Response to comments following Functional Scoresheet training 8/21/18

Planning Evaluation

Q: *When will TRAs be available? Will that be a shapefile? Or just on the web-based planning tool?*

A: Targeted Resource Areas (TRAs) are not yet available and there is no set timeline to distribute for any basin. Once approved TRAs will be available for download and for viewing in our web-application. The current scoresheet was developed with consideration for implementing TRAs as well as the flexibility to accept projects outside of our targeted areas. Authorization to incentivize TRAs is pending. **Until further notice:**
NCDMS will continue to utilize Targeted Local Watersheds (TLWs).
Stream and/or Wetland proposals are required to be within TLWs
Buffer and/or Nutrient proposals are incentivized to be within TLWs.
Because stream and/or wetland projects are required to be within TLWs, the TRA portion of the scoresheet will be temporarily removed.

Q: *Are the TRAs identified in the Neuse 01 LWP going to remain as TRAs going forward?*

A: There are no TRAs within the Neuse 01 LWP. The TRAs identified as part of the 2015 Neuse 01 CU Update will continue to be used as targets in the near future. A map identifying targeted areas will accompany each RFP.

Function Evaluation

Q: *How will culverts be scored? As percent of project length that is in a culvert?*

A: It depends. The question that needs to be answered is "how much better is the project because you addressed the issue". If a single undersized culvert was at the bottom of a project creating a hydrologic restriction for reaches above it would be viewed more favorably. Repairing and replacing multiple appropriately sized culverts as part of general construction would likely warrant no additional functional points.

Q: *Can DMS recommend nutrient estimation tools?*

A: We have some tools linked within the 'Project Templates and Guidance' on the DMS website OR the provider can use something peer-reviewed and justify in proposal calculations within the proposal.

Q: *If a site had 20 ft of mature buffer and cattle, would restoration to 50 ft & fencing out cattle get a high?*

A: It would depend on stressor magnitude & location.

Q: *How is habitat fragmentation different from barriers in hydrology?*

A: This differs based on where barriers are in watershed and the attributes of each barrier. For example, an appropriately sized, but perched culvert constitutes habitat fragmentation but not hydrologic barrier. Conversely an undersized culvert appropriately installed constitutes a hydro barrier, but not habitat fragmentation. You can potentially "double dip" here, if a barrier is a stressor for both functions then it can receive points for addressing both issues.

Q: *What is the definition of LWD?*

Q: *Is LWD strictly in the stream? What about the floodplain? Wood in FP can mobilize?*

A: LWD is scale dependent. DMS does not consider it LWD just because it is on the floodplain, only immediately adjacent to the stream. The proposal must define how engineered woody structures benefit stream and wetland function to be considered.

Q: *Does the scoresheet work for non-riparian wetland?*

A: Yes; you might not check all the boxes.

Adjusted Risk Factor

Q: *E1 can be riskier than restoration – should it be on the same level as E2 in the risk section?*

A: It varies by project. We are trying to reward E sites with high uplift potential; the old scoresheet was R-heavy (based on existing conditions) – the only way we could take E sites before was if they were the lowest cost.

Q: *Are we ignoring preservation in the risk equation?*

A: Yes, because it's capped at 10%; this may change.

Q: *Does this eliminate the minimum amount of preservation/restoration requirements?*

A: No, those are RFP-specific & IRT-mandated.

Q: *Should adjusted risk factor equation be based on credits, not feet?*

A: Credits are not considered in technical section (section 1); they are accounted for in section 3 (% of proposal). Risk is related to level of intervention at a project scale.

General Section

Q: *Do internal crossings count against you as much as external easement breaks?*

Q: *Will the width of a crossing matter? I.e., will narrower crossing score better than the same number of wider crossings?*

A: The tool used to calculate the 'Easement Continuity' can be found on the DMS Contracting Forms and Templates page. Internal crossings would not negatively affect the score. The width of an easement break does not negatively affect the score as much as the fact a break exists. A narrower break will minimally improve the score. The intent of this scoring metric is to minimize the number of easement breaks and the complexity of easement boundary. Elimination of a single easement break or narrowing all crossings will likely not affect your project enough to change the points awarded. Refining the easement boundary to remove extraneous bends is more likely to improve the score.

Q: *Project density is currently limited to DMS projects; does the Corps have a DB of all mitigation projects.*

A: It doesn't work reliably. We could expand to include other protected areas with a functional consolidated data set that is reliable.

Q: *Do providers need to do their own calculations in the General Section?*

A: Not required but it is recommended.

Other

Q: *Preservation was not discussed and R and RE terminology is no longer used. Is DMS purposefully discouraging preservation?*

A: Based upon guidance from the IRT, NCDMS generally requires that stream projects consist of no more than 10% preservation credit. NCDMS intent of shifting to a function based scoresheet is to more closely comport with the 2008 Federal Rule. Preservation inherently delivers less functional improvement to onsite conditions; however, it may augment other practices to produce a better mitigation project.

Q: *Does DMS currently consider provider self-scores?*

A: We do look at them and try to go back to the proposal for evidence. We also use scores to prompt on-site discussion.