

Criteria for Selection of Payment in Lieu (PIL) Projects

PIL projects must be for the primary purpose of producing an increase in wetland functions and or acreage. Options include restoration of diked, drained or filled former wetlands, creation of new wetlands and/or enhancement of existing degraded wetlands¹. Acquisition of land or easements is possible using these funds, but wetland improvements must be part of the package. Project sites must be protected from adverse future land uses with a permanent conservation easement or equivalent mechanism².

The following criteria will be used to evaluate PIL projects for funding.

- 1) **Likelihood of success:** Funded projects must demonstrate a high likelihood of success through a sound wetland restoration, creation and/or enhancement concept. The water source for the site should be reliable. Threats from invasive species or vandalism should be low or manageable. The project will be evaluated for its ability to result in successful and sustainable net gain of wetland acreage and/or function, with limited maintenance.
- 2) **Multiple objectives:** The project will be evaluated for its ability to address multiple functions such as improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, support for rare species, flood attenuation, water quality improvement, and recreation or education values. The project should target native plant community diversity and natural processes. Greater functional gains will be given more preference.
- 3) **Supports regional conservation initiatives and is compatible with the surrounding landscape:** Projects should be located where they pose minimal conflicts with adjacent land uses and where they meet regional conservation priorities, address limiting factors identified in watershed assessments, provide habitat corridors, and/or add to the effectiveness of nearby protected natural areas.
- 4) **Capacity of the applicant and the project team:** The applicant must demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity and expertise to manage the project. The project team must have the necessary expertise and capacity to carry out pre-implementation planning, restoration construction, follow-up monitoring and remediation of project problems.
- 5) **Fund leveraging and project costs:** Collaborative funding from multiple sources is encouraged, but not necessary. The project budget should identify all sources of funding and in-kind services, and itemized list of components to be funded including planning, implementation, monitoring and accounting. Projects with a high wetland functional gain per dollar will be given preference.
- 6) **Long-term management:** Suitable projects must have a plan for long-term management and stewardship. Long-term stewardship could be provided by a non-profit conservation organization, local government or other interested constituency.

¹ "Degraded Wetland" refers to a wetland that has been hydrologically manipulated (ie, diked, drained or filled) interfering with the normal functioning of wetland processes.

² Equivalent mechanisms may include things such as programmatic restrictions on use of properties for publicly owned properties or properties owned by conservation organizations.