

Draft Individual Review Form

Proposal number:2001-D203-1

Short Proposal Title:Yolo Bypass Management Strategy

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

The objectives of the project are clearly stated as 7 hypotheses, which are not all necessarily testable hypotheses, but are more like goals, objectives and project needs. For example, hypothesis #5 states “An MOU between landowners, resource agencies, and other parties with an interest in the Bypass is critical to the overall CALFED goal of ecological enhancement in the Bypass.” Presented as an hypothesis, this is clearly just a task that needs completion (according to the proponent). These 7 “hypotheses” are then presented as tasks in Section 2b Project Approach.

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

They clearly present the “concept” that without landowner and flood management agency willingness and participation, ecological enhancement in the Yolo Bypass is not likely to succeed. This differs somewhat from the “ecological conceptual basis” that CALFED is likely pursuing, nevertheless the concept is clear. They raise the important point that analysis of existing habitat in the Yolo Bypass has not been conducted, and that this information is essential to future habitat restoration.

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

Presentation of the hypotheses as tasks, then elaboration of each task in pages 5-9 provides a clear articulation of proposed tasks, and seems appropriate for meeting project objectives.

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

Yes, this can be considered a research/monitoring project, but could also be considered a watershed planning project.

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

Definitely. It seems that the Yolo Bypass Working Group has developed a comprehensive list of questions and issues that needs answering before future Yolo Bypass enhancement can occur. As presented in the proposal, the groups involved seem competent and capable of obtaining and processing the appropriate information to be useful to future management

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

There appears to be considerable emphasis placed on evaluating the performance of the working group of stakeholders in agreeing on fair compensation to the private landowners for their role in allowing habitat enhancement work on lands within the Yolo Bypass. The monitoring of this project essentially will provide an evaluation of the process of negotiation, stakeholder cooperation, and decision-making.

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

Most of the data are related to two central tasks: (1) development of a hydrologic model to be used as a management tool to evaluate flood conveyance, and (2) analysis of cost vs. benefit to conducting ecological enhancement on Yolo Bypass lands, which appears to be the responsibility of the consultants Jones and Stokes and Associates. Both these tasks are clearly laid out and described, and appear adequate to meet the proposed objectives.

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

Based on the descriptions provided regarding the successful performance of the Working Group, and the presence of a facilitator/conflict resolution specialist, it seems reasonable that the group would be able complete the work as proposed. Whether or not all parties can agree on what is fair market compensation for allowing their lands to be flooded will likely be a contentious issue, with consensual resolution uncertain. Nevertheless this effort is surely technically feasible. Also, the hydraulic modeling task is intended to

simplify the model performance by employing commonly used HEC-RAS model, which is a fairly straightforward procedure.

4) Is the proposed project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project?
It appears they have been working together successfully for several years.

Miscellaneous comments

I do not know the history of the landowner involvement in the Yolo Bypass flooding of the past few years, so this proposal may be similar to the efforts that have occurred in the past. However, I am surprised that CALFED would fund an analysis to determine the compensation that the landowners should receive for flooding their lands. I understand that there are flood easement issues with these landowners, and that their cooperation is essential to future flooding of the Bypass. I also have begun to understand the biological importance of bypasses. I just hope this issue does not end up on the “fleecing of America” segment of the news.

**Overall Evaluation
Summary Rating**

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating

The project will likely contribute to future use of the Yolo Bypass, which has been shown to provide substantial benefit to several fish species, including anadromous salmonids. It also seems that the proposed tasks are necessary for future Yolo Bypass flooding. It is unfortunate, however, that funding should be required from CALFED to determine the compensation that landowners receive, but if this is the economic reality and there is no alternative, then the project should be supported.
