

Evaluation Process for Payment in Lieu (PIL) Projects

Introduction

This document provides a brief description of the process for approving projects for funding under the PIL program. The process was designed to allow applicants to submit *existing* information first and more detailed information after DSL has indicated an interest in funding the project. The following paragraphs describe the process the five steps for processing request for funding PIL projects.

Step 1: The proposal

Applicants must apply for funds by submitting a proposal. The proposal can either be prepared according to the list in the *Proposal Requirements for PIL Projects* or applicants may submit a grant application from another funding entity. If submitting a grant application from another grant program, the application must contain the information listed in *Proposal Requirements for PIL Projects*.

The proposal should contain basic information about the project including location, applicant and landowner information, the project plan in general terms, and estimated increase in wetland functions. The level of detail required in the proposal is dependent on the complexity of the project. There must be sufficient information to allow staff to determine if the project is likely to meet the *Criteria for Selection of PIL Projects*.

Note that approved wetland delineations, functional assessments and detailed PIL project plans are not required at the proposal stage. Some of these deliverables are part of pre-implementation and costs for producing these may be eligible for reimbursement, if the project is approved for funding.

Step 2: Initial screening and determination of likelihood of funding

The initial screening will be conducted by DSL staff and is based on the review of the project proposal. A site visit may be conducted if the project appears to meet the selection criteria. At this stage, staff may contact the applicant or other resource agency staff for additional information about the project. Staff will review the project against the *Criteria for Selection of PIL Projects* and make a determination of whether or not the project is a likely candidate for funding within 60 days of submittal, unless additional information is required to make the determination. If a project is not eligible or not likely to be funded, an explanation will be provided to the applicant.

Step 3: Preparation of the PIL project plan

If it is determined that the project is a likely candidate for funding, the applicant will be notified and asked to provide a PIL project plan according to the *PIL Project Plan Checklist*.

Step 4: Submission and review of the PIL project plan

Upon receipt of the PIL project plan, the proposal and PIL project plan, along with a staff summary will be forwarded to the project review team for further evaluation. The project review team will evaluate the proposal and PIL project plan according to the same *Criteria for Selection of PIL projects* used in the initial screening of the project. The review team will make one of the following overall recommendations:

- Fund the project
- Do not fund the project
- Additional information is required to make a recommendation

If additional information is requested by the project review team staff will work with the applicant to obtain the information. The information will be forwarded to the project review team for subsequent review.

Step 5: Final decision: DSL staff will synthesize the following into a Wetlands and Waterways Conservation Division staff recommendation to the Director, who will make the funding decision.

- 1) Likelihood of success of the project in creating, restoring and/or enhancing wetlands
- 2) The ability of the project to meet multiple objectives
- 3) The ability of the project to support regional conservation initiatives and its compatibility with the surrounding landscape
- 4) The capacity of the applicant and the project team
- 5) The project costs and ability to leverage other funds
- 6) The financial and legal terms of the project
- 7) Long-term management of the site
- 8) The overall recommendation of the project review team