

Project Scoring Sheet – Caves and Subterranean

Version 1.1

Notes

- This is a static document intended for reference only. It includes information the Reviewer sees while scoring an application.
- Questions relating directly to requirements are indicated with a red asterisk*.
- Checkmarks help reviewers focus in on key components of the scoring.
- The results of individual project reviews are available at the top of each project's page in the [Conservation Certification Website](#).
- Information about other aspects of evaluations (e.g. methodology used for scoring) is available in the [Certification Support Center](#).

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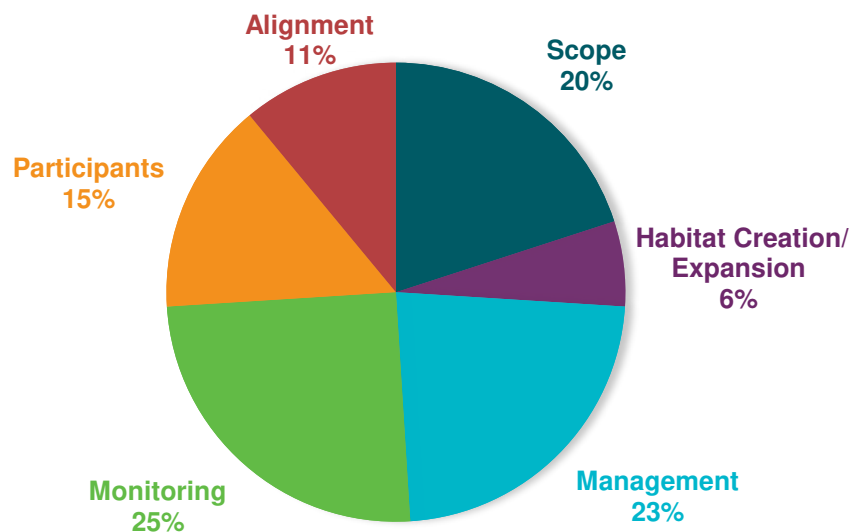
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Overview

Percentage of points achievable per section



*** Does the project exceed regulatory requirements?**

If the applicant answered that no aspects of the project are done in relation to regulatory requirements, select N/A. If they answered that it was done in relation to regulatory requirements, select Yes or No depending on if it exceeds requirements.

- N/A
- No
- Yes

*** What is the total size of the project (in acres)? | Up to 4 points**

0 = Not large enough to function as a habitat or be considered as a habitat

Score = Number of acres greater than zero (an entry with partial acres is acceptable) | Points earned = score/100

*** How long has the project been on the ground? | Up to 4 points**

0 = Project started less than 1 year ago (not long enough to have a measurable conservation outcome)

Score = Number of years | Points earned = score/10

*** Is the project locally appropriate by targeting a native Caves & Subterranean community? | Up to 12 points**

Because vegetation may play a reduced (or absent) role in cave & subterranean habitats, a native community may include either a native plant or animal community, or both. Animal species can be appropriate indicators of habitat health, serving as proxy indicators of extent and diversity of native species.

✓ Inventory has a date

✓ Inventory date is recent

0 - Not targeting a native cave community (<50% of the plant/animal species listed are native)

1 - Targeting a native cave community (≥50% of the plant/animal species listed are native) |

12 pts

*** Is there a stated conservation objective?**

✓ Applicant understanding

- No
- Yes

Habitat Creation/Expansion | 6% of points achievable

Is this a new project or has the project been expanded?

- Yes
- No

Does the newly created habitat add conservation value relative to the previous land use?

Replacing a previous land use of greater or lesser habitat value. | Up to 2.1 points

Use of the term "newly created" is used in its broadest sense, meaning to replace or otherwise improve.

✓ Applicant understanding

N/A - the project was started prior to their last certification and no additional acreage was added

0 - Does not replace a less valuable land use

1 - Replaces a land use that had some habitat value (e.g., mine shaft that was used by some non-cave-dependent wildlife) | 1.05 pts

2 - Replaces a land use that did not have any habitat value (e.g., completely blocked off mine shaft, adit, or tunnel) | 2.1 pts

Were appropriate design considerations taken into account for new additions to the project (not included in a previous application)? | Up to 2.1 points

New addition = not included in a previous application (e.g. new plantings or structures such as snags or brush piles).

✓ Applicant understanding

✓ Documentation

N/A - the project was started prior to their last certification and no additional acreage was added

0 - Harmful or no design considerations for the habitat or wildlife (e.g. planting invasive species, planting in an inappropriate area, too small an area to be considered habitat)

1 - Good design consideration(s) but with some flaw(s) (e.g. planting native and non-native species) including a diversity of native plant species. | 1.47 pts

2 - All design considerations are valid and valuable (e.g. planting 100% native with a diversity of plant species suitable for the soil and location). | 2.1 pts

Is a new area being managed?

- Yes
- No

What is the size of the new area managed? | Up to 1.8 points

0 = Not large enough to function as a habitat or be considered as a habitat

Score = Number of acres greater than of zero (an entry with partial acres is acceptable) |

Points earned = score/100

Management | 23% of points achievable

How valuable are the steps taken for maintenance and management of the habitat? | Up to 11.5 points

✓ Applicant understanding (see monitoring section)

✓ Documentation

0 - nothing, not actively managed (just monitored)

1 - managed utilizing techniques appropriate for the local natural community | 6.9 pts

2 - managed utilizing techniques appropriate for the local natural community AND either managed in accordance with conservation objectives OR managed adaptively (utilizing monitoring information to guide practices) | 9.2 pts

3 - managed utilizing techniques appropriate for the local natural community, managed in accordance with conservation objectives AND managed adaptively (utilizing monitoring information to guide practices) | 11.5 pts

To what level has action been taken to limit access and disturbance? | Up to 11.5 points

0 - Public access is allowed, and no actions to minimize disturbance

1 - Public access is allowed, and some actions taken to minimize disturbance | 2.3 pts

2 - Public access is allowed, and limited to human carrying capacity OR no public access is allowed OR other actions taken to significantly minimize disturbance | 9.2 pts

3 - No public access is allowed AND other actions are taken to minimize disturbance | 11.5 pts

Monitoring | 25% of points achievable

Does the project include project-relevant baseline documentation? | Up to 3.75 points

✓ Applicant understanding

✓ Documentation is relevant

0 - No baseline

1 - Mid-project baseline collected (collected after on the ground activities started) | 1.875 pts

2 - Initial baseline data collected (collected before the start of the project) | 2.8125 pts

3 - Initial and new baseline data collected (collected prior to the addition of new habitat areas/features) | 3.75 pts

Does the project include a relevant, scientifically rigorous monitoring protocol? | Up to 6.25 points

Relevant = Monitoring that would inform assessment of habitat.

✓ Applicant understanding

✓ Includes methodology/procedure, timing and frequency

0 - No monitoring plan or protocol. Or, monitoring protocol is not relevant

1 - Monitoring protocol that is relevant but not scientifically rigorous (i.e. may not fully protect against bias) | 3.75 pts

2 - Monitoring protocol that is both relevant and scientifically rigorous | 6.25 pts

*** To what level is monitoring implemented? | Up to 8.75 points**

Adequate monitoring = providing data that can be compared over time to assess whatever is being monitored.

Initial programs ✓ Documentation is from at least the past year

Renewal programs ✓ Documentation includes each year since last applied up to date applied

0 - No monitoring or inadequate/irrelevant monitoring (monitoring that is not directly tied to the habitat such as wildlife observed on site not specifically noted as occurring in the habitat)

1 - At least annual adequate monitoring not of the vegetation directly but of associated factors (such as wildlife observed in the habitat) | 2.625 pts

2 - Adequate monitoring of vegetation or structural integrity at least annually | 6.125 pts

3 - Adequate monitoring of vegetation or structural integrity at least annually AND adequate monitoring of at least 1 additional aspect (e.g., wildlife use) | 8.75 pts

Is monitoring data evaluated? | Up to 6.25 points

An evaluation of monitoring data involves examining how successful the project was in achieving desired outcomes and reviewing if changes need to be made to the project. Examples of evaluation of monitoring data include: assessing whether plantings successfully established, and if not, determining what changes can be made to improve the success of future plantings.

0 - No evaluation provided (or nonsensical/irrelevant)

1 - Evaluation provided (does not consider how correct the evaluation is) | 3.125 pts

2 - Use results of evaluation to create next steps for the project | 6.25 pts

Participants | 15% of points achievable

Do employees actively contribute to the project?

Yes

No

How many employee hours were spent on project specific activities each year? | Up to 3.5 points

Hours are calculated as: all planning + all implementation / # years of cert term with full data

0 = No employee hours

Score = Average number of employee hours/year over the course of the certification term (an entry with partial hours is acceptable) | Points earned = score/100

What was the depth of employee engagement in the project? | Up to 3.5 points

This criterion does not take into account the number of employees engaged.

0 - No employee participation

1 - One-off/ single event or irregular involvement of employees | 0.7 pts

2 - Regular involvement of employees in implementation OR development or long-term planning | 2.45 pts

3 - Regular involvement of employees in implementation AND development or long-term planning | 3.5 pts

Do any groups or partners actively contribute to the project?

Yes

No

How many partner hours were spent on project specific activities each year? | Up to 2.8 points

Hours are calculated as: all planning + all implementation / # Years of cert term with full data

0 = No partner hours

Score = Average number of partner hours/year over the course of the certification term (an entry with partial hours is acceptable) | **Points earned = score/50**

What was the depth of partner engagement in the project? | Up to 2.8 points

This criterion does not consider the number of partners engaged.

0 - No partner participation

1 - One-off/ single event or irregular involvement of partners | **0.56 pts**

2 - Regular involvement of partners in implementation OR development or long-term planning | **1.96 pts**

3 - Regular involvement of partners in implementation AND development or long-term planning | **2.8 pts**

What was the level of technical advice used in the project? | Up to 2.4 points

✓ Applicant understanding

0 - No technical advice

1 - Technical advice sought (from partner or other resources) | **0.72 pts**

2 - Demonstrated implementation of technical advice | **1.68 pts**

3 - Ongoing regular use of technical advice (at least once per year) | **2.4 pts**

Alignment | 11% of points achievable

Is the project designed to connect to Caves & Subterranean habitat on nearby property? | Up to 5 points

✓ Applicant understanding

✓ Connecting habitat is off-site

0 - No

1 - Connects to adjacent properties' Caves & Subterranean | **3.75 pts**

2 - Coordinated management of the Caves & Subterranean with adjacent properties | **5 pts**

Does the project tie to a corporate level commitment to Caves & Subterranean? | Up to 1.2 points

General corporate commitments to the environment, biodiversity, or education are not recognized.

✓ Specific to project type

0 - No

1 - Yes | **1.2 pts**

Does the project align with a large-scale conservation initiative? | Up to 3.9 points

✓ Applicant understanding

0 - No stated alignment with an established initiative

1 - Alignment with a general plan (not Caves & Subterranean specific), or an initiative (without a specific plan). Example of both types: State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), migratory pathway | 1.95 pts

2 - Managed in accordance with an established Caves & Subterranean specific plan | 3.9 pts

Does the project demonstrate success through a third-party Caves & Subterranean certification that meets WHC criteria? | Up to 0.9 points

0 - No

1 - Yes (one or more) | 0.9 pts