

## Draft Individual Review Form

Proposal number: 2001-K218-3

Short Proposal Title: Butte Creek, Big Chico Creek and Sutter Bypass chinook salmon and steelhead evaluation.

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

With the exception of the first hypothesis, the objectives and hypotheses are reasonably clear. The first hypothesis isn't really a hypothesis—it is more of an assumption.

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

The proposal doesn't seem to have a conceptual model. The proposal would have been more effective with the following information in a conceptual model: 1) life cycle of target species; 2) details about which factors or geographical regions are important; 3) an illustration of how the proposed research relates to these areas/topics.

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

Yes, the approach should provide useful information to achieve the proposed objectives. As noted above, it would have been much easier to put the methods and objectives into context with a proper conceptual model.

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

Reasonably well. Steelhead and spring run are obviously important from a management and ecological standpoint. The applicant has correctly selected Butte Creek/Sutter Bypass as critical habitat for these species. Again, the selection of each of the sampling methods would have been better supported if the proposal had a conceptual model.

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

Yes, but the applications are unclear. Population data on these species is especially important for management. Integration of experimental approaches such as coded wire tagged studies is also commendable as this will help answer major questions about the value of floodplain/Sutter Bypass to migrating fish. A major cause for concern is how the information will be analyzed and used. There will obviously be reports, but it is unclear how the data will be used. The study may not be of great management value if the product is simply a data report. Managers require detailed analyses of study data and clear summaries of how the information will be used for restoration. For example, a stated objective is to use the data collected as a means to inform and evaluate restoration projects in the region. It is unclear how this information will be provided to project designers or to evaluate existing projects. Are the data meant as some sort of baseline? If not, is there some sort of experimental design that can be used to help us "learn"?

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

To some extent. See previous comments.

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

Yes, with respect to data collection and analysis. But see previous comments about the lack of clarity in data analysis and reporting.

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

Yes. This is a continuing study, so the applicants have a “track record” with the proposed methods. One concern is that the sampling permits for this project expire in 2001. Renewal of the older study elements is fairly likely, but the CWT release study may not be as easy to get approval for. Release of tagged Sacramento River fall-run hatchery fish into the Butte Creek watershed may be heavily scrutinized as this is critical habitat for spring-run.

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

Yes. Again, the study team has done most of this before.

**Miscellaneous comments**

Butte Creek, Sutter Bypass, spring-run and steelhead are all important study/restoration areas for CALFED. However, the proposal is a somewhat confusing mixture of different sampling programs, making it difficult to identify a central “thread” in the research. The proposal would have been much more effective with a good conceptual model to unify these elements. My opinion is that this study is more appropriate to CVPIA than CALFED.

---

**Overall Evaluation  
Summary Rating**

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**