the preparation of recommendations in order to fully execute its obligations as described in § 10005.8. The following information will be requested of applicants:

(a) An abstract of the proposed project,

(b) Information on the applicant, including the name of the person preparing the recommendation, the official authorizing the recommendation, and partners to the application, if any,

(c) The location of the proposed project,

(d) The overall goal for the project and the specific fish, wildlife, or recreation objective(s) that the project's proponent seeks to achieve,

(e) The relationship, if any, of the proposed project to Federal reclamation mitigation and, especially, to measures delineated in Title II, Section 304, or Section 315,

(f) A description of the project, including tasks to be undertaken, products to be produced, and the expected results,

(g) A proposed budget, including, where applicable, a description of contributions to be provided by project implementors or other sources,

(h) A proposed time schedule,

(i) The identification of the entity (ies) to be involved with the project (project implementation and post-project operation and management), including their qualifications for undertaking this type of work,

(j) A description of any consultation with landowners, agencies, or other affected entities, to include documentation where appropriate,

(k) An evaluation of the project in relationship to the Commission's first five decision factors identified in § 10005.19,

(l) An evaluation of the anticipated need for NEPA documentation and compliance with the ESA, the Clean Water Act, and other applicable environmental laws, and

(m) At the option of the applicant, other information that might assist the Commission in evaluating the recommendation.

§ 10005.19 Decision factors.

This section identifies the principle decision factors that the Commission will use to evaluate the relative merit of proposed projects and the way that the Commission will apply these decision factors. The Commission has selected six general decision factors that will be used to evaluate the relative priority of proposed projects. ''Standards'' related to each decision factor provide a means for measuring the extent to which each proposed project responds to the decision factors. The Commission's decision factors and standards are as follows:

(a) *Decision Factor 1: Benefits to fish, wildlife, and recreation resources.* The following three standards apply:

(1) *Biological integrity*. Projects will contribute to the productivity, integrity, and diversity of fish and wildlife resources within the State of Utah. To meet the Biological Integrity standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Protect, restore, or enhance the ecological functions, values, and integrity of natural ecosystems supporting fish and wildlife resources,

(ii) Provide conservation benefits to both species and their habitats,

(iii) Provide benefits to multiple species,

(iv) Promote biodiversity and/or genetic conservation,

(v) Aid long-term survival/recovery of species, or groups of species, that are of special concern, including:

(A) Species on the Federal List of Endangered or Threatened Wildlife and Plants,

(B) Federal category 1 or 2 candidates for listing,

(C) Species identified by the UDWR as wildlife species of special concern,

(D) UDWR Natural Heritage Program G1 and G2 plant and animal species,

(E) On lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management, species of special concern as recognized by the appropriate agency, and

(F) the sensitive species conservation list developed by the Utah Interagency Conservation Committee,

(vi) Provide protection to important aquatic, riparian, or upland habitats, especially those that are either critical to a sensitive indigenous species or useful to a variety of species over a

range of environmental conditions, and/or

(vii) Restore self-sustaining, naturally functioning aquatic or riparian systems, especially through the use of natural recovery methods.

(2) *Recreation opportunities.* Projects with recreation objectives will provide opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation experiences for the general public that are compatible with, and support, the conservation of biological resources and natural systems. To meet the Recreation Opportunities standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Create opportunities for the public to enjoy fish, wildlife, and native plants in their natural habitats,

(ii) Provide permanent access to aquatic areas for recreation purposes,

(iii) Create opportunities for walking or bicycling that complement protection and restoration of riparian and aquatic corridors,

(iv) Create opportunities for fishing, boating, and other water-based recreation activities that complement protection and restoration of aquatic areas,

(v) Provide outdoor recreation opportunities that are lacking within the watershed or State,

(vi) Provide outdoor recreation opportunities near to or accessible by urban populations,

(vii) Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for people who are physically challenged or economically disadvantaged,

(viii) Provide opportunities for environmental education and interpretation, and/or

(ix) Do not cause a disruption to the natural environment that will, itself, require mitigation.

(3) *Scientific Foundation.* Projects will be based on and supported by the best available scientific knowledge. To meet the Scientific Foundation standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Include specific and sound biological objectives,

(ii) Be supported by appropriate population and/or habitat inventories or other scientific documentation,

(iii) Provide tangible results and, to the extent possible, measurable benefits to species, habitats, and/or recreation opportunities,

(iv) Involve accepted techniques that have been demonstrated to produce significant results, or, alternatively, innovative techniques that hold promise for resolving significant issues and that might serve as models for other initiatives,

(v) Make a significant contribution to the scientific knowledge concerning ecosystem protection and restoration, and/or

(vi) Be recognized as scientifically valid by the American Fisheries Society, the Wildlife Society, or other applicable professional scientific organization.

(b) *Decision Factor 2: Fiscal responsibility*. The following three standards apply:

(1) *Fiscal accountability.* Projects will provide a substantial return on the public's investment. To meet the Fiscal Accountability standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Provide significant benefit at reasonable cost,

(ii) Where alternatives exist, utilize the least cost alternative that fully meets objectives,

(iii) Continue to provide value over the long term, and/or

(iv) Encourage and facilitate economic efficiency among agencies.

(2) *Shared funding.* While not an absolute requirement, projects should, when practical, be funded through cost sharing with project participants or involve other contributions. To meet the Shared Funding standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Have guaranteed partial funding from other sources,

(ii) Have a high potential for leveraging additional funding by others in the future,

(iii) Be coupled with other ongoing or proposed projects that have compatible objectives and secured non-Commission funding, and/or

(iv) Involve significant in-kind contributions by the applicant and participating agencies or organizations.

(3) *Protection of investment.* Successful implementation of projects over time

will be ensured. To meet the Protection of Investment standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Result in permanent, as opposed to temporary, protection to fish and/or wildlife habitats,

(ii) Have low maintenance cost and/or be self sustaining over the long term,

(iii) Have clearly assigned operations and management responsibilities and assurances of long term support on the part of implementors,

(iv) For those projects likely to require substantial operations and management expenditures, have in place a realistic strategy for obtaining the necessary funds, including, where applicable, a commitment by the applicable agency(ies) to seek necessary appropriations,

(v) Contain guarantees on the part of the applicable landowner(s) or manager(s) that incompatible land uses will not be allowed, and/or

(vi) Have a high probability that action will not be negated by other activities outside of the control of the land owner/manager.

(c) *Decision Factor 3: Agency and public involvement and commitment.* The following three standards apply:

(1) *Partnerships.* Projects should, when practical, involve a partnership among Federal and State agencies, local governments, private organizations, and/or landowners or other citizens. To meet the Partnerships standard, projects should accomplish one or more of the following:

(i) Span multiple jurisdictions or otherwise require, or benefit from, inter-organizational cooperation and involvement,

(ii) Have been proposed through a cooperative effort among two or more agencies, governments, and/or private entities, each having a stake in the outcome and/or possessing complementary expertise, and/or

(iii) Encourage, or facilitate, the establishment of complementary management plans and programs among land and resource managers.

(2) *Authority and capability.* The entities charged with undertaking and, after completion, managing each project must have the authority to be involved in the proposed activity and possess the administrative, financial, technical, and logistical capability necessary for successful implementation. To meet the Authority and Capability standard, projects should:

(i) Be supported by documented evidence that the entities involved have previously undertaken similar work successfully, and/or

(ii) Be supported by fully developed implementation plans.

(3) *Public support.* Projects should, wherever possible, enjoy broad support within the natural resource community, and/or with the public at-large. To meet the Public Support standard, projects should:

(i) Build upon previous compatible efforts that have undergone public involvement and are widely supported,

(ii) Be supported by implementation plans that have previously been subjected to peer and/or public review,

(iii) Have documented support from affected interests, and/or

(iv) Have a high probability that agency and public support will be sustained into the future. This is especially important for multi-year projects and projects that are part of a larger, long-term initiative.

(d) *Decision factor 4: Consistency with laws and programs.* The following two standards apply:

(1) *Laws and tribal rights.* Projects will be consistent with the legal rights of Indian tribes and with applicable State and Federal laws.

(2) *Complementary activities.* Projects will complement the policies, plans, and management activities of Federal and State resource management agencies and appropriate Indian tribes. To meet the Complementary Activities standard, projects should:

(i) Complement, or contribute to, established, documented fish and wildlife protection and/or restoration programs,

(ii) Be a component of, or support, a recognized ecosystem or watershed planning initiative where protection or restoration of fish, wildlife, or recreation is a primary goal, and/or

(iii) For projects involving Federal or state lands, be consistent with, and supported by, an adopted management plan.

(e) *Decision Factor 5: Other contributions.* The following two standards apply:

(1) *Public benefits.* Projects will, wherever practicable, provide benefits in addition to those provided to fish, wildlife, and recreation. To meet the Public Benefits standard, projects should:

(i) To the extent that this is compatible with the primary objective of protecting or restoring fish, wildlife, or outdoor recreation, provide opportunities for multiple use of resources,

(ii) Provide benefits to aspects of the environment beyond fish, wildlife, and recreation,

(iii) Not result in unacceptable impacts to other aspects of the environment, and/or

(iv) Contribute to the social and/or economic well-being of the community, the region, and/or the State.

(2) *Unmet needs.* Projects will satisfy significant needs that would not otherwise be met. To meet the Unmet Needs standard, projects should:

(i) Address significant fish, wildlife, or recreation needs that are unable to secure adequate funding from other sources,

(ii) Not duplicate actions already taken or underway, and/or

(iii) Not substitute for actions that are the responsibility of another agency and that must be implemented regardless of Commission involvement. This is not meant to restrict the Commission's ability to be involved in projects advanced by land management or other agencies that, while within the general responsibility of the agency, cannot be implemented because of internal funding limitations.

(f) *Decision Factor 6: Compatibility with the Commission's overall program.* This decision factor is relevant to the overall project portfolio rather than to individual projects. The following five standards apply:

(1) *Commission obligations.* Taken as a whole, the project portfolio must help fulfill the Commission's obligations for mitigation of Federal reclamation projects as described in § 10005.8.

(2) *Project mix.* The Commission's portfolio should provide an appropriate mix of projects in terms of project type, geographical distribution, and other appropriate factors. While the Commission desires to implement a broad range of projects, and to have an effect throughout the State, this alone will not determine the Commission's mix of projects. Among the factors that the Commission will consider when selecting projects are the following:

(i) The Commission will consider concentrating projects in one watershed or basin if these projects are ecologically connected and are likely to result in a significant cumulative effect on fish, wildlife, and/or recreation that could not otherwise be realized.

(ii) The Commission will consider implementing a major, high cost project—as opposed to several smaller projects with the same total cost—if that project is likely to produce net cumulative benefits to fish, wildlife, and/or recreation that exceed those of the smaller projects.

(iii) The Commission will consider small projects that appear unconnected to other Commission activities if these can serve to demonstrate the viability of a certain type of protection and restoration project, or to establish the groundwork for additional fish, wildlife, and recreation initiatives.

(3) *Timing.* Projects should address needs that are time sensitive. To meet the Timing standard, projects should:

(i) Target immediate, high priority needs,

(ii) Target opportunities that are of limited duration,

(iii) Preempt future crises, and/or

(iv) Be consistent with identified ''critical paths'' or other logical, multiple-year project phasing plans.

(4) *Project completion.* Ongoing projects that are making satisfactory progress will generally be approved for continued funding prior to allocating funds for new projects.

(5) *Budget.* The total cost of proposed projects for any given fiscal year must not exceed the Commission's anticipated budget allocation for that year. When the total cost of qualified projects exceeds funding capability, the Commission will re-evaluate all qualified projects and identify those that, in combination, produce the most meaningful results. High cost projects will be subjected to particular scrutiny and may be scaled back, phased over

multiple years, or deferred if doing otherwise would preclude other worthwhile but lower cost projects.

§ 10005.20 Project evaluation procedures.

Projects proposed for inclusion in the plan will be subjected to a systematic evaluation using the decision factors delineated in § 10005.19. The Commission may, at any time in the project evaluation process, contact applicants to ask for clarification, to propose modifications, or to otherwise cause the formulation of project proposals that are in keeping with the Commission's authority and mission. The result of the evaluation will be a preliminary list of eligible projects, arrayed by year over the term of the plan. The evaluation will adhere to the following process:

(a) Each project will be arrayed according to location (by watershed), project type, and the resource that the project seeks to address.

(b) Each project's consistency with Commission policy delineated in § 10005.12 will be determined.

(c) Complementary, competing, and duplicative projects will be identified. (If warranted, applicants may be asked to combine efforts or otherwise modify projects.)

(d) Projects that satisfy obligations described in § 10005.8 will be identified.

(e) Using best professional judgement, Commission staff will evaluate each project according to the standards delineated in § 10005.19 with the exception of Decision Factor 6, which relates to the Commission's overall portfolio and is, therefore, not applicable to the evaluation of a specific project.

(1) For each standard, a preliminary rating will be made, with the project rated as:

(i) Exceeding minimum standard,

(ii) Meeting minimum standard,

(iii) Minor deficiency in meeting standard,

(iv) Deficient, or

(v) Not applicable.

(2) Commission ratings will be contrasted to those of applicants and major discrepancies re-evaluated. Commission findings will be recorded and will be available for review.

(f) Each project will be given an overall rating based on the extent to which it meets Commission criteria as defined in paragraphs (b) through (e) of this section. The rating will be made on the basis of best professional judgement using quantitative and/or qualitative rating techniques as appropriate. A given project need not meet all standards to be selected for inclusion in the Commission's plan. A project may, for example, be deficient in an area that the Commission determines is not important for that type of project or, alternatively, deficiencies in some areas may be off-set by major assets in others. A tiered rating scale will be used, with projects grouped into two or more categories according to how well they meet Commission criteria.

(g) Projects with moderate to high ratings will then be re-evaluated from a multiple project perspective. Decision Factor 6, Compatibility with the Commission's Overall Program, will be the focus of this evaluation. For those areas with a concentration of projects this might involve a watershed-wide analysis. It will also involve a statewide analysis. As with the previous step, the evaluation will be conducted using best professional judgement and may involve a variety of applicable techniques.

§ 10005.21 Amending the plan.

The Commission considers the plan to be a dynamic instrument that guides decisions over time and is capable of responding to changing circumstances. Amendments to the plan provide the vehicle for maintaining this dynamic quality.

(a) *Types of plan amendment.* The Commission recognizes three distinct types of plan amendment: comprehensive revisions, substantive revisions, and technical revisions. The particulars regarding each is as follows:

(1) *Comprehensive revision.* The Act requires that the Commission ''develop and adopt'' a plan every five years. At the end of each five year period the Commission will undertake a comprehensive review of the plan to determine its adequacy and the need for revision. The need to revise, and add to, the Commission's portfolio of proposed