

**California Bay-Delta Authority
Ecosystem Restoration Program Selection Panel**

**2002 Proposal Solicitation Package – Directed Action
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation - Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration
Project**

Final Recommendation – Wednesday, August 3, 2005

Amount Requested: up to \$64 million dollars

Recommendation: Fund w/ conditions

The Selection Panel received three letters from the general public during the 30-day public comment period of the Panel's initial recommendation. All three letters were from landowners in the Battle Creek Watershed. The ERP Selection Panel believes the issues raised in the comment letters are more appropriately addressed in the project's joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) and/or by the project lead agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). The State Water Resources Control Board is the CEQA lead, and the US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) is the NEPA lead. These public comment letters are available for viewing on the California Bay-Delta Authority's (CBDA) website at <http://calwater.ca.gov/Programs/EcosystemRestoration/EcosystemBattleCreek.shtml>.

The Selection Panel also received a letter from USBR, CDFG, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and NOAA Fisheries responding to our initial recommendations (see Attachment 1). The Panel appreciates this response to the initial recommendation and the agencies' affirmation of a commitment to the project's timely implementation and long-term management.

The ERP Selection Panel would like to reiterate three aspects of our Initial Recommendation.

First, we recommend that both the CBDA Ecosystem Restoration Program staff and Science Program staff assist with independent technical review of future project management documents, including the Battle Creek fish management strategy.

Second, we urge the agencies to develop life-cycle models for winter-run and spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead before the construction phase of the project is completed. The Joint Battle Creek Review Panel (JBCRP) stated in its technical review that these models could be used "to demonstrate the degree of success of the Project" and "to explain what happened to the channels, habitats, thermal environments, and fish populations in Battle Creek." These models should include a level of specificity that allows them to inform adaptive management of the target species on Battle Creek, as recognized in the agencies letter by their commitment to modify and expand developing models for use in Battle Creek. We agree with the JBCRP that the models would provide a critical framework for understanding the observed responses in Battle Creek and therefore would be more useful if developed before construction is completed. Third, the Selection Panel believes that public workshops and meetings that bring together the State and Federal agencies, PG&E, the scientific community, and local

stakeholders are necessary to ensure the success of restoration efforts. These public forums will also ensure that regular reports and information collected during project implementation are widely disseminated and that there is accountability by the agencies with a role during and after implementation of the Restoration Project. The project agencies should work with the CBDA ERP staff to schedule these forums at key times during project implementation.