

Panel Scientific and Technical Review Form
(Note: Review comments will be anonymous, but public.)

Proposal number: 2001-C210

**Short Proposal Title: San Joaquin River Channel
Island Restoration**

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "The 'Hypotheses' are very general, basically related to whether riparian restoration efforts are successful." "The objectives are not explicitly stated, but are reasonably clear. The hypotheses are clear, but aren't really testable at this phase of the study. The null hypothesis is that the implementing this restoration project will increase the probability of "success". No construction will occur at this phase of the study, so there is no opportunity for hypothesis testing."

Panel Summary: This proposal is reasonably well conceived and is promising because there is evidence the proponents understand adaptive management.

1b1) Does the conceptual model clearly explain the underlying basis for the proposed work?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "No. The project doesn't have a true conceptual model. The 'Conceptual Model' section is really the 'Approach'." "In this project there doesn't really seem to be a major role for 'research' concerning best methods for conducting restoration - it is basically asking 'how do we conduct appropriate re-vegetation in our site?'"

Panel Summary: There is not a conceptual model in the proposal, as the proponents apparently intend to use the requested funds to gather a team and develop a study plan.

1b2) Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "Yes, at least for a planning level study." "Frankly, it would have been preferable if the proposers could have assembled a team in advance, and requested that they assist in developing the proposal to be submitted."

Panel Summary: The panel was willing to accept the proposal as a reasonable approach to putting a project planning group together.

1c1) Has the applicant justified the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "I do not believe that the applicant has justified why restoration is needed in this case. Why not simply leave the island alone and let natural processes guide restoration?" "I have very little on which to judge the quality and appropriateness of the intended work."

Panel Summary: This is actually a pre-planning proposal to initiate a project planning effort. It is neither research, pilot, demonstration nor implementation. That does not mean it would be unworthy of CALFED support because a sensible approach to channel island management is important to Delta ecosystem restoration.

1c2) Is the project likely to generate information that can be used to inform future decision making?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "It is not entirely clear to me that the work will involve actual revegetation work on-site, or will simply be a site inventory and a review of related work to determine best approaches for proceeding with restoration." "Perhaps. This is a planning level study, so hopefully we will learn something about what types of restoration might work here."

Panel Summary: The panel agreed this was a reasonable effort with potential utility at a reasonable price.

2a) Are the monitoring and information assessment plans adequate to assess the outcome of the project?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "N/A. This is a planning level study, not an actual evaluation of a restoration site."

Panel Summary:

2b) Are data collection, data management, data analysis, and reporting plans well described, scientifically sound and adequate to meet the proposed objectives?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "No, the monitoring plans and data management are only very generally described, and are intended to be developed by the bidder who is accepted to undertake the contract work for designing and conducting the project. " "No. There are virtually no details about this issue."

Panel Summary: The panel concluded there would be a significant burden on the consultant chosen by the proponents to produce these plans.

3) Is the proposed work likely to be technically feasible?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "Perhaps. The main technical component of the study is the biological survey of existing conditions. We don't know who the consultant will be, so it is hard to judge the feasibility of completing this study component." "...putting together a restoration and monitoring plan, and undertaking the field work are certainly feasible..."

Panel Summary: The panel felt the crucial issue was the as yet unknown consultant chosen to do the field work, put together the plans and develop a project for implementation.

4) Is the proposed project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project?

Summary of Reviewers comments: "Project team is not assembled. The Program Coordinator seems to be reasonably proficient with wildlife issues, as well as with floral surveys, but background is not focused on research nor habitat restoration." "Unclear. The success of the project depends primarily on the work of a consultant, who has not yet been selected. The applicant may be able to administer the project, but I cannot judge whether the team is qualified without prior information about the consultant's background."

Panel Summary: The qualifications of the project proponents are not the issue. The issue is the qualifications of a consultant not yet selected.

5) Other comments

Overall Evaluation PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS

The Panel was sympathetic to the proposal but cautious because so little substance is available. We were willing to support a contingent funding for this proposal if a satisfactory consultant could be found to bid on developing a design for the investigation and carrying out the proposal at the price proposed.

Summary Rating

Excellent
Very Good
Good X
Fair
Poor

Your Rating: GOOD