

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

**Proposal number: 2001-E203**

**Short Proposal Title: Fay Island Restoration  
Phase I**

**1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?**

*Summary of Reviewers Comments:*

Yes, the objectives and hypotheses are presented clearly and in a straightforward and simple manner. The hypothesis reflects some uncertainties of outcome, but clear goals of restoring habitats, biotic communities, ecosystem processes, and ultimately recovery of species at risk of all explicitly stated.

*Panel Summary:*

Agree that the objective is stated but is a bit buried in the text. Also the hypothesis is a bit simplistic and not necessarily specific enough to be tested through implementation of this project as described.

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

*Summary of Reviewers Comments:*

The Conceptual Model is clearly explains the project, and outlines the desired restoration procedures, processes, and likely results, however, this part of the proposal could have been substantially strengthened by citing appropriate published references.

*Panel Summary:*

There is absolutely no clear conceptual model and it is presumptuous on the part of the applicant to assume that building the physical system will cause the biological system to develop given a whole host of reasons - not the least of which is the potential for colonization by exotic species. The paper (Grimaldo, et.al, 1998) that is referenced is only about how to study such a site and not relevant to conceptual model or design.

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

*Summary of Reviewers Comments:*

The approach is well designed and thought out, however, from the information provided with this proposal it is not possible to evaluate the actual elements of physical restoration.

***Panel Summary:***

No, because there is no explanation of what the applicant proposes to do to evaluate baseline habitat conditions. They indicate that there will be a feasibility study to quantitatively evaluate certain physical and biological elements but no description of how that evaluation will be approached.

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

***Summary of Reviewer Comments:***

No, this project appears to be more of a pilot/demonstration project than a research project. There are no controlled comparisons of alternate techniques, nor comparative analyses of different “treatments.”

The research status of the project is justified as it is geared towards initial land acquisition and evaluation of hydrology and topography of the site. The applicant acknowledges the relative paucity of precursory restoration in this particular tidal-riverine system from which they would have prior information on effective strategies.

***Panel Summary:***

Discrepancy: Some on the Panel do not think this is a research project - this is a full-scale implementation project given that land will be acquired and a restoration plan and feasibility study generated. But, at the same time, others on the Panel assumed that the applicant simply caught not able to check more than one box in that some of what applicant is proposing to could be termed research. In the end, however, what they have inadequately described about the feasibility study is inadequate and cannot be considered “research.”

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

***Summary of Reviewers Comments:***

Yes, the work will generate useful information for use in the later proposed stages of this particular project and also for other projects. However, logistics of island site may raise some challenges that if successfully met will inform feasibility of future projects.

***Panel Summary:***

There is no way to determine whether useful information will be generated because the applicant provides No detail of exactly what will be included in the feasibility study. There was a dissenting view in this regard.

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

***Summary of Reviewers Comments:***

Reviewer noted NA.

Plans for monitoring and assessment of proposed work are briefly described in this proposal and are to developed in later project stages.

***Panel Summary:***

No, there is no description of the monitoring plan that will have to be implemented relative to the feasibility study.

**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:***

Reviewer noted NA.

Data collection, management, and analysis are relegated to future phase (Ph 4). Phase I reporting will only describe restoration potential and site valuation.

***Panel Summary:***

No, the applicant does not describe how data from feasibility study and restoration plan will be handled or stored and thus cannot tell whether elements are scientifically sound.

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

***Summary of Reviewers Comments:***

Yes, the Phase I portion of the proposal appears to be technically feasible based on the limited general information provided and the general approach described.. Later restoration phases of the proposal are not addressed in great detail, but the engineering restoration and monitoring aspects outlined in Phases 3 and 4 are apparently feasible. However, from the information provided with this proposal it is not possible to evaluate the actual elements of physical restoration, not the monitoring program which is proposed to be developed in future phases. Also, the proposed project would benefit from information gathered and shared from ongoing assessments of the nearby Rhode Island restoration project.

***Panel Summary:***

Yes, as far as land acquisition is concerned because there is a willing seller identified. Beyond that, the proposal is so weak in other aspects of Phase I that it is impossible to say.

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

***Summary of Reviewers Comments:***

The team has unknown qualifications - there is insufficient information to allow any assessment of knowledge. However, there is likely good administrative and technical support from CDFG though individual staff qualifications are unknown.

***Panel Summary:***

Impossible to say as qualifications for project team not fully described – the proposal only gives general qualification for CDFG. No basis for Panel to make any judgment in this regard.

**5) Other comments**

None.

**INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS OVERALL EVALUATION SUMMARY RATING AND COMMENTS:**

**GOOD.** The concept is good and the feasibility is high, but there is little explication of the likely time line and results, likely problems and their solutions. The proposal is primarily to fund acquisition of land with little discussion of the overall, restoration of the land. There are many unknowns regarding Phases II-IV, hindering proper evaluation of the larger project at this time.

**Overall Rating  
PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS**

Excellent as far as acquisition is concerned given that the parcel has been appraised and appraisal has been accepted by the landowner. Also, there is a need for habitat in Old River (which is bound by riprap) for Delta Smelt. Fair as far as the other aspect of Phase I which is the feasibility study. The proposal is sound but too little is included here regarding later stages of work. In particular, the consequences of levee breaches of various size and number on hydrological and geomorphological processes are not well explored, and understanding of these consequences will likely be crucial to the restoration and resilience of the restoration effort.

PANEL RATING: EXCELLENT—acquisition; FAIR—feasibility