

# Final Selection Panel Review

0055

Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and

Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

**Applicant amount requested: \$5,457,960**

**Fund This Amount: \$0**

This project was reviewed as technically sound and recognized for its focus on high priority species. However, the panel recognized that the success of this project depends on access to the agricultural land. Landowner participation was not established. The Panel also questioned the need for such extensive baseline research without demonstrated ecosystem restoration given the level of cost. The proposal did not demonstrate a basis for selecting the number of or location of the test sites. The Panel noted support for the proposal's underlying concept of research tied to specific ecosystem restoration projects on the agricultural land. A future application may benefit if scaled back that includes greater justification of the site selection, benefits of the proposed projects and research, specific parcels on which projects would be located, and budget detail for the proposed demonstration projects.

Most of the comment letters received were dated prior to the Panel's initial findings. One letter of support from the Chico College of Agriculture dated after the Panel met, suggested that the scope of the project be confined to research activities in an effort to scale back the overall effort as suggested by the initial Panel findings. Although no specifics were provided, these revised activities may total approx. \$1.5 million. A second letter of support dated after the Panel met from River Partners suggested they would support research activities on their lands.

Although the revised project could have some merit, the public comments received did not provide enough detail (size, scope, landowner support, etc.) to specify how the project would be revised to provide this type of research; a completely revised proposal would need to be submitted. As such the comments received did not alter the Selection Panel's initial findings. A future proposal with greater detail outlining a research project of this nature is encouraged in response to a future funding opportunity.