

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

Proposal number: 2001-H206

Short Proposal Title: Ecological Preserves of Butte County

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The objectives are clearly stated, according to two of three reviewers. There was concern noted, however, that the objectives were more related to "developing a "a living laboratory and field classroom that provides watershed education" rather than to "restore, protect and enhance habitat for spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout." One reviewer stated that "when reviewed as a local watershed stewardship proposal, the objectives are not clearly stated."

Panel Summary:

The Panel agrees that this proposal does not constitute a watershed stewardship proposal. It needs to be connected to a watershed context in a more direct way. The objectives listed are not ones typically thought of as crucial to good watershed management, but are instead narrowly focused on management of one small and one larger parcel, with no overt direct connection to the watersheds of which those parcels are a part. The proposal hypothesis is non existent, or at best, poorly defined.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The conceptual model is very poor or does not exist. One reviewer noted that the proposal states "there is no conceptual model to submit with this grant application." One reviewer recommended some possible models, but noted that none are present in the proposal.

Panel Summary:

There is no conceptual model and there is no effort to present one.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The reviewers noted that the approach proposed is in some ways well designed, but is not designed to implement watershed stewardship. Parts of the proposal such as exotic species removal have no basis for inclusion as an objective. No mention is made of what species are present, if any, or what their impacts are.

Panel Summary:

The approach is reasonable, if somewhat lacking in detail, for developing a plan for parcel management. Connections to the goals and objectives of CALFED are not evident, and no context is given to validate this project as a viable watershed stewardship project.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The reviewers had differing ideas of whether this project classification was justified. The project listed itself as a "pilot or demonstration" project. One reviewer felt that development of a management plan was justified, but did not address the issue of whether the classification was justified. One noted that "it is unclear how the planning for "Programmatic Objectives" or "Facilities and Maintenance Objectives" provide demonstration of something useful to other landowners in the watershed.

Panel Summary:

The description of this project as a pilot or demonstration project is not completely justified. The panel has doubts about the usefulness of this project to demonstrate methods useful outside the management of these two parcels.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Two of the reviewers noted that the project will produce information that will inform future decision making relative to specific parcel management, and the third noted that this project would develop information of "limited utility for non-publicly owned lands."

Panel Summary:

The panel feels that this project will not generate information to inform future decision making beyond these specific parcels. It would therefore not generate any considerable value toward achieving the goals and objectives of CALFED Ecosystem Restoration.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Reviewers noted that plans will be developed as a part of this project. No mention was made of any assessments of the efficacy of the outcome of the project.

Panel Summary:

The panel feels that information generated by this project is inadequate to gauge success of the project, particularly in absence of clearly stated objectives.

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:

The reviewers felt that insufficient detail was given regarding data collection and management. None could ascertain the sufficiency of the proposal in this regard.

Panel Summary:

The panel agrees with the reviewers that data collection, management and analysis is too sketchy to judge. Further detail is needed to determine scientific soundness and adequacy.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The reviewers had questions regarding the technical feasibility of this project. One noted that permits would likely be required for one contemplated action, yet no provision for obtaining them is included in the proposal. Other notes included the comment that the planning portion seemed feasible, but that the budget is perhaps too generous for what is proposed.

Panel Summary:

The panel felt that the technical portions of the plan seemed feasible, but that the purposes of the plan seemed outside the purposes of this solicitation. Some concern regarding the cost of the project relative to the benefits received to the Bay-Delta ecosystem were quite high.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The reviewers noted that only one person had qualifications listed. Other possible contributors were not listed. One reviewer questioned whether "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."

Panel Summary:

The information given does not provide sufficient source to judge whether the team is qualified, since the team is not identified.

5)Other comments

Reviewer Comments: Two reviewers noted significant shortcomings in the description of tasks and their relationship to CALFED's needs. One reviewer felt the tasks were good, but the conceptual model needed work. Relevance of work on these parcels to the watershed as a whole is not clear. Reviewer ratings ran from poor to very good.

Overall Evaluation PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS

This proposal needs to make a stronger connection between the project tasks and direct benefits to CALFED species of concern. It appears to be largely a request for funds to bridge a gap between property acquisition and property management. The monitoring elements of the proposal may produce useful data for this local portion of the watershed. The panel recommends that this project not be funded, with the possible exception of parts of Task 6, Monitoring.

Summary Rating

Excellent
Very Good
Good
Fair
Poor

Your Rating: POOR