Proposal Reviews

#8: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review	
Delta Regional Review	
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Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP
Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review Form

Proposal Number: 8

Applicant Organization: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Proposal Title: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Superior: outstanding in all respects;
Above Average: Quality proposal, medium or high regional value, and no significant administrative concerns;
Adequate: No serious deficiencies, no significant regional impediments, and no significant administrative concerns;
Not Recommended: Serious deficiencies, significant regional impediments or significant administrative concerns.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating
-Superior	**A consortium of local governmental leaders (ABAG) is working to promulgate the CALFED goal of restoring in-channel islands. They request funding for a second phase that will review current methods and plan for a third phase where different berm stabilization techniques will be attempted on Rhode Island. They have presented a very good methodical approach, but failed to develop conceptual models of the processes that build and erode islands. They do not plan to collect data on sediment dynamics until the next phase (Phase III). And they do not share the results of Phase I to help the reviewers judge the value of the project. Further, most of the work will be done by people/groups yet to be hired, making judgment of capabilities regarding the actual design work impossible. Although a strength of this proposal is the clear administrative planning path outlined, this is not complemented by technical aspects (monitoring, success criteria, performance measures) needed for adaptive management. Even though the work is still in a planning stage through the portion of the funding requested, the panel would like to see better geomorphological context and better integration of the Phase I results. The panel recommends the applicant resubmit a proposal in the next funding cycle that addresses these concerns.**
-Above average	
-Adequate	
XNot recommended	

1. **Goals and Justification.** Does the proposal present a clear statement of goals, objectives and hypotheses? Does the proposal present a clear justification and conceptual model for the project?

The justification for this work is largely through CALFEDs ERP Plan. There is only a weak description of conceptual models with no geological context. For example, no consideration of how the in-channel islands were originally formed was given, nor what might happen if there were no berms around the island. An ecological target for the island needs to be established and supported by a clear rationale based upon its physical setting and processes.

2. **Likelihood of Success (Approach, Feasibility, Capabilities and Performance Measures).** Is the project likely to succeed based on the approach, feasibility and project team capabilities? Are the proposed performance measures adequate for measuring the project's success?

   The proponents approach toward gaining an understanding of the physical conditions and stressors needed for the project design is a strength of the proposal. Their attention to permitting and construction design appears excellent, though the actual work will be performed by consultants (and thus cannot be judged yet). The project will build on information from ongoing studies at Rhode Island and especially other sites (e.g., Georgiana Slough). The panel was mixed on whether the proposed work has potential to generate valuable and novel information regarding the preservation and restoration of in-channel islands. Certainly in Phase II alone, it will not. The approach is well documented. With carefully planning and proper execution, this work has the potential to produce new, important information. Performance standards are interpreted in this proposal as the ecological responses (physical and biological) of the system to the construction trials set to occur during the next phase and funding cycle of the project (Phase III). Therefore, performance measures are not explicitly stated here, but they will be developed for Phase III. The group is well informed and poised to carry out the project using the latest information to guide development and implementation of in-channel island restoration techniques (from on-going projects in the region). However, no results from Phase I were presented in the proposal. These results would help the review panel evaluate the current habitat value of the island and the need for the restoration.

3. **Outcomes and Products.** Will the project advance the state of scientific knowledge in general and/or make an important contribution to the state of knowledge of the Bay-Delta Watershed? For restoration proposals, is the project likely to contribute to ecosystem restoration or species recoveries in a significant way? Will the project produce products useful to decision-makers and scientists?

   Aside from the on the ground restoration in the next Phase, products will be largely reports and presentations. These will focus on the physical stresses at the site and new designs for erosion control and enhancement of sedimentation at the site. The management group is advised to explain mechanisms to allow information exchange for the next Phase (III) of funding.

4. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   Yes, but these are only estimates and cannot be adequately evaluated at this time.

5. **Regional Review.** How did the regional panel(s) rank the proposal (High, Medium, Low)? Did the regional panel(s) identify significant benefits (regional priorities, linkages with other activities, local involvement) or impediments (local constraints, conflicts with other activities, lack of local involvement) to this proposal? What were they?

   Delta Regional Review rated this proposal as high. They felt it was both timely and had the potential to contribute to understanding subsided systems and innovative techniques for restoration. While they wished the application would have specified how it would support Delta Priorities, they were satisfied with the abilities of the leaders and the connection to local stakeholders.

6. **<u>Administrative Review.</u>** Were there significant concerns about the proposal with regard to the prior performance, environmental compliance and budget administrative reviews? What were they?

   The 4 administrative reviews had no major issues. One reviewer noted that the quality of the feasibility study (Phase I deliverable) was poor. The lack of valuable Phase I results is underscored by the last comment in section 2 (Likelihood of Success).

Miscellaneous comments:

1) There is a clear need to understand sediment dynamics at this site. It would be wise and valuable to establish a set of monitoring stations to assess sediment dynamics now. The focus should be on rates of erosion, accretion and subsidence.

2) A consensus of the external reviewers was that this phase or a new Phase IIA should build pilot structures to test some of the design ideas prior to the development of a large demonstration projects.

Delta Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 8

Proposal Title: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

Overall Ranking: **-**Low **-**Medium **X**High

Provide a brief summary explanation of the committee's ranking:

Panel felt this project was urgent and had excellent learning potential as a pilot project. Panel rated this proposal high because it was action-oriented and restored critical parts of the Delta's habitat corridors. The project is also expected to provide scientific information that will be helpful in making decisions in the Delta.

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   I could not identify any local constraints that would impede the projects ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner.

    Island is owned by DFG

    Project proponents have essentially completed an extensive collaborative effort through the Delta In-Channel Islands Workgroup.

2. Does the project pursue the restoration priorities applicable to the region as outlined in the PSP?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   Proposal claims it meets two of the Strategic Plan Goals but does not reference the eight priorities for the Delta Region. Those that do apply are:

    DR-1- Restore habitat corridors in the North Delta, East Delta and San Joaquin River.

    DR-4- Restore habitat that would specifically benefit one or more at-risk species; improve knowledge of optimal strategies for these species.

3. Is the project adequately linked with other restoration activities in the region, such as ongoing implementation projects and regional planning efforts?

   XYes **-**No

How?

Proposal claims relationship to other projects such as the In-Channel Island Project and Webb Tract Island #3. Knowledge gained could inform any of these projects and future channel island protection efforts.

4. Does the project adequately involve local people and institutions?

XYes **-**No

How?

Most of those involved in the project are members of the Delta In-Channel Island Workgroup, an interagency, stakeholder, and landowner group formed to help implement the SFEP CCMP adopted in 1993.

The plan for local involvement, therefore, appears adequate

Other Comments:

 Highly qualified staff associated with ABAG, SFEP, and other participating agencies as well as stakeholder members of the Workgroup have the experience and perspective to ensure the success of this proposal as it relates to designing measures to protect channel islands using innovative bioengineering solutions.

 There is some uncertainty about whether significant effort should be expended to protect the inside and outside of levees of this island. In some cases, dredge material should be reused to shape the interior of the island to that in internal levee protection is unnecessary and the tidal emergent wetland begins to function in the near future. The rate at which sedimentation occurs on the interior of the island may be too slow.

 If successful, this project could be significant since it contributes to meeting CALFED tidal wetlands goals in a key area of the estuary. The results could guide more successful restoration projects in the future.

External Scientific: #1

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **8**

Applicant Organization: **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)**

Proposal Title: **Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

NONE

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Excellent	**A consortium of local governmental leaders (ABAG) is working to promulgate the CAL FED goal of restoring in-channel islands. They plan to try different berm stabilization techniques on one island that was completely protected by berms (and farmed) until floods breached the berms in 1971. The entire island, save the berm itself, is subaqueous. They have presented a very good methodical approach, but failed to develop conceptual models of the processes that build and erode islands. They do not plan to collect data on sediment dynamics until the next phase (Phase III). And they do not share the results of Phase I to help the reviewers judge the value of the project.**
XGood	
-Poor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   The goals, objectives and hypotheses are clear and consistent within the proposal, and consistent with CAL FEDs ERP Plan for restoring in-channel islands. Thus, the work is both timely and important.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

   The justification for this work is largely through CAL FEDs ERP Plan. There is only a weak description of conceptual models with no geological context. For example, no consideration of how the in-channel islands were originally formed was made, nor what might happen if there were no berms around the island. However, the work is still in a planning stage through the portion of the funding requested. Therefore, there is time to overcome these deficiencies prior to pilot/demonstration phase of the project (Phase III).

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   The proponents approach toward gaining an understanding of the physical conditions and stressors needed for the project design is a strength of the proposal. Their attention to permitting and construction design appears excellent, though the actual work will be performed by consultants (and thus cannot be judged yet). The project will build on information from ongoing studies at Rhode Island and especially other sites (e.g., Georgiana Slough) and has great potential to generate valuable and novel information regarding the preservation and restoration of in-channel islands.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   The approach is well documented. With carefully planning and proper execution, I am confident that this work will produce new, important information.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   Performance standards are interpreted in this proposal as the ecological responses (physical and biological) of the system to the construction trials set to occur during the next phase and funding cycle of the project (Phase III). Therefore, performance measures are not explicitly stated here, but they will be developed for Phase III.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   Aside from the on the ground restoration in the next Phase, products will be largely reports and presentations. These will focus on the physical stresses at the site and new designs for erosion control and enhancement of sedimentation at the site. This project is still in the planning stages, and the management group will be advised to explain mechanisms to further information exchange for the next Phase (III) of funding.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   The group is well informed and poised to carry out the project with the latest information to guide development and implementation of in-channel island restoration techniques. However, no results from Phase I were presented in the proposal. This is worrisome because it would help the reviewer evaluate the current habitat value of the island and the need for the restoration.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   Yes, but these are only estimates and cannot be adequately evaluated at this time.

Miscellaneous comments:

There is a clear need to understand sediment dynamics at this site. It would be wise and valuable to establish a set of monitoring stations to assess sediment dynamics now. The focus should be on rates of erosion, accretion and subsidence.

External Scientific: #2

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **8**

Applicant Organization: **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)**

Proposal Title: **Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

None

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Excellent	**The drafters of this proposal seemed to lack a thorough understanding of the environmental setting in which the project is to be implemented.**
-Good	
XPoor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   The goals, objectives and hypotheses are stated as required by the CALFED proposal form. All three state conditions for the ultimate restoration activities and none applies to the subject planning study. This leads to much confusion.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

The arguments for the restoration work are somewhat reasonable but do not address the planning study. The need for planning is clear, particularly when it comes to understanding what the restoration target is. However, planning should not start until the target is identified and justified. This will require some investigation of the pre-settlement landscape and the changes that have occurred over the past 200 years. Even if the target becomes the state at 1950, what proceeded this state is important to the restoration plan.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   Within the context a greater understanding of the origins of the landscape, the proposed approach could lead to the development of a reasonable restoration plan. However, given the proposed approach, this effort is not likely to generate novel or greatly useful information, methodologies or approaches. Only if the plan addresses the morphological and biological origins of the landscape will it produce useful information.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   The proposed work plan is feasible but it is not likely to lead to a successful conclusion. The scale of the project is tractable.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   Developmnent of the plan, completion of the design and collection of baseline data are the performance measeures. Their quality and timelyness are the measures of success.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   Discussed in Section 5.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   Given that the project coordinator is not on board, the staff at this juncture cannot be judged fit.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   If all of the elements for a succeeeful planning effort were included, the budget is adequate.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #3

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **8**

Applicant Organization: **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)**

Proposal Title: **Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

None

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
XExcellent	**This proposal is well thought out and has an excellent chance for success. The project leaders have a great deal of experience in the study region. I especially like the demonstration aspects of this project with the comparison of several bio-engineering approaches to the repair of the berm. This project will then be usefull to other projects, both in California and elsewhere. Therefore, this is a timely and important issue.**
-Good	
-Poor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   The overall goal of this project is the restoration of shallow water habitat (Rhode Island) in the Sacromento-San Joaquin Delta area, an evaluation of the technigues used in the restoration, and a determination of its ultimate success. This goal is being addressed in several phases. The first phase which was funded by Calfed has been completed and defined the needs and objectives outlined in this proposal. The new work consists of a two phases. The first phase is the planning phase during which: 1) site specific erosive forces will be evaluated; 2) a literature survey into bio-engineering methodologies to protect and restore berms will be done; and 3) the project design, environmental permitting, agency

coordination and environmental review will be completed. The funds requested here are for this first phase of the new work. The final phase of the project will be the construction, maintenence, success evaluation and monitoring of the restoration program. A seperate proposal will be submitted for this last phase. Consequently, in reviewing this proposal only the goals, organization and the tasks to be addressed in the planning, etc. are being considered. Actual workplans for the construction, success evaluations of the overall goals, and monitoring will result from this proposal and be presented in the future and could not be considered here. However, in responding to many of the queries presented in this review, the overall project had to be considered.

Despite this proposal primarily reviewing only the planning portion of the overall project, the goals, objectives, and hypotheses for the entire program (all phases) are included. This is helpfull as it puts the present work into context. The goals and objectives of the project are clear and consistant. The hypotheses are simple and testable. In addition, it is clear how the present proposal fits into the development of the entire program. I see no problems here. In addition, I believe the type of project being proposed is timely and important. Restoration projects are badly needed. However, the success of many of the earlier restorations have been variable. Therefore, the demonstration aspects of this project and the monitoring of it success are very usefull.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

   At present, restoration of habitats of all types has become very important. However, the actual science and pratical limitations of restoration programs are still not very well understood. Studies looking at restoration efforts, monitoring their success or failures, and sharing of this knowledge will aid future efforts. At present we have technologies to conduct restoration; needed are inplementation programs that comparee approaches and evaluate results. This project does that.

   The conceptual model presented here identifies limting factors for habitat and the stressors impacting the Rhode Island system. These seem reasonable as presented. However, not listed is the potental impact of subsidence. I assume with the loss of the berm, sedimentation has decreased, perhaps leading to some submergence. This is mentioned elsewhere, but it should be included as a stressor.

   I believe the selection of the area, restoration effort and demonstation is well justified. The restoration effort can be limited in scope (repair and maintanence of the berm), therfore, increasing the likelyhood of success.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   This proposal is a request for funds to design the restoration effort (demonstrating several approaches), as well as evaluate the success of the project. The actual methods for the restoration and monitoring will be developed and presented in the future. Consequently, in this proposal only the approach, tasks, timeline, etc. to preparing the plan, permitting, etc. is presented. Overall, the approach is well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project. The work here will not add to the base of knowledge or generate noval information in itself. However, the work will ultimately lead to the restoration and monitoring project. These are often

expensive and difficult. Therefore detailed planning is essential.

One suggestion to the approach that I feel would be usefull is the preliminary testing of some of the bio-engineering technigues. This project proposes to do a literature survey to find several systems to test during the last phase of the project. This is usefull and needed. However, it might be beneficial if it was possible within this planning effort to intitate some small tests of approaches. This would provide some experience and help define the larger scale bio-engineering approaches to be tested in the next phase. This would be usefull even if the preliminary approcahes used here on a very scale were not ultimately used.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   The approach for the work presented here to plan the restoration, evaluation and monitoring project is feasible and should be successfull. However, much of the success of the planning effort depends on the quality of the work of a number of consultants to be hired for this project. A good example of this is the proposed evaluation of erosive forces on the berms. It is very important to the planning, but it is not explained here. Therefore, there is no way to judge the tasks or the qualifications of the consultant. Therefore, it will be up to the management team of this project to oversee this. However, I do not see this as a problem. The mangement team is very experienced and has the expertise within the project to assure this is done well. It appears there is the structure for significant oversight and evaluation.

   The scale of the project proposed here appears to be consistant with the development and objectives of the overall program.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   Because this is largely a planning phase with no restoration efforts, the performance measures are limited. These will be primarily a series of plans and documents to demonstrate the planning effort is being accomplished and the field measurements are being conducted appropriately. Therefore, there are appropriate oversight and performance measures to be successfull in the planning efforts.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   The major products of this study will be the restoration, evaluation and monitoring plan as well as the environemtal study. These are very valuable to the overall restoration of Rhode Island and are needed for the final phase of this project.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   I can not judge the past performance of the project personnel from the information in this proposal. However, the project team seems very well qualified and experienced in restoration efforts. I believe this group is well qualified to conduct this work.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   It is hard for me to judge the budget for this project as it is outside my area of expertise. However, the budget is explained well in the proposal and justified. The benefits of this project are very high and should provide some very usefull information. Therefore, the cost/benefit is reasonable and the project should be successfull.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #4

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **8**

Applicant Organization: **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)**

Proposal Title: **Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

none

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Excellent	**Fair to Good as proposed. Have authors re-submit at much lower cost and better written.**
XGood	
-Poor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   As stated, the approach does not seem to mesh with the stated "hypothesis" (which are most untestable anyway). The intent of the authors is not very clearly stated, although the work that they are proposing may be quite important. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

Not really. What they seem to be proposing is an engineering feasibility study to stabilize the shoreline of Rhode Island, and accrue some interior benefits to habitat. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   No, it is very confusing as written. It is too early to determine their chances of success. Shoreline stabilization is an old subject, the authors appear to be on a "fishing expedition" to find the most suitable approach for their site. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   No, and the feasibility of the approach is yet to be tested. Too early to determine success. Scale is okay. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   No success criteria are proposed, thus there is no detail to evaluate. The "monitoring program" does not seem to fit the goals of the project, AS PROPOSED. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   Too early to determine. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   Didn't seem to be a qualifications statement nor resumes appended to proposal. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   Way too expensive for what is proposed. PLEASE SEE "Miscellaneous comments" FOR DETAILED REVIEW.

Miscellaneous comments:

General Comments

This proposal is quite confusing in its stated objectives, study design and methodology, and expected outcomes. It took several readings to determine that Phase II appears to be a paper exercise only (a very expensive one at that), and does not include any in-water construction of a series of protective measures [to] allow a comparison of the cost, ease of installation, and effectiveness of bio-engineering construction techniques. If so, then it appears that the selection of shoreline stabilization method(s), and project permitting, will depend on the results of literature review alone, without any in situ testing. Does CALFED/ABAG want to take this risk, especially since the proposal authors themselves suggest that many of these techniques are relatively untested, or should this project consist of four Phases, including a new Phase III that evaluates the bioengineering techniques in the field as a true Demonstration Project? It would have also helped the review process, if the previous Demonstration Project results were made available in some summary form. Assuming that my assessment of intent is correct, then some of the proposed tasks seem premature, and it is way to early to talk with any seriousness about limiting factors, ecological end-points, success criteria (long-term monitoring), benefits to species and habitats, and restoration to pre-disturbance conditions (impossible in this readers view, since constant change -- in planform, geomorphology, shoreline configuration, hydroperiod, etc.-- of Rhode Island was the norm in pre-human intrusion stabilization is not the norm, it is a societal condition).

Is the fact that the property is owned by CA Department of Fish and Game going to ensure that the site will be protected in perpetuity? If not, there should be some sort of guarantee for a conservation easement/deed of conservation restriction for CALFEDs investment.

Specific Comments

Demonstration Project Design On p. 6, the comment is made The approach for this project is the demonstration of several types of bio-engineering materials [emphasis added]. Again, I assume that no actual in-water construction is going to take place in Phase II? Very confusing as written! Is the 7000 ft referred to on p.12, the entire perimeter of the island? If not, how will the long-term stabilization of remaining shoreline going to be guaranteed? What bio-engineering applications are intended for the interior of the island, as stated on p. 2, last paragraph?

Permitting Your final Biotechnical design package is scheduled for delivery in May 2003, but other elements for the permitting package appear not to be ready until November 2003 (topographic maps and survey), July 2004 (environmental documentation), etc. Is the proposed Draft CEQA/NEPA document completion date of October 2003 feasible in this context? Seems that the overall schedule for environmental review and permitting is overly ambitious.

Monitoring It seems that what should be monitored in Phase II is solely those factors that will instruct CALFED and the ABAG as to the best approach for stabilizing the shoreline against the forces of erosion. Assuming that baseline assessments are in place, the first five years of monitoring should address the engineering success of the project; e.g., have the shorelines been stabilized, has interior erosion stopped, and is sediment accreting, what are the changes in sediment composition and chemistry, and how has the hydroperiod changed? Also, it seems clear that the authors are anticipating the inclusion of adaptive management principles in the project, suggesting that it might be some time before the engineering success criteria are met. Beginning in the third year, you might start looking at the changes in plant species composition and areal coverage, and in year five begin the faunal assessment. I do not know the politics of monitoring in California, but I can state with certainty that monitoring should be a long-term process, perhaps as long as twenty years, especially if there is hope to demonstrate a quantifiable change in the production of sensitive species (their simple presence or absence will not be enough). It all

depends on CALFEDs commitment to a meaningful ecological outcome (fidelity and persistence) of these restoration projects versus a feel-good outcome that is politically and socially correct.

p. 2. The primary biological objective protect and restore shaded riverine aquatic, . Do you plan to depend on the self-organizing principles of ecological engineering to restore these habitats for you, or will there be active plantings, contouring, etc. activities on site? p. 3. the project includes a monitoring program to gather data to determine and evaluate the projects effectiveness. If I sorted this out correctly, no it wont, you will only design a monitoring program, rather than implement one. Either way, it is premature to develop a monitoring program, until you know what your are going to construct, and model its outcome (the first five years I refer to above). p. 7. How will quality (versus quantity) of habitat be measured? p. 9 (last para). ..emphasize habitats rather than species. Must emphasize both. We have learned that build it and they will come does not necessarily work, especially for sensitive species (e.g., light-footed clapper rail issue in California). p. 11. Expected Products Outcomes. Seems like a critical aspect is not even listed (i.e., project success criteria and the means to know that they were achieved!). p. 15 This project will aid in the recovery of Delta smelt We have no way of knowing this until well after the project is in place. p. 15. This project will restore and protect shallow water. Ditto. p. 16. System Wide Ecosystem Benefits. Do the GS and WTI projects include in situ testing of the feasibility of bio-engineering alternatives? If so, the data should have been summarized here. Many readers (especially from other areas) would have no way of knowing the success of these projects. p. 18. The Workgroup seems to have no academic members. If so, this is an oversight that should be corrected. Much of the new science of restoration ecology has not yet undergone technology transfer to the tool kit of practitioners. The latter community would benefit greatly from the insights of the scientists. This is especially clear in the broadly stated (but largely un-testable) ecological outcomes proposed for this project. p. 18 Cost sharing. This is a very expensive project as proposed (without construction, it is already being proposed at $7500 per acre ($500,000/67 acres) for essentially a feasibility study. An estimate of $248,000 for design services (over two years) seems obscenely high, even if it includes the topographic and erosion studies. The proposed cost share of 2.5% seems absurd; at least force the consultants to work at cost (without profit) to get the in kind share a little higher. Most federal cost share requirements that I deal with are at a minimum of 33% (one state dollar for each two federal dollars supporting the project). If this Phase II feasibility study were to represent about 20% (one-fifth) of the total project cost (a not unreasonable assumption?) then the entire project will run about $2,500,000. If so, then the restoration, protection and enhancement of RI will cost about $37,000 per acre, at the very high end of restoration projects (?). Either way, the cost of this feasibility study should probably be reduced by about one-third.

External Scientific: #5

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **8**

Applicant Organization: **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)**

Proposal Title: **Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

none

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

<u>Excellent:</u> outstanding in all respects;
<u>Good:</u> quality but some deficiencies;
<u>Poor:</u> serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Excellent	**The proposal addresses an important, timely issue. The habitat type and species associations to be protected/enhanced are clearly of importance to CALFED.** **The applicants seem well-qualified to manage and coordinate the project; however, the proposal does not contain sufficient information on the technical components of the project. In particular, there is little information on monitoring and development of success criteria. Demonstration of expert technical and planning capabilities in these areas will be critical in managing this project witin an "adaptive management" framework, which demands quantitative performance measures and the committment to sequential assessment and adjustment of project conditions.**
XGood	
-Poor	

1. **<u>Goals.</u>** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   The goals and objectives of the project are clear and appear feasible given the history of previous funding and related work. The goals and objectives are presented as hypotheses, which is odd, since there is no experimental or hypothesis-testing component to the proposed

work. The concept of protecting and enhancing flooded Delta in-channel island habitat is timely and important to the region and local ecosystem.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

   The study is justified relative to previous work (It represents two successive phases to a project previously funded by CALFED). The proposal cites examples of delta-island restoration efforts currently being conducted by other parties, thus the project is complimentary, and will contribute to achieving a "critical mass" of habitat restoration in the area.

   A conceptual model is presented, albeit briefly. A diagram with separately labeled components and arrows indicating relationships between components of the model would have been helpful.

   The demonstration project seems justified, given the resources to be protected/enhanced, the history of habitat degradation in the region, and the high chance of success if bio-engineering technology is properly applied.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   The project is well-conceived in terms of logistics and project administration. The proposal lacks specific information on how geomorphology, vegetation and biota will be monitored following construction. There is little indication in the proposal that success criteria have been developed to assess the results of the demonstration project.

   The project, if documented carefully, and if success criteria are developed, should represent an important contribution to the state-of-the-art in habitat restoration of flooded Delta in-channel islands. This information will be of greatest interest to other restoration practitioners, and also to local decision-makers.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   The shoreline stabilization techniques proposed appear to be well-researched, and a detailed literaure review is a component of the proposed work plan. The scale of the proposed project is commensurate with the objectives, the time frame, and the budget. Most of the technical work will be performed by a team of consultants (unspecified), so it is difficult to judge the capabilities of the team in this area. The monitoring protocols are not well-described in the proposal, and the utilization of monitoring outputs in adaptively managing the project site is mentioned, but not in sufficient detail.

   Considerable effort has been invested to document the impressive array of regulatory issues to be addressed during the completion of this project. the project proponents seem well-prepared to coordinate their efforts among the various regulatory agencies.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   This is the weakest component of the proposal. A number of parameters are listed to be monitored (geomorphology, vegetation, animal communities, including several species of special concern to CALFED). Unfortunately, there is virtually no discussion of the methodology to be used to measure these parameters. The proposal also lacks a description of success criteria to be employed during the monitoring program.

   There is very little discussion of how monitoring outputs will be used to periodically "adjust" the system, as is generally the case in a adaptive management framework.

   Virtually all of the monitoring activity is to be performed by consultants; nonetheless, the project managers should have a clear vision of the monitoring methodology prior to contracting the work.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   It is likely that the demonstration project will yield valuable information on bio-engineering and shoreline stabilization techniques. This information will be useful to future Delta in-channel island projects and should have direct application to riverine restoration projects in other geographic areas. It seems likely that a tangible portion of this threatened habitat will be enhanced and protected.

   It is unclear from the proposal whether or not the monitoring program will be succesful. The propoal lacks sufficient detail in this area. If monitoring protocols are poorly developed or inappropriate, or if success criteria are lacking, the project proponents will not obtain quantitative information upon which to base sound management decisions. In this case, considerable funding may be spent, with little to show for it.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   The applicants have already generated products for CALFED. They are clearly familiar with the needs and expectations of the funding agency. The existance and participation of a multi-agency technical advisory team to oversee the project is encouraging. From an administrative and regulatory standpoint, the applicants seem well-qualified.

   The technical capabilities of the yet-to-be-specified consultants (who will perform the bulk of the construction/monitoring work) cannot be assesed at this time.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   The budget appears to be reasonable in terms of line items. The proposed cost of the project seems appropriate; however, much of the work is to be performed by consultants, so it is difficult to assess the adequacy of the budget without additional information.

Miscellaneous comments:

none.

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #1

New Proposal Number: 8

New Proposal Title: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

1. Prior CALFED project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)

   ERP 01-N13 - Phase II Demonstration Projects for the Protection and Enhancement of Delta In-Channel Islands(Construction and Monitoring)

2. Prior CVPIA project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)

   n/a

3. Have negotiations about contracts or contact amendments with this applicant proceeded smoothly, without persistent difficulties related to standard contract terms and conditions?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain any difficulties:

4. Are the status, progress, and accomplishments of the applicant's current CALFED or CVPIA project(s) accurately stated?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain any inaccuracies:

5. Is the applicant's progress towards these project(s)' milestones and outcomes to date satisfactory?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain deficiencies:

6. Is the applicant's reporting, records keeping, and financial management of these projects satisfactory?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain deficiencies:

7. Will the project(s) be ready for next phase funding in 2002, based on its current progress and expenditure rates?

   -Yes -No **X**N/A

If no, please explain:

N/A

Other Comments:

ABAG has been a knowledgeable and effective project manager.

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #2

New Proposal Number: 8

New Proposal Title: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

1. Prior CALFED project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)

2. Prior CVPIA project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)

   98-F09, Rhode Island Floodplain Management and habitat Restoration Project;CALFED ERP

3. Have negotiations about contracts or contact amendments with this applicant proceeded smoothly, without persistent difficulties related to standard contract terms and conditions?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain any difficulties:

4. Are the status, progress, and accomplishments of the applicant's current CALFED or CVPIA project(s) accurately stated?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain any inaccuracies:

5. Is the applicant's progress towards these project(s)' milestones and outcomes to date satisfactory?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain deficiencies:

6. Is the applicant's reporting, records keeping, and financial management of these projects satisfactory?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain deficiencies:

7. Will the project(s) be ready for next phase funding in 2002, based on its current progress and expenditure rates?

   XYes -No -N/A

If no, please explain:

Other Comments:

Cooperator submited timely and accurate quarterly reports, billings, but quality of Phase I deliverable(feasibility study) was poor.

Environmental Compliance:

Proposal Number: 8

Applicant Organization: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Proposal Title: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

1. Are the legal or regulatory issues that affect the proposal identified adequately in the proposal?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

   All necessary permits have been or will be obtained. CEQA and NEPA will be complied with.

2. Does the project's timeline and budget reflect adequate planning to address legal and regulatory issues that affect the proposal?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

   Budget and timelines for permitting and environmental documentation very adequate.

3. Do the legal and regulatory issues that affect the proposal significantly impair the project's feasibility?

   -Yes **X**No

   If yes, please explain:

Other Comments:

Budget:

Proposal Number: 8

Applicant Organization: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Proposal Title: Demonstration Project for the Protection and Enhancement of Essential Fish and Wildlife Habitat at Rhode Island, Contra Costa County, Ca.

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

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

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

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

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

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

4. Are appropriate project management costs clearly identified?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

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

   XYes **-**No

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

6. Does the budget justification adequately explain major expenses?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

7. Are there other budget issues that warrant consideration?

-Yes **X**No

If yes, please explain:

Other Comments: