

# Final Selection Panel Review

0040

Providing Landowner Incentives to encourage Riparian Restoration and Natural River Processes on Working Landscapes.

CSU, Chico Research Foundation

**Applicant amount requested: \$2,148,602**

**Fund This Amount: \$600,000**

The Program should reconsider this proposal if revised. The Panel indicated that the numerous components of the project aren't necessarily integrated and there was insufficient detail in the budget. Additionally, the Panel noted that the applicant may not have strong support from certain segments of the landowner community. The Panel recommends funding only the tasks related to safe harbor and basic landowner conservation assistance for \$600,000. The revisions to the proposal should focus on the development of a safe harbor agreement, demonstrating better integration with the USFWS process. The proposal should be clear on its commitment to provide a state ESA safe harbor agreement under applicable provisions of the Fish and Game Code. The proposal should also focus on basic landowner assistance, including permit assistance, the conservation assistance library publication, and related landowner workshops and conservation tools. The applicant should provide a revised budget that includes a more detailed breakdown of costs and provide a response to the concerns about landowner support raised in the regional review.

Several comments were received on this proposal. One set of comments came from SRCAF responding to the initial comments from the Selection Panel indicating a commitment to address the budget detail, monitoring program, and include treatment on how a state safe harbor agreement might work. They also noted that they are working on funding for continued support of the Forum.

Three sets of comments were in opposition to funding this proposal. One of these included attachments documenting the lack of support by local interests for the Forum until a Good Neighbor Policy is adopted. One issue raised by the commenter was a lack of community landowner support for this proposal; in response to this issue, the Forum indicated that they had not requested any letters of support. The Selection Panel noted that, in general, the ERP PSP discourages submission of letters of support during the public comment period.

The Selection Panel noted that the comment letters raise the question that without confirmed local government or landowner support, whether these funds can be used successfully. The Selection Panel noted that this proposal was directed at answering the key complaint of these entities. The Panel noted that safe harbor is one of the tools that can be used to address landowner concerns. This proposal is about making this tool available to landowners.

The Selection Panel recognized that the applicant had the responsibility of showing there was local support for this project. The applicant did not explicitly address the controversy associated with SRCAF and this project. That being said, the proposal meets the requirements of the PSP and goals of the ERP. As

noted above, the proposal had some deficiencies so the Panel recommended that it should be reconsidered if revised. As part of this process, the proposal needs to be revised to address panel comments and concerns, and show that they have sufficient local support to work with individual landowners for implementation of a successful safe harbor agreement. Once the scope meets agency staff requirements, it will be sent out for further review.