

Geographic Panel Review 2 - Sacramento River/Butte Basin

Proposal number: 2001-C213

Short Proposal Title: Understanding Natural Processes Through Restoration

1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities in your region. This project would be expected to enhance survival of at-risk species and reduce the negative impacts of non-native species. It promises to convert 400 acres of exotic weeds to wooded riparian habitat. High priorities in this region, applicability is high.

2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region. The project dovetails with several on-going and completed projects of land acquisition and riparian restoration in the area. CALFED, USFWS, DWR, WCB, DFG, TNC, and private organizations have supported these projects. The project will provide an important link between parts of the highly fragmented riparian forest.

3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner. Techniques proposed for revegetation have been proven successful by the investigators and others in similar habitats. However, applicant must obtain Reclamation Board permits to implement the project.

4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project. The applicants are well qualified to carry out the project, having a track record of successful conversion of abandoned agriculture fields to native riparian species.

5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance). The project involves local volunteers and schools as well as the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. Environmental compliance is included or already complete. Any potential adjacent landowner concerns should be addressed. Proposal should be submitted to the SB1086 Board for review.

6. Cost. Consistent with costs for similar projects.

7. Cost sharing. 2% of the cost is borne by the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge and local conservation groups. Use of local volunteers provides cost sharing of a different type.

8. Additional comments. The proposed science seems add-on, to comply with the current CALFED RFP. Methods for monitoring, especially for rodent herbivory, are inadequately described in the proposal. If the monitoring program is adequate, it should provide useful data for decisions on the type of restoration needed in similar projects. Even if the science proves weak, the money will not have been wasted; 400 acres currently in weeds will have been restored to native riparian vegetation. Perhaps a better approach would be to fund the restoration separately from the monitoring.

Regional Ranking

Panel Ranking: Medium-high

Provide a brief explanation of your ranking: Restoration portion of project is a high priority for the region, assuming all potential flood control issues, Reclamation Board and SB1086 concerns are satisfied. Monitoring and research plan need to be further developed.