

**ADF&G DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
HUNTER ACCESS PROGRAM
CRITERIA SUMMARY**

The following is a summary of the criteria used to evaluate and rank proposals submitted to Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Division of Wildlife Conservation for Pittman Robertson (P-R) Hunter Access Program funding.

Wildlife Restoration (P-R) funds will reimburse 75% of the cost of an eligible proposal and requires a 25% non-federal match. Entities submitting a proposal for funding consideration are required to provide the 25% non-federal match funds if selected for award. In conjunction with the match fund requirement, proposals are evaluated, scored, and ranked using the following criteria. Not all criteria are weighed equally. The categories below denoted with ** indicate those which are weighted more, i.e. greater importance.

CRITERIA CATEGORIES

- (1) PROPOSAL TYPE**
- (2) HUNTER AND TRAPPER INTEREST / SUPPORT****
- (3) OTHER WILDLIFE RECREATION INTEREST / SUPPORT**
- (4) OTHER PUBLIC / RECREATIONAL INTEREST**
- (5) COMMUNITY SUPPORT**
- (6) LEGAL ACCESS****
- (7) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M)****
- (8) PROXIMITY OF SIMILAR SITES**
- (9) COOPERATING ENTITY FEDERAL GRANT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES****
- (10) RESOURCE POTENTIAL AND USE**
- (11) ADF&G RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**
- (12) TRESPASS MITIGATION**
- (13) CONSTRUCTABILITY**
- (14) POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**
- (15) COORDINATION AND TIMING**
- (16) LEVEL OF DESIGN & ENGINEERING COMPLETED**
- (17) OTHER REGIONAL ACCESS PROJECTS COMPLETED / ONGOING**
- (18) LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE INTEREST / SUPPORT**

(1) PROPOSAL TYPE

There are basically two types of proposals – renovation or repair of an existing site and/or facilities, and construction of a new site and/or facilities. A renovation proposal may include upgrading/updating, replacement to maintain existing services (maintenance), addressing health, safety and security issues, ADA compliancy/barrier free accessibility, and savings in operation and maintenance (O&M) costs. A new construction proposal may relate to many of the same objectives considered for a renovation proposal.

(2) HUNTER AND TRAPPER INTEREST / SUPPORT**

As a “user pay / user benefit” program it is appropriate that hunter, trapper, and shooter interest and support is evaluated as the primary user group.

(3) OTHER WILDLIFE RECREATION INTEREST / SUPPORT

Similar to hunters/trappers/shooters, other wildlife recreational users benefit from P-R program funds. As a “user pay / user benefit” program, it is appropriate that interest and support from this user group is also evaluated.

(4) OTHER PUBLIC / RECREATIONAL INTEREST

This criterion evaluates potential conflicts that may occur between hunters, trappers, shooters, wildlife recreationalists, and other user groups during use of a public access site or facility. Other user group activities that could conflict with hunting and trapping include commercial, sport angler, or non-wildlife related recreational use.

(5) COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Proposals are evaluated for support from the local community and adjacent property owners. It is prudent to consider community concerns and develop support and/or address community issues prior to submitting a proposal. Per federal regulations, the ADF&G Hunter Access Program must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and public/community support is a large component of NEPA compliancy.

(6) LEGAL ACCESS**

This criterion identifies if current legal public access to the proposed project site (such as trail head, parking lot, trail, or facility) exists, or whether an easement or acquisition is required to ensure long-term public use of the proposed project.

(7) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M)**

This criterion rates the proposal relative to the commitment for long term maintenance and operation of the completed site. Preference is given to proposals that are self-supporting or will be operated and maintained by the cooperating entity (generally the landowner or land manager). It is extremely important that the cooperating entity is fully supportive and committed to long term maintenance of a proposal site or facility. Once the federal life of the completed project has been reached, generally ownership of the improvements is transferred to the cooperating entity, and therefore it makes sense for the cooperating entity to provide long term management and maintenance needs. Once an access site or facility is constructed/renovated federal regulations require that proper O&M of the facility occur for the duration of the project’s expected life, which is usually 10-20 years.

(8) PROXIMITY OF SIMILAR SITES

The interest of hunters, trappers, and shooters is best served by pursuing proposals that help disperse user pressure. This criterion evaluates the distance of the proposed site to similar existing facilities. Preference is given to proposals that are isolated from similar existing facilities. Access sites and facilities are rated based on the number of miles from the nearest community to the nearest site and ease of accessibility.

(9) COOPERATING ENTITY FEDERAL GRANT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES**

This criterion evaluates the capability of the cooperating entity's management systems, internal controls, and federal grant management skills and experience. All funded proposals are cooperative ventures with ADF&G and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The cooperating entity is generally the landowner or land manager and must be eligible to receive federal funds.

(10) RESOURCE POTENTIAL AND USE

Regardless of how limited access to a resource may be, improved access is not justified if the resource will be negatively impacted. The opposite can also be true, improved access may help resolve a problem by dispersing user pressure. Preference is given to proposals that increase utilization of under-utilized wildlife populations.

(11) ADF&G RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The typical hunter access program proposal should have little effect on biological resource management, but in some cases management biologists can use a hunter access project as a tool. In some rare instances, a hunter access project may put pressure on a wildlife population that little is known about. This criterion gives a preference to projects that have a positive effect on wildlife management.

(12) TRESPASS MITIGATION

One indicator of inadequate access to a hunting or trapping area is trespass on private land. Trespass can lead to conflicts between the public, private landowners, and supporting entities that result in negative feelings on all sides. In some rare cases, a hunter access proposal can cause a trespass problem. This criterion gives preference to proposals that eliminate or mitigate trespass problems.

(13) CONSTRUCTABILITY

This criterion evaluates the ability of the proposal to provide safe and functional improvements. Physical or geographical limitations of the proposed project site may prevent construction of a safe and barrier free facility that meets accepted specifications (such as sustainable trail design guidelines, ADA accessibility guidelines, etc). A higher preference is given to proposals that provide safe and functional improvements.

(14) POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

All proposals must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which is required by federal regulation. Wildlife and social access trails in Alaska are often associated with wetland habitats. In general, the more adverse effects a proposal has on the human and physical environment (such as wetlands), the more difficult it will be for a proposal to obtain NEPA approval. In many cases, a proposal can mitigate adverse effects that are occurring through existing use. This criterion evaluates the level of difficulty to obtain NEPA approval.

(15) COORDINATION AND TIMING

Sometimes there are advantages or disadvantages related to coordination and timing of a proposal. If possible, it is desirable to coordinate construction of a proposed project as part of a larger project (such as highway re-surfacing) in order to decrease mobilization, demobilization, or material costs. At more remote communities, it may be better to wait until needed equipment or construction materials are available. In other instances, it may be wise to delay funding a proposal until other activities in the area have ceased. This criterion evaluates proposal cost in relation to proposal coordination and timing.

(16) LEVEL OF DESIGN AND ENGINEERING COMPLETED

It is advantageous, but not required, to have completed a higher level of engineering work before submitting a proposal for funding. This not only provides the proposing entity a realistic cost estimate, but can also identify engineering, permitting, and/or NEPA environmental compliance issues as well as help streamline the proposal timeline for completion. This criterion gives a preference to projects that have already completed some level of engineering design.

(17) OTHER REGIONAL ACCESS PROJECTS COMPLETED / ONGOING

The purpose of this criterion is to monitor how P-R monies are distributed throughout each of the [five ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation management regions within Alaska](#). This is to ensure that P-R funds are dispersed among ALL constituents. Most of Alaska's population is in or around the major cities and entities in these locations are likely to submit the most proposals due to the higher proportion of organized user groups. However, even though rural areas contain a much smaller proportion of the population, they are more likely to rely on state resources for subsistence purposes and may have fewer organized user groups who submit proposals. This criterion evaluates the location of a proposal in relation to other P-R funded proposals that have been completed or are ongoing.

(18) LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE INTEREST / SUPPORT

The local advisory committee generally has first-hand knowledge of the access situation for hunters, trappers, and other wildlife recreation users within an area. They may be aware of potential conflicts, if any, from adjacent landowners or communities and/or other user groups. Proposals are evaluated for support from the local advisory committee.