

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

**Proposal number: 2001-H210**

**Short Proposal Title: Lower American River  
Science**

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

*Summary of Reviewers comments:*

Yes, the objectives and the hypothesis are well defined however the connection to the proposal is not. The other reviewer also agrees that the objectives and the hypothesis are stated clearly.

*Panel Summary:*

No, although we realize that there are stated objectives and hypotheses, these are from a wider program. It is difficult to determine what the specific objectives and hypotheses for this proposal. We suggest that a statement such as “The objectives are....”

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

*Summary of Reviewers comments:*

The first reviewer say no. Scant models illustrate need/basis for the work, however it is unclear about the roles of how these “tests” are to be accomplished. The second reviewer suggests that there is bias in identifying only one stressor. The opportunity to address all stressors is limited.

*Panel Summary:*

We agree with the reviewers. It is unclear how this specific project fits into the conceptual models provided.

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

*Summary of Reviewers comments:*

No both reviewers agree. First reviewer says it is not clear how the group will achieve the flow augmentation test. Nowhere is it apparent that the USBR is in the mix, except for a staff person on something called the FISH Group. Second reviewer says no, the actual monitoring work is not well defined in the proposal, and seems to take a back seat to all the superlative descriptions of how the information will be used at some point in the future. Lots of inference to adaptive management, refining hypotheses, educational objectives, and analyses by a “Technical Subcommittee” all gloss over the lack of well described monitoring methodologies and peer review of the results.

*Panel Summary:*

Although we have confidence in the ability of the team to design their approach, we find the proposal difficult to follow logically and the monitoring network is not defined in the document.

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

***Summary of Reviewers comments:***

One reviewer said no and the other said yes. The selection of Watershed Planning as the project type seems to be an error. The project clearly should be classified as a Research/Monitoring Project. The primary task is to conduct monitoring of projects and actions intended to benefit the referenced fish species. There is no clear explanation how the monitoring results would be used to manage the watershed any differently than is currently done in the limited geographic area defined by the proposal. Watershed stewardship is not the term normally used when the project is restricted to the active channel, within relatively confining levees, below a major dam.

***Panel Summary:***

We agree with the reviewers. This appears to be a research and monitoring program rather than a planning project. However it is not clear.

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

***Summary of Reviewers comments:***

Yes from both reviewers, one reviewer says the project is likely to generate information useful to informing decision-making entities. The elaborate system of interpreting and refining the results of the information generated by the monitoring by CDF&G may greatly reduce its usefulness. The second reviewer says yes, some information collected could be used to modify flow regimes in the Lower American River to the benefit of fish and other aquatic species and possibly be used in similar systems.

***Panel Summary:***

Yes, we agree with the reviewers, however it would have been better to see the methods described, the hypotheses better-defined etc.

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

***Summary of Reviewers comments:***

No, The monitoring and assessment plans are not adequately defined to enable an assessment of the project outcome. The preponderance of statements like “to develop projects based on a solid foundation of knowledge..., hypotheses will be refined from the concepts of ecosystem processes and stressors..., and Specific sampling, analytical, planning and construction procedures for each

project will be developed at project definition...” do not provide a clear definition of the methodology.

The second reviewer said not as well.

***Panel Summary:***

No, we are uncertain. We feel that the group will monitor the effectiveness in the future but there is no monitoring and assessment plan described in the proposal.

**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:***

No from both reviewers. First reviewer says no, data collection, data management and data analysis are not well described in the proposal and a decision on their adequacy is impossible to make by simply reviewing the proposal. How a decision will be made and who has the final say in the report are not stated. The reports to be produced are clearly defined. Second review says no information is provided on data collection, other than the monitoring and collection protocols will be developed by CDFG, with input from the technical committee. No information on wetlands, monitoring...etc.

***Panel Summary:***

No, we agree with the reviewers. The data collection methods, management, analysis are not defined in the report in detail.

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

***Summary of Reviewers comments:***

No, both reviewers are unsure. Based on the information provided, it is impossible to determine if the project is technically feasible. There is always going to be uncertainty in the understanding of causal relationships in complex biological systems such as the Lower American River.

***Panel Summary:***

No, we agree with the reviewers. We believe that it is technically feasible because of the expertise of the agencies involved however it is not clear from the proposal.

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

***Summary of Reviewers comments:***

Yes, however one reviewer suggests that the project is not “efficiently budgeted”.

***Panel Summary:***

Yes, we feel that the project team is competent to carry out the work but again stress that it is difficult to see from the proposal exactly what will be done.

**5)Other comments**

One reviewer says the \$¼ million for the service contract for Fisheries Technical Consulting each year appears excessive. The monitoring portion by CDF&G has acceptable costs, but the overall project is heavy with additional expenses for an elaborate and unnecessary reporting process. The roles of the CDF&G and the Technical Subcommittee in developing final reporting of results of the monitoring is not acceptably defined. Without clear definition of the process by which “collaboration” will result in analysis of monitoring and the presentation of results in final reports the project is suspect.

The second reviewer says Great cost sharing, with large amounts from SAFCA (\$5.6 million) and the Water Forum (\$1 million). There has been earlier work completed, such as a bibliography, and an outline for Baseline Report. It is not clear if the hypothesis will be carried out, and no info on whether or not USBR will cooperate on flow regime. No details on monitoring, etc. The reviewers did not agree on the overall rating, which ranged from fair to very good.

**Overall Evaluation  
PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS**

We feel this proposal suffers from confusion between what a program is and what a project or set of projects are. As such it is difficult for us to discern what the objective, hypotheses, data collection, methods, and outcomes for this proposal will be other than to further the program on the lower American River. It seems that the applicant assumes that the reviewers and this panel have prior knowledge of the environmental concerns and the programs being run on the Lower American River. We feel that the program and the concepts of it are strong and ecologically the program and its associated projects have long reaching benefits for the community and the environment. The main weaknesses is that the proposal is poorly written and as such we are left guessing as to what the exact outcomes from this proposal will be.

Summary Rating

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Your Rating: FAIR