) under state or federal laws or local ordinances?
		Fund facilities other than those required to provide public access to or use of open space?
		Fund facilities for active recreation such as tennis courts ball fields or recreation centers?
		Funds storm water facilities as the primary purpose?
		Will the land area associated with the project be extensively maintained and managed by other than natural means, forces or processes?
		Is the project determined to be an unacceptable use of Clean Ohio Conservation Funds by the District 16 NRAC? <i>Eight (8) NRAC members must affirm that the application is an</i>

District 16 Natural Resources Assistance Council - Scoring Methodology

		<i>unacceptable use of Clean Ohio Funds. (Factors to be considered may include, but are not limited to any of the following: an unjustified cost per acre, poor location, or non-existent claimed benefits such as the presence of wetlands that is not supported by documentation).</i>
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If **Yes** to any of the above in **C**, the project is **ineligible** (Section 164.22, ORC).

If the project meets Preliminary Scoring Requirements move on to Part II.

Item	Score	Factor	Possible Points	Applicant's Page Reference
Part II --Required: The District 16 NRAC shall consider all the following in approving or disapproving a grant: Does the project emphasize the following pursuant to Section 164.22, ORC? Please refer to Glossary of Terms at the OPWC Web Site. <u>To receive points, information must be documented in application.</u> ORC 164.24(A)(1); 164.24(A)(7)				
1		Protects habitat where rare, threatened and endangered species as defined by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves or the Ohio Division of Wildlife currently grow, nest or reside .	<i>(2 points)</i>	
2		increases habitat protection for a variety of native species	<i>(2 points)</i>	
3		reduces or eliminates nonnative, invasive species of plants or animals	<i>(2 points)</i>	
4		preserves high quality, viable habitat for plant or animal species	<i>(2 points)</i>	
5		restores and preserves aquatic biological communities	<i>(2 points)</i>	
6		preserves headwater streams	<i>(2 points)</i>	
7		preserves or restores functioning floodplains	<i>(2 points)</i>	
8		preserves or restores water quality	<i>(2 points)</i>	
9		preserves or restores natural stream channels	<i>(2 points)</i>	
10		preserves or restores streamside forests	<i>(2 points)</i>	
11		preserves existing high quality wetlands or restores wetlands	<i>(2 points)</i>	
12		preserves or restores other natural features that contribute to quality of life and state's natural heritage	<i>(3 points)</i>	
13		fee simple acquisition of lands to provide access to riparian corridors	<i>(3 points)</i>	
14		acquisition of easements protecting and enhancing riparian corridors or watersheds	<i>(2 points)</i>	
15		reforests land to improve water quality	<i>(2 points)</i>	
16		plants native vegetation for filtration to improve water quality	<i>(2 points)</i>	
17		incorporates aesthetically pleasing and ecologically informed design including sensitivity to the terrain, natural resources and heritage of the property	<i>(3 points)</i>	
18		enhances environmental & conservation educational opportunities or provides physical links to schools and after school centers <i>(3 points)</i>	<i>(3 points)</i>	
19		includes pedestrian/bicycle linkages to other open space preserves and population centers	<i>(3 points)</i>	
20		supports comprehensive open space planning	<i>(2 points)</i>	
21		provides multiple recreational, economic and aesthetic preservation benefits	<i>(3 points)</i>	
22		allows proper management of areas where either safe fishing, hunting or trapping may take place in a manner that will	<i>(3 points)</i>	

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Item	Score	Factor	Possible Points	Applicant's Page Reference
		preserve balanced natural ecosystems		
23		enhances economic development that relies on recreation and ecotourism in areas of relatively high unemployment	(3 points)	
24		Protects rare Ohio biological communities, such as prairies, bogs, fens or savannahs.	(2 points)	
25		one of the above checked items was previously adopted as a priority for District 16 (District 16 has adopted as its initial priority projects that protect habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species)	(2 points)	
Part II SCORE ▶		58 points Maximum		
Part III-- Required: The District 16 NRAC shall consider the following in approving or disapproving a grant:				
1. Percentage of Clean Ohio matching funds necessary to complete project:				ORC 164.24(A)(3)
		Clean Ohio = 75%	(required)	
		Clean Ohio = 74-69%	(2 points)	
		Clean Ohio = 68-63%	(4 points)	
		Clean Ohio = 62-57%	(6 points)	
		Clean Ohio = 56-51%	(8 points)	
		Clean Ohio = 50% or less	(10 points)	
2. Level of coordination: Coordination means project carries out goals of multiple agencies, organizations. A letter is required from each agency or organization explaining how project carries out their goal. (1 point potential for each category, 5 points maximum)				ORC 164.24(A)(4)
		local political subdivisions	(1 point)	
		state agencies	(1 point)	
		federal agencies	(1 point)	
		community organizations	(1 point)	
		conservation organizations	(1 point)	
3. Level of conservation coordination with other Open Space, Riparian Corridor, Trails, Farmland Protection or Urban Revitalization Projects under the Clean Ohio Fund in other Public Works Commission districts. <i>Documentation required supporting any award points.</i>				ORC 164.24(A)(5)
		is a joint project	(1 point)	
		carries out an adopted community, watershed or other plan overlapping another district	(2 points)	
4. Community benefits: <u>Relative</u> economic, social/recreational and environmental benefits the proposed project will bring to the geographical area represented by the NRAC <i>as compared to other projects.</i>				ORC 164.24(A)(6)
		economic	(1 point)	
		social/recreational	(1 point)	
		environmental	(1 point)	
5. Extent of public access once project is completed:				ORC 164.24(A)(8)
		open days and weekends	(15 points)	
		open limited, but regular hours or with restrictions on sensitive areas	(12 points)	

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Item	Score	Factor	Possible Points	Applicant's Page Reference
		open by appointment or with written permission	(1 point)	
6. Operation and Maintenance once project is completed:				
		operation plan and infrastructure, if appropriate, in place	(5 points)	
		operation plan, no infrastructure	(3 points)	
		limited operation plan, volunteers available, no infrastructure	(1 point)	
7. Project Management Experience of similar or related projects.				
		Applicant has successfully completed 1-2 similar project in the last 5 years	(1 point)	
Part III Score ▶		42 points maximum		
Part IV -- Other Factors: The NRAC may adopt additional criteria which reflects local priorities as long as the criteria compliment and does not negate Parts I-III which carry out ORC Sec. 164.20-164.27.				
1. Community Planning: Project is in concert with publicly adopted regional, community plan or watershed plan. <i>Documentation is required to support any award of points.</i>				
		project would be consistent with plan	(1 point)	
2. Regional Significance: What is the regional significance of the proposed project? <i>Documentation is required to support any award of points</i>				
		project will benefit a multi-county area Minimum documentation -letter from County Commissioners from two (2) counties	(2 points)	
		project will benefit primarily one county within the NRAC Minimum documentation -letter from County Commissioners	(1.5 points)	
		project benefits multiple local political subdivisions within one county Minimum documentation -letter from two (2) political subdivisions	(1 point)	
		project benefits single political subdivision within one county	(0.5 points)	
3. Natural Resource Viability: How important is the project to the viability of the natural resources affected by the project?				
		protects a globally endangered species or biological community,	(3 points)	
		protects more than 5 state Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) endangered species,	(2.5 points)	
4. Readiness to Proceed - Acquisition ORC 164.24(A)(10)				
		Contract with the owner and evidence from seller that closing will take place within 1 year,	(1 points)	
5. Readiness to Proceed – Open space related facilities construction				
		construction to begin in less than 1 year	(1 points)	
6. Other Project Factors				
		Land acquisition includes all mineral rights	(1 point)	
7. Other Project Factors				
		Project addresses a significant situation where action must be taken now or opportunity will be lost forever <i>Documentation</i>	(1 to 10 point)	

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Item	Score	Factor	Possible Points	Applicant's Page Reference
		<i>required to support any award of points.</i>		
8. Amount of NRAC Funding Requested:				ORC 164.24(A)(2)
		\$500,001 or more	0	
		\$400,001 - \$500,000	4	
		\$301,000 - \$400,000	8	
		\$201,000 - \$300,000	12	
		\$1 – \$200,000	16	
9. Other Factors Relative to Project				
		Applicant may attach a brief, concise narrative supporting the project for use by the District 16 NRAC members in assigning additional points for factors relevant to the project.	<i>(0 to 15 points)</i>	
<i>Rationale for # 9 points awarded ▶</i>				
Part IV Score ▶		50 point maximum		
<p>Minimum Total Project Scoring: Proposed projects must obtain an average minimal score from committee members of at least 75 points to be accepted and voted by the NRAC. A majority vote of committee members will be required to fund projects not meeting this criteria and will be contingent upon funding availability.</p>				
Scoring Summary				
Part II Score ▶		<i>Max 58</i>	Part IV Score ▶	
Part III Score ▶		<i>Max 42</i>	Total Score ▶	
				Ranking among all projects:

Reviewers Signature _____

Date _____