

Individual Review Form

Proposal number: 2001-H206-1

Management Plan Implementation for Ecological Preserves of Butte County

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

When reviewed as a Local Watershed Stewardship proposal, the objectives are not clearly stated in the proposal. There are “Ecosystem, Programmatic, and Facilities Maintenance” objectives in the proposal, but there is not a clear linkage to how the project will “restore, protect, and enhance habitat for spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout” as stated as a “long term management goal”. Most of the objectives listed in the proposal are more related to the other “long-term management goal” of developing “a living laboratory and field classroom that provides watershed education”. The area of influence is limited to lands previously acquired for the protection of natural resources, not watersheds. Most of the activities funded by this proposal are more closely related to developing educational opportunities that do not likely transfer to privately owned lands in the watershed.

The Hypothesis Being Tested portion of the proposal simply refers back to the Conceptual Model and a diagram.

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

The conceptual model states that the proposal funding will be used to “manage high value habitat “ for a two year period. The Conceptual Model section states that “there is no conceptual model to submit with this grant application”. There is no connection to watershed stewardship in the remainder of the watershed, other than through education by interaction of the “management advisory team” and inclusion of information on these parcels being added to the watershed GIS. The other aspects seem more related to formal education through CSU Chico.

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

The approach is not well designed for developing watershed stewardship. The proposal may produce management plans and interim management funding for these particular parcels, but it does not demonstrate an adequate methodology for furthering watershed stewardship.

The proposal’s approach adds little to the benefit of the aquatic ecosystem. The linkage of impacts created by exotic plant species on these parcels, to the limiting factors for the salmonid species mentioned in the proposal, is not clearly stated. The proposals investment in infrastructure maintenance and development seem to have very little to add to the aquatic resource improvements.

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

The selection of Pilot/Demonstration Project does not appear to be justified. The Education category would be a much better fit for the project described. Most of the methods used in the project would probably be applicable only to lands in public ownership, and therefore have limited value in promoting watershed stewardship. It is unclear how the planning for “Programmatic Objectives” and “Facilities and Maintenance Objectives” provide demonstration of something useful to other landowners in the watershed.

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

Other than providing an opportunity for evaluating the effectiveness of establishing a mid-watershed preserve to protect high value riverine habitat for highly migratory salmonids, this project is unlikely to inform future decision making. The remainder of the scope of the project is limited to the individual parcels, so it has limited utility for non-publicly owned lands.

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

Monitoring plans will be developed as part of this proposal, but will not be implemented until a future unspecified date. The description provided does provide not enough detail to determine whether they would be adequate to assess the outcome on future actions.

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

Data collected will be stored in GIS format and made available via the Sacramento River Watershed Project web site. No specifics on QA/QC, other than “Consult with university faculty and preserve advisory groups to establish or adopt proper protocol”. There is not adequate information provided to make a determination on the adequacy of the information. A suggestion would to review the adequacy of similar CALFED projects completed by the proposer in order to make this determination.

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

The proposal is technically feasible, and the budget seems overly generous to complete the scope of work on a limited geographic area.

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

The project team is certainly qualified to effectively implement the proposal. The amount of the budget leaves open the question if this proposal is an efficient way to develop a management plan for a limited acreage. The proposal does not appear to be either an efficient or effective way to establish watershed stewardship in the surrounding watersheds.

Miscellaneous comments

This project would be better suited to be submitted as an education proposal. The benefits are much more social in nature (recreational and educational) and are not likely to produce lasting stewardship on a watershed level. Development of site-specific habitat improvement opportunities would be a much better focus for a proposal related to these properties. Is funding allowed for maintenance of existing facilities that produce no benefit to the CALFED mission of ecosystem restoration?

**Overall Evaluation
Summary Rating**

Poor

Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating

I found this proposal to be poor at articulating how it would produce meaningful results in the area of watershed stewardship that would be applicable to a wider geographic area. If funding is available to assist in the development of site specific projects that would benefit CALFED priority species, then that portion of the project could be funded. Most of the additional benefits to the salmonids referenced would come from specific projects to address limiting factors, since these lands are unique in having been purchased for protection.