

Geographic Review Panel 2 - Sacramento River/Butte Basin

Proposal number: 2001-H206

Short Proposal Title: Ecological Preserves
of Butte County

1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region. Although it was not clearly identified in the proposal, geographically, this project is a high priority and has high applicability to restoration goals in our region; it's applicable to CALFED ERP Goals 1- 5 and highly applicable to CVPIA goals, addressing AFRP Big Chico Creek action items 6 and 7 and AFRP Butte Creek action item 19.

2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region. This project provides the funding to restore three creekside parcels of land on Butte Creek adjacent to key spawning and rearing habitat for spring-run and fall-run chinook salmon and steelhead. The Butte Creek Ecological Preserve was set up as an umbrella organization to manage CDFG lands and a recently purchased 93-acre parcel for restoration and educational purposes. These are key components of the Butte Creek riparian corridor that provide spawning and rearing habitat for listed anadromous fish species. On Big Chico Creek, the AFRP, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and the Wildlife Conservation Board recently acquired a \$3.5 million dollar parcel located adjacent and upstream of Bidwell Park that includes 3.5 miles of riparian habitat corridor. Funding from this proposal would provide the ability to restore and preserve acquired parcels on both creeks and develop an endowment fund for the Simmons Ranch parcel to allow for management in perpetuity. These preserves will protect listed anadromous fish habitat and provide an outdoor education laboratory that will be used to further the habitat restoration and preservation goals of CVPIA and CALFED.

3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner. Feasible, likely to move forward.

4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project. Applicant is qualified.

5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance). The Panel expects that local involvement by Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance and Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy is likely given the applicants previous track record, but is not described in the proposal.

6. Cost.

7. Cost sharing.

8. Additional comments. The TARP suggests that "the proposal needs to make a stronger connection between the project tasks and direct benefits to CALFED" (and

AFRP) “species of concern”. It appears to be largely a request for funds to bridge a gap between property acquisition and property management. The TARP recommends that this project not be funded, with the possible exception of parts of Task 6, Monitoring.

The three independent scientific reviewers rated the proposal as Poor, Good, and Very Good. The TARP rated it as Poor.

Regional Ranking

Panel Ranking: Low

Provide a brief explanation of your ranking: The panel felt that proper management of parcels described in this proposal is important to the overall health of the watershed. However, the proposal doesn't reflect accurately the applicants ability to achieve this.

Because of the applicants unique position to provide a demonstration and educational components to this project the panel would like to see a more well developed outline that would demonstrate the three primary components (planning, implementation, and evaluation) of truly adaptive management. This approach would allow the project to truly be used as an "outdoor laboratory".

The panel suggests this project be resubmitted with more thought and detail given to an expected management plan and potential research.