

Rhode Island Natural Heritage Preservation Commission Scoring Criteria for Open Space Grants

The Natural Heritage Preservation Commission and the Natural Heritage Preservation Commission Advisory Committee shall evaluate grant applications based on the following scoring criteria. (100 points total)

(A) HABITAT PROTECTION (25 points)

- 1. *Critical and/or Uncommon Habitat:*** The property supports critical and/or uncommon, ecologically fragile habitat, or is a unique ecological community in the state or region.

Habitat/Community Types considered:

Estuarine Intertidal Wetlands
Freshwater Tidal Marsh
Coastal Plain Pond and/or Pondshore
Open Peatland (Bogs and Fens)
Vernal Pools
Morainal Grasslands
Maritime/Inland Dune System
Pitch Pine/Scrub Oak Barrens
Calcareous Habitats (forests, outcrops, etc.)

- 2. *Common Community Type:*** The property is representative of typical ecological communities in Rhode Island. This criterion seeks to preserve high-quality examples of common communities that support productive and diverse biological systems.
- 3. *Habitat Diversity:*** The property includes managed open land that provides habitat supporting native animals/plants.
- 4. *Urban Habitat Protection:*** Property is located in an urban or densely developed area where the habitat, open space, and/or educational values are particularly significant or unique.

5. Rare/Endangered Species: The property supports or is capable of supporting rare/endangered species. The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program current lists of rare/endangered species are the references used under this criterion.

Descriptions of all Rhode Island ecological communities, and current lists of rare/endangered species, can be found at:
www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/bpoladm/plandev/heritage/index.htm

(B) GREENWAY OR REGIONAL LINKAGES (20 points)

1. Property is contiguous to other protected land.
2. Property is contiguous to a river/stream as defined in Section 2-1-20(j) of the Rhode Island Fresh Water Wetlands Act. As defined in this section - "a body of water designated as a perennial stream by the United States Department of Interior Geologic Survey on 7.5 minute series topographic maps."
3. Property provides public recreational opportunities.
4. Property connects urban community to protected lands or parks.
5. Other

The application must reference in detail the linkages that relate to the acquisition proposal. Up to 4 points may be awarded per category.

(C) PLANNING CONSISTENCY (20 points)

1. Acquisition is consistent with Local Comprehensive Plan.
2. Acquisition is consistent with a Local Open Space Plan.
3. Acquisition is consistent with a Regional or Watershed Plan.
4. Acquisition is identified in the Greenways/Greenspace Element of the State Guide Plan.

The application must reference in detail the elements of each plan that relate to the acquisition proposal. Up to 5 points may be awarded per plan reference.

(D) RESOURCE PROTECTION

(15 points)

1. Fisheries Resources:
 - a. Are there water bodies stocked for recreational fishing?
2. Forest Resources:
 - a. Has a Forest Stewardship Plan been prepared?
3. Agricultural Resources:
 - a. What is the agricultural acreage and type of crops produced?
4. Cultural, Geological, or Scenic Resources:
 - a. Is area identified by RI Statewide Preservation Commission?
5. Biological Resources.
 - a. Shellfish beds
 - b. Migratory bird stopover areas
 - c. Champion trees

This category represents the relationship and efficiency between the type of acquisition proposed and the value of the sustainable resource being protected. For example, the acquisition of a conservation easement on forest land may provide for a continued timber resource value and also protect the natural habitat and/or biological resource. Acquisition may also provide for protection of cultural or historical artifacts. Up to 15 points awarded.

(E) WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION

(15 points)

1. ***Public Water Supply or Groundwater Recharge Area.*** The land is identified on the Drinking Water Supply Map which is available at: www.state.ri.us/dem/maps/index.htm
Up to 10 points may be awarded based on the size of the property and percentage of land located within the watershed of the Public Water Supply or Groundwater Recharge Area.
2. ***Flood Protection.*** In coastal areas, the property is located within 1000 feet of a tidal water body, and is designated on Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as Special Flood Hazard Areas (V and A zones). Up to 5 points may be awarded.

(F) MULTI-COMMUNITY APPLICATION

(5 points)

The property to be acquired or preserved is located in 2 or more communities. The application for funding requires the consent of the governing boards for each agency listed.