

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

Proposal number: 2001-G202

**Short Proposal Title: Staten Island
Acquisition**

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The objectives and hypotheses are clearly stated. Restoring wetlands and expanding a habitat corridor will benefit wildlife. The science underlying this proposal lies in other phases of the project.

Panel Summary:

Project objectives are clearly stated. Hypotheses will be tested in Phases I and III.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The model describes phases of the project beyond the scope of the acquisition proposal, but this is helpful and necessary to understand all elements of proposal. The conceptual model emphasizes that enhanced management can occur with acquisition therefore producing greater wildlife habitat values in perpetuity.

Panel Summary:

Conceptual diagram is very useful and explanatory. There should be a key legend to distinguish between solid and dashed lines.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The acquisition is critical but only one step in the process of meeting the project's overall objectives. The overall project is very well designed.

Panel Summary:

Yes. Continuing the agricultural enterprise is critical to provide support for habitat management in perpetuity.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

There was a difference of opinion among the reviewers. One felt The Nature Conservancy track record on the nearby Cosumnes Reserves justified their effort at full implementation through purchase. One felt that the completeness of the conceptual model, which included multiple phases, justified the full implementation. One reviewer wanted examples illustrating how this kind of project has succeed elsewhere.

Panel Summary:

Yes, this is a full implementation project on a strategically located parcel ideally suited for the proposed management.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Combined with other phases of the project, this acquisition will allow generation of information on economic viability of wildlife-friendly farming practices. Water quality relationships with alternative agricultural practices is critical information for sound future decision making.

Panel Summary:

Yes. It will provide information on farming costs and returns with wildlife friendly farming practices as well as wildlife and water quality values.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

More frequent and closer monitoring appears necessary. Other phases including more intense monitoring protocols is critical to this project.

Panel Summary:

Monitoring occurs in Phases I and III. Panel does not see a need for biological monitoring during this acquisition phase of the project. It does see a need for assessment of what has already been gathered from baseline (past management) practices.

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:

Again, other phases of the project detail the data protocols and are outstanding. Project G201 needs co-funding.

Panel Summary:

Same as for 2a) above.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Yes, the time is right, the landowners appear willing to sell and continue to prescribe-farm the island in the future.

Panel Summary:

Yes. The only question is economic justification.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Yes, they have an outstanding record on the Cosumnes Preserve and a real willingness to work with agriculture.

Panel Summary:

While no lead individuals are named, The Nature Conservancy has a strong track record in accomplishing similar projects.

5) Other comments

Proposals G201 and G202 are closely linked and dependent upon one another. G202 will ensure that water quality monitoring in G201 will be carried out over a meaningful time period.

If this land is acquired, there needs to be language in the title that guarantees that the land will be in Ag for perpetuity. The intent in the proposal seemed a bit nebulous.

Overall Evaluation
PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS

The panel feels Staten Island is the optimal locale to acquire land to enhance bay-delta wildlife habitat. The corridor connection is optimal and the potential for efficient management is present. Current landowner cooperation and experience is extraordinary. This is an outstanding opportunity.

Summary Rating: very good

Your Rating: VERY GOOD