

Draft Individual Review Form

Proposal number: 2001-G201-1

Short Proposal Title: Wildlife-Friendly Farming

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

Yes. Three specific objectives are clearly presented:

- Develop a cost effective and efficient water management infrastructure
- Determine the effect of winter flooding on target bird species
- Measure the quantity and quality of organic carbon and nutrients discharged from winter-flooded fields.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

Yes. The conceptual model is a clear, detailed, and comprehensive flow chart that adequately addresses the underlying basis of the proposed project.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

No. The applicant proposes constructing 5 miles of interior cross levees (3 to 4 feet in height), a discharge pump station, and a large water control structure – all on private property. This represents a total of \$1,204,153 in capitol improvements for a private landowner. The July 15, 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between M&T and the Cosumnes River Preserve stipulates, “Either party may terminate the agreement with a 60-day notice.” Without a binding contractual agreement unforeseen changes in ownership, management, or agricultural commodity prices could significantly alter the proposed winter flooding regime outlined in this proposal. If the landowner, present or future, chooses not to practice wildlife-friendly farming it will be impossible to meet the project objectives.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

Yes. Given the experience and proven track record of the Cosumnes River Preserve the choice of a full-scale implementation project is reasonable.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

Yes. Land managers will be interested in the economic viability of wildlife-friendly farming practices and natural resource specialists will focus on water quality assessments and waterfowl habitat improvement.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

No. The Department of Water Resources monitoring protocol on the intake water, field water, and discharge water does not include measuring pesticide levels. To make this project wildlife-friendly for both fish and fowl the pesticide issue needs to be addressed.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

No. This proposal is missing an opportunity to compare actual Pesticide Use Reports (known types, amounts, date applied, and method of application) filed with the county agricultural commissioner's office with detectable pesticide levels in the water samples.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

Yes. The technology is in place to install pumps and construct levees and water control structures.

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

Provide detailed comments in support of your conclusion

Yes. The project team has proven their competency by implementing successful projects on the Cosumnes River Preserve.

Miscellaneous comments

This is a clear and well-developed proposal.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	The applicant describes this proposal as Phase I of a three-phase conservation initiative. Phase II is to acquire the property to ensure permanent protection. In the Phase II proposal it states that "Unfortunately, the window of opportunity may be short-lived: the current managers (Jim and Sally Shanks) expect to retire in two to three years, and that is the time period in which M&T Staten Ranch intends to try to develop a permanent conservation solution. If this solution fails to materialize, then the likely outcome will be the sale of the Island to another entity without the conservation inclinations of the present owners". Given the uncertainty of the acquisition, the costs of the capitol improvements, and the flexibility of the MOA why not delay this project until the Island is permanently protected?
