CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP Directed Actions -- Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 123DA
Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.
Proposal Title: Assessment of life-history characteristics and genetic composition of *Oncorhynchus mykiss* throughout the Central Valley

Recommendation: Not Recommended

Amount: $0

Provide a brief explanation of your rating:

The applicants proposed to assess life-history characteristics and genetic composition of anadromous steelhead and resident rainbow trout populations using scales collected from fish in 12 streams within the Central Valley. Although additional information on the life-history characteristics and genetics of steelhead/rainbow trout is needed, the Selection Panel agrees with the technical reviewer who assessed the proposal as costly and lacking a detailed sampling plan. Although the revised proposal is focused on the Central Valley ESU, as recommended in the panel's previous comments, costs remain high. Furthermore, the proposal does not adequately reflect clear coordination with CDFG and NMFS genetics collections and another CDFG study, as recommended by the panel previously. The Selection Panel does not recommend funding this proposal.

Research and Restoration External Review Form
CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program 2002 Proposal Solicitation Package

Proposal Title: ***Assessment of Life-History Characteristics and Genetic Composition of*** *Oncorhynchus mykiss* ***Throughout California***

Review:

I reviewed an earlier draft of this proposal and had ambivalent feelings towards it at that time. Although the price tag on the revised proposal seems modestly reduced (down to "only" about $475k over three years), the reduction in total cost seems primarily due to the reduction in the scope of the proposed work (now limited to CV steelhead only whereas I believe that the original proposal included other locations in northern CA outside the CV).

My continued ambivalence is traced to the following problems that I continue to have with this proposal:

1. There are absolutely no maps or indiciations of the specific locations where steelhead/rainbow trout scales might be collected. Instead, there is only a vague reference to "12 streams". Surely the authors should be expected to have developed some notion of where and when they wish to collect scale samples, and I mean more specific dates and locations than "in the Yuba River". In particular, if they wish to assess variation in life histories, then it would seem to make sense to collect fish from above, well below and perhaps near the current "end" of anadromy in each of the streams where they will be sampling. And, of course, many large streams will themselves have substantial and perhaps complicated tributary structure.

2. Development of a sampling plan is proposed as part of the project that would be funded by CALFED. How can one possibly judge the cost-effectiveness or cost-justification of a project for which there is no preliminary sampling plan? The authors mention some vague target of 12 streams x 100 scale samples (i.e., adult fish, I guess) per stream x 3 years = 3600 scale samples, but provide no basis for assessment of whether or not they will, in fact, achieve this vaguely specified goal.

3. The project remains expensive, although not perhaps by inflated CALFED standards. I am particularly disturbed by the $50k/yr price tag for what amounts to 28 weeks of scale reading and analysis per year. That's amount a rate of $90k/yr for a full-time consultant employee to read scales and mess with their analysis. If Cramer & Associates were providing the equipment to carry out the analyses, perhaps such extreme costs might be justified. But they are also requesting funds for an imaging system, scale press and other items that they theoretically ought already to have if they indeed have "highly trained" scale readers in their firm.

4. I am disturbed that the authors of the proposal have not explicitly identified individuals from agencies and fisheries conservation groups, etc., who will agree to serve on their technical committee. Indeed, it is unclear just exactly what entity or individual would provide the needed expertise to develop "a comprehensive and statistically rigorous sampling plan" (whatever that might possibly mean).

In conclusion, I feel that this project basically asks for three year funding for a project for which no detailed "sampling plan" yet exists. Given the substantial funding requested for this project, I recommend that no more than $50k be awarded to Cramer and Assoc. to convene the "technical working group", if they can, and develop a "a comprehensive and statistically rigorous sampling plan" which could then become the basis for a serious CALFED effort. Otherwise, CALFED will be funding a costly project with an unspecified plan. I just can't see that as good science.

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CALFED Bay-Delta Directed Action
Administrative Review
Budget Evaluation

Proposal number: 123

Proposal title: Assessment of life-history characteristics and genetic composition of *Oncorhynchus mykiss* throughout the Central Valley.

1. Does the proposal include a detailed budget for each year of requested support?

Yes

If no, please explain:

2. Does the proposal include a detailed budget for each task identified?

Yes

If no, please explain:

3. Does the proposal clearly state the type of expenses encompassed in indirect rates or overhead costs?

Yes

If no, please explain:

4. Are appropriate project management costs clearly identified?

I don't know. Project management costs are included in each of the tasks as supervision by a Bio I, II, or III. That inclusion is not overly evident in the budget table.

If no, please explain:

5. Do the total funds requested (Form I, Question 17A) equal the combined total annual costs in the budget summary?

Yes

If no, please explain (for example, are costs tp be reimburse by cost share funds included in budget summary).

6. Does the budget justification adequately explain major expenses?

Yes

If no, please explain:

7. Are there other budget issues that warrant consideration?

No

If yes, please explain:

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