

## Geographic Review Panel 1 – Bay Delta

**Proposal number:** 2001-E214      **Short Proposal Title:** Franks Tract/Decker Island

**1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region.** Applicability to ERP goals are clearly described. Applicability to CVPIA priorities are not described, though benefits can be inferred. See CVPIA staff comments.

**2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region.** Linkages to several Delta island restoration projects (all funded through the Delta Flood Protection Program) are identified. The panel sees no conflicts with other projects.

**3. Feasibility, especially the project’s ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner.** We agree with the TARP that the engineering work is technically feasible. We find it will be difficult to assess the primary project objective of “enhancing the ecosystem” with the proposed 3-year monitoring plan. A 5-year plan at a minimum should be in place.

A second concern is that the proposed 6-month final permitting window may be overly ambitious, as past efforts to permit “in-water” projects have been very time consuming.

The TARP questioned the durability of the project due to erosion from boat wakes at Franks Tract.

**4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project.** The independent reviewers and TARP Summary both note team experience with project management and engineering disciplines. Wetland ecology and zoology were noted as areas lacking experience. The panel concurs. This experience is required for all stages of the project, especially with the emphasis on monitoring and adaptive management.

**5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance).** No plan for public outreach program is included. The Local Involvement section describes previous efforts to inform the public about island creation in Frank’s Tract. It is stated there is no known opposition. There is opposition, however, from the striped bass community as creation of Franks Tract islands would displace existing (deeper water) striped bass habitat.

**6. Cost.** Cost for this project is \$16.6 million. The panel questions whether the relative high cost investment here is commensurate with expected benefits.

**7. Cost sharing.** The Delta Flood Protection Program (AB360) will contribute \$3 million worth of borrow material (from Decker Island), and \$1 million in funding for restoration (including final contouring and planting at Decker Island).

**8. Additional comments.** None.

**Regional Ranking**

**Panel Ranking:** Medium Low

**Provide a brief explanation of your ranking:** The previous Individual Review evaluation was POOR, while the overall evaluation from the TARP was FAIR, citing the major weakness as an inadequate monitoring and assessment plan. The panel concurs.

Strength: Very little is known to date about habitat restoration through creation of dredge material islands in open water habitats. This project would provide demonstration data for future consideration.

Additional weakness: Given the amount of acreage restored and expected outcomes (listed as two presentations at CALFED sponsored professional association meetings, and documentation in two professional papers) the panel feels that the almost \$17 million project cost is not cost effective.