

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

Proposal number: 2001-I205

**Short Proposal Title: IDG Films Bay-Delta
Festival**

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Yes, there are two approaches; 1) to enhance learning and understanding of the San Joaquin ecosystem showing a photography exhibit in conjunction with the film festival and 2) the oral history project will garner greater support and credibility for CALFED missions by recording and documenting local history and relating to local individuals.

The two approaches are fresh and innovative from the standard proposals one might see. The objectives and hypotheses are well thought out. Intangible benefits can be difficult to identify, but the use of film can be a powerful motivator.

Panel Summary:

Yes. The objectives and hypotheses being tested are clearly outlined.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The CALFED initiative is complex and wide-ranging and it is difficult to explain the impacts to individuals within their own communities. By bringing the media of film (a familiar vehicle) and history using local people, the “big” ideas of CALFED can be better accepted by the average citizen. The film festival clearly has demonstrated success in other communities and offering these films to greater audience in the Central Valley is important.

Oral history projects are popular and offer first-hand accounts of history from those who shaped it. Local community history has always been a way to engage regional support for ideas and concepts, and this is no different by attempting to garner support for the Pilot Restoration Project. Sometimes you have to start from a historical perspective and knowing how the river once was will help people imagine the possibilities for the future.

Panel Summary:

In addition to describing the overall benefits of a film festival, this proposal goes one step further, by telling how San Joaquin residents would personally be affected. The use of first person stories serve as a powerful educational tool. The program managers assert that "it is critical that these stories, told by farmers who have lived and worked the land along the river for many decades, be gathered together and be told before they die; before it's too late."

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The Film Festival has a proven track record and demonstrated success and critical acclaim. Combining the festival with the photography exhibit adds a dimension that might reach a greater audience that otherwise wouldn't come.

The Oral History project is designed to meet the objectives of the project because the Pilot Restoration Project has already received some local criticism and another perspective needs to be used. It is possible that the regional population has no idea how the resource has changed over the years. It's easy to think that the local resources have always looked the same throughout the years and in this case, that's certainly not true. In addition, I think using the oral history vehicle is non-threatening and interesting in its approach.

Panel Summary:

Yes. The approach is extremely well designed.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

This is a full-scale implementation project based on existing films produced under separate contract. The project calls for expansion and inclusion with other elements via a CA `Council for Humanities. The film series has variety and diversity of interests that appeals to all ages and learning levels. This proposal projects expansion into underserved areas of the Central Valley. The Oral History component will document vanishing history and provide context for the Pilot Restoration Project currently proposed.

Panel Summary:

The managers of this project have extensive experience organizing film festivals and producing films. The most impressive awards they received were a Grand Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and a National Emmy Award. They have produced six educational films that are widely used by foundations and government organizations.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The Oral History project in particular is projected to increase support and influence decision - making with regard to the Pilot Restoration effort on the San Joaquin River. I agree that documenting historical natural state of the river will surprise and delight a great number of people who have never known the river except, as it exists now. Reconnecting to the "natural past" using local people to tell the story should deflect some criticism that the effort to restore the river is initiated by "outsiders".

Panel Summary:

Yes, however it is difficult to assess the projected impact that the film would have on the general public.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The success of the program is monitored via bookings, numbers in attendance- both good indicators, but it would be interesting to test a sample of attitudes before and after. Exit interviews or focus groups could be used. The assessment plan could be expanded.

Panel Summary:

We agree with reviewer's comments.

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 data collection and storing is straightforward via databases, reports, and websites. If the proposal included focus group or exit interviews, the process would need to be indicated

Panel Summary:

There is a good attempt to measure perceptions and to collect statistical data. Given their previous experience with producing films, we assume that they will employ some of the research and feedback strategies they used before to produce quality educational films.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Yes, the films are already completed and the proposal indicates existing bookings for the festival in conjunction with the photographic exhibit.

Panel Summary:

We agree.

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

Summary of Reviewers comments:

Very much so. This team is award winning and long standing reputation in the industry. The project team is well organized and possesses clear focus.

Panel Summary:

This is an extremely qualified team.

Additional Comments:

A more formal evaluation process should have been included to assess impact on attitudes and behavior as a result of the Festival and Oral History Project. Both projects hypothesized that support will increase and it would be interesting to see if that occurs.

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**Overall Evaluation
PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS**

This was an excellent proposal and well written according to the guidelines. The proposal addressed the individual elements and criteria very clearly and made it easy to evaluate. The budget was very detailed and in line with current costs for projects of this type.

The Film Festival is an obvious winner and we can visualize an expansion to other venues. One per county doesn't seem like enough, but these projects take money and considerable coordination. We anticipate that as word gets out the venues will increase and every effort should be made to accommodate them. We were impressed by the awards and qualifications of the production team, and have every confidence that they will do a very good job.

The Oral History Project is imperative. As these landowners and farmers pass away so too their knowledge, perspective and first-hand accounts. Oral histories are an established and accepted protocol for documenting history. What a wonderful way to honor the accomplishments and experiences of these people and recreate the past. Further, the project goes one step beyond by laying a foundation for future restoration efforts. This really engages history in the living process from past to future. I liked the approach very much.

An additional benefit of this project is its outreach potential. Most Californians are not environmentally aware and would not seek out such information. This film format reaches a large audience using an enjoyable, entertaining venue.

Summary Rating

Excellent
Very Good
Good
Fair
Poor

Your Rating: **EXCELLENT**

