

Proposal Reviews

#70: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

Fall River Resource Conservation District

Initial Selection Panel Review

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review

Land Acquisition

Sacramento Regional Review

External Scientific Review

#1

#2

#3

Environmental Compliance

Budget

Initial Selection Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP Initial Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

Please provide an overall evaluation rating.

Explanation of Recommendation Categories: Fund

- **As Is** (a proposal recommended for funding as proposed)
- **In Part** (a proposal for which partial funding is recommended for selected project phases or components)
- **With Conditions** (a proposal for which funds are recommended if the applicant contractually agrees to meet the specified conditions)

Consider as Directed Action in Annual Workplan (a proposal addressing a high priority action that requires some revision followed by additional review prior to being recommended for funding)

Not Recommended (a proposal not currently recommended for funding-after revision may be considered in the future)

Note on "Amount":

For proposals recommended as Fund As Is, Fund In Part or Fund With Conditions, the dollar amount is the amount recommended by the Selection Panel.

For proposals recommended as Consider as Directed Action in Annual Workplan, the dollar amount is the amount requested by the applicant(s).

Fund	
As Is	-
In Part	-
With Conditions	-
Consider as Directed Action	-
Not Recommended	X

Amount: **\$0**

Conditions, if any, of approval (if there are no conditions, please put "None"):

None.

Provide a brief explanation of your rating:

This proposal is outside the geographic scope of the ERP. The Selection Panel believes this proposal does not provided sufficient benefits to the Delta ecosystem to merit funding.

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review:

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

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

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	The panel felt that this is a unique and valuable site. It addresses important issues. Because it is such an important area and the spring-fed river is unique, the panel feels that the land should be acquired now. However, the applicants should resubmit a proposal that better addresses the enhancement and monitoring portions of the project at a later date. The content of the present condition reports needs to be detailed in order to justify the \$330,000 requested. The monitoring program needs more detail.
XAbove average	
-Adequate	
-Not 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?

Goals. A major goal of the project is to acquire easements on three ranches - a total of 2,860 acres and 7 miles of river front (Fall River) in Shasta County. In addition to acquiring easements they will enhance habitat on the property which will enhance water quality in this spring-fed river where native rainbow trout and endangered crayfish species live. Sediment reduction will be obtained by increased streambank stabilization via cattle exclusion fencing, cattle access ramps, bank vegetation, and removal of non-native invasive species. Also there will be implementation of tailwater recovery systems to improve water quality. The landowners are very much involved with the habitat enhancement needs. The long-term goal of the Fall River Conservation Easement Program is to protect 20,000 acres/20 miles of river corridor. This project involves 3 of the 6 Phase I properties.

The goals are clearly stated. The concept is timely in that if easements are not obtained in a timely manner the land may be developed for residential use.

Justification. The full-scale implementation project is justified in that they are addressing CalFed goals (riparian habitat enhancement, non-native species control, reduced sediment transport and reduced nutrients). The conceptual model is clear.

There needs to be significant detail of what will be in the Present Condition Reports to justify the nearly \$344,000 requested to prepare them. Likewise the monitoring program should be better outlined. They are going to develop the monitoring plan as part of the project but still they could have included some details. Its price tag is not nearly so large as that for the condition reports so the fact that they dont have detail here at this stage is not so significant.

The idea of purchasing easements and the landowners maintaining ownership is cost-effective and benefits both sides.

- 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?**

Approach. The approach is well designed and should meet the objectives. Easements will be purchased and Present Condition Reports will be prepared, after which conservation plans will be designed and implemented (e.g. habitat and water quality enhancement, including cattle exclusion fencing, cattle access ramps (rocked), bank vegetation, removal of invasive non-native species, and implementation of tailwater recover systems). They have a sample conservation plan (Attachment 4) for the landowners that looks reasonable. They will design and implement a monitoring program.

The project will protect and enhance 7 miles of riverfront using techniques already common practice. If water quality is significantly enhanced decision makers will be able to point to this project as an example to follow. One concern is that they provide no details of how and what information will be collected for the Present Condition Reports and no details for the monitoring program.

They should have provided specific restoration goals for each of the three properties.

See Light, Erman, et al. 1993, Conserv. Biol. Regarding Shasta crayfish.

Feasibility. They have identified 6 landowners and have several more interested for Phase I of their overall project. For the funds requested in this project they have 3 willing landowners making the easement purchase feasible. They are currently negotiating easements and appraisals are underway. The landowner is required to maintain enhancement in perpetuity. With each easement acquisition they will secure a stewardship endowment to insure FRRCDs ability to monitor and enforce easements.

The project is feasible but not fully documented in that they give no detail of what the \$344,000 Present Condition Reports will contain. The project scale is consistent with objectives.

Assessing likelihood of success is difficult because in order to do this the habitat values of the protected river portion would have to be compared to non-protected portions in a controlled scientific manner over a long time frame.

Capabilities. The FRRCD has experience working with private landowners in the last 4 years they have executed agreements, which require 10 years of annual inspections, with 10 landowners for restoration, bank stabilization, and fencing. They get oversight from two technical advisory groups and their Board of Directors.

The individuals involved seem to be well qualified.

Performance Measures. Performance measures include easement purchase, success of enhancement, water quality improvement (temperature, turbidity, and NO3 levels), lack of violations to easement terms. There are not details given for a monitoring plan which surprises me since there have been other water quality improvement/monitoring projects in the region and they could have drawn on information coming from those projects. How the direct measurement of fish and wildlife health will be measured is not described.

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?

The products they list include the easements on the three ranches, implemented conservation plans, implemented monitoring programs, improved terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic habitat, and improved water quality. These are all products of value. Products of value coming from the monitoring will be to verify that habitat enhancement is taking place, but until monitoring details are available we cant assess how well this will be done. There are no indications of interpretive outcomes from the project.

They do have a detailed list of species that will benefit from the project and indicate how they will benefit.

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

Except for the extremely high cost of the Present Condition Reports for which we have no detail of what they will include, the other budget items seem reasonable, although its difficult to assess the cost of enhancement, etc. without a developed plan in place.

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?

Rank = Medium. It is outside the geographic scope for ERP, but the regional panel felt it was a great proposal.

The project relates to other projects in the area dealing with improving Fall River and its tributaries several of which deal with decreasing sedimentation. There is a lot of local involvement from the landowners, the board of conservation district is made up of landowners, and there is considerable involvement from several other organizations (McConnell Foundation, The Conservation Fund, CA DFG, Wildlife Conservation Board, CA Waterfowl Association).

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

Prior Performance no prior CalFed projects.

Environmental Compliance Reviewer says that for CEQA there should only be 1 lead agency, not 2. NEPA compliance will be necessary for the Shasta crayfish if Phases 2 and 3 are funded this year. Year 2 work will require a 1601 and possibly an Encroachment Permit and State Land Commission Land Use Lease. They will also need to comply with CESA and obtain a 2081 for the Shasta crayfish. Reviewer says money is allocated for legal advice with document planning but not for the actual document writing or permit fees. However, in the budget justification it states planning and preparation of documentation.

Budget On p. 3 the total requested is \$330,000 and the budget summary shows \$2,405,499. They show some cost share but not the amount needed to make up the difference.

Miscellaneous comments:

This project would benefit the region by protecting 7 miles of riverfront and improving agricultural management practices that would result in enhanced habitat for numerous species of interest. They should have provided more detail of the condition reports and monitoring program (especially the condition reports since they have such a big price tag).

Purchasing these easements would allow landowners to keep the land in agricultural production.

External Scientific Review. 3 Good

Land Acquisition:

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

1. Is the site's ecological importance documented in the proposal?

Yes -No

If yes, please import relevant text and citations here:

The Fall River, a tributary of the Pit River, is noted for its world class native wild rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) fishery and is one of the few remaining locations where the federally endangered Shasta crayfish (*Pacifiastacus fortis*) can be found. A few large springs are the reason the Fall River maintains a near constant flow and temperature throughout the year a key to the health of the wild trout fishery and a rarity in Californias dry climate where most rivers are dependent on rainfall and snowmelt for their flows. The agriculturally friendly wildlife practices found in the Fall River Valley attract large numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds, cranes and geese. The Fall River Conservation Easement Program is aimed at protecting 20,000 acres and roughly 20 miles of river corridor. This proposal is requesting funding for the first three properties in the Program. The Easement Program and the implementation of property-specific conservation plans meet CALFED and CVPIA goals by protecting and enhancing riparian and Fall River Conservation Easement Program Fall River Resource Conservation District Page 14 of 48 aquatic habitat, prohibiting the introduction of invasive non-native species, reducing sedimentation and nutrient loading and improving water quality.

2. Is the owner's willingness to sell the site documented in the proposal?

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

3. Is evidence of local government support for the purchase included in the proposal?

Yes -No

If yes, please explain:

Letter from county supervisor (but does his district encompass project?). Applicant is local RCD..

4. Is the use proposed for the site after its purchase clearly consistent with the site's general plan designation and zoning?

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

No change from current agricultural use

5. Is the land mapped as prime farmland, farmland of statewide significance, unique farmland, or farmland of local importance?

Yes -No

If yes, please explain the classification:

2128 of the 2860 acres (77 %) where easements would be acquired are prime.

Is the site under a Williamson Act contract?

Yes -No

Will use of the site change from agriculture after its purchase?

-Yes No -Not Currently in Agriculture

6. Is this a time-sensitive acquisition opportunity, according to the proposal?

Yes -No

If yes, please import relevant text here:

The Fall River is facing increasing pressure for small lot residential development, especially along the river corridor.

Other Comments:

Sacramento Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

Overall Ranking: -Low Medium -High

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

The panel felt this was a great proposal. The proposal is extremely well written and well thought-out; it was seen as a model proposal by members of the panel. The panel was confounded on how to rate this proposal (3 way split between high, medium and low). Part of the conundrum was that this project is outside the geographic scope for the ERP, yet the project objectives are aligned with the goals in the ERP/CVPIA.

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

Yes -No

How?

Local entities have joined together to match funds and collaboratively work toward protecting habitat and water quality on land in the Fall River area. A sequenced funding and activity implementation approach appear to be working quite well to protect streamside habitat.

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

Yes -No

How?

Section B.1 of the proposal (page 8) shows that "Habitats", "Non-native Species", "Sediment and Water Quality" and CVPIA Priorities "Biologic Resource Considerations", "Implementation Considerations", and "Economic Considerations" are priorities that will be addressed by this proposed activity.

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

Yes -No

How?

Linkage to other past and ongoing implementation projects is apparent in the proposal (page 9). The review panel noted that the description provided referred to multiple past and ongoing projects (1983 water quality study, 1996 sediment transfer studies, the 1999

restoration work on the recommendations from the sediment study and ongoing monitoring work).

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

Yes -No

How?

The Fall River Resource Conservation District board is made up of landowners and has a long history of working cooperatively with landowners to undertake resource protection, restoration and enhancement projects. The Conservation Easement Program has strong local support among landowners and elected officials.

Other Comments:

The Fall River is a tributary of the Pit River (tributary to the Sacramento River). Although it is now somewhat separated from the remainder of the Central Valley anadromous fish habitat, it is within the geographic watershed of the Sacramento River.

External Scientific: #1

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **70**

Applicant Organization: **Fall River Resource Conservation District**

Proposal Title: **Fall River Conservation Easement Program**

Conflict of Interest Statements:

I have no financial interest in this proposal.

Correct

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 literature review was not exhaustive. It was also hard to gauge team's past accomplishments.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	
-Poor	

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

Yes. Yes.

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?

Yes. Yes. Implementation: yes.

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?

Yes.Unclear. Probably not. Unclear.

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?

Yes. P>80%. Yes.

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?

Monitoring information is limited. Purchase of the easements, assessment of violations, little monitoring, otherwise.

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?

Yes: Model easement. Monitoring no strong. Interpretive outcomes are doubtful.

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?

Hard to gauge track record: looks OK. Team qualifications look good. Good infrastructure and letters of support.

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

Yes.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #2

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **70**

Applicant Organization: **Fall River Resource Conservation District**

Proposal Title: **Fall River Conservation Easement Program**

Conflict of Interest Statements:

I have no financial interest in this proposal.

Correct

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	I gave this a "Good" rather than "Excellent" because I think the applicants should provide some more specific details on their proposed restoration activities. As a conservation easement program, I think it well thought-out. As a restoration project, it has inadequate description. Overall, does CalFED want to invest \$2 million into preserving 6 miles of the Fall River or 2870 acres of riparian land?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	
-Poor	

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

As this project involves the acquisition of conservation easements along with associated riparian and water quality restoration, goals and objectives are structured towards the signing of conservation easement agreements. As the applicants indicate landowner approval of projects, part one (acquisition of easements) should be an easy goal to achieve. The second part of this program involves site-specific plans for restoration, most of which involve the institution of best management practices on agricultural lands. Some measures to combat erosion are also mentioned briefly, but not in great detail. There is certainly consistency throughout the proposal in these goals. There are no hypotheses to be tested as this is not a scientifically-based proposal. The applicants provide compelling justification for the need of implementing their proposed program, given the opportunities for conservation and the

pressures to develop in the region.

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 proposal is more of an easement program than a study, but the applicants provide justification for its need. A conceptual model of their program is supplied; however, given the scope of their program, this modeling effort is not the best way to visualize the needs and expected outcomes of their work. The applicants justify the need of funding for their program, and it is compelling that they include restoration efforts into their easement 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?

The applicants have been working to set up their program prior to this application and have their approach to the easement part of their program well mapped-out. Unfortunately, they have not established specific goals with regards to the three sites for which they have slated to acquire easements. Instead of an example conservation plan or in addition to it, they should have included specific measures for restoration at each site. The results of this program will provide 3 case studies of how private landowners/agricultural interests can be involved to better the condition of watersheds in the area and whether these practices will work on these size ranches. Otherwise, I do not see how the results of this program will add to the knowledge base. Applicants are using restoration techniques and best management practices implemented in other nearby areas, so the work here cannot be considered novel. The only unique feature of this program would be the involvement of the Fall River Resource Conservation District in the long-term oversight of these easements and in monitoring their effects on the watershed. I don't see where the information gained through this program will ultimately be useful to decision-makers as the results of the easements will be location-, size-, and site-specific.

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 first part of the approach, the acquisition of conservation easements, is certainly technically feasible, and, given landowner support, should be quite easy to attain. The second part of this program, the implementation of restoration efforts and "best management" practices on these agricultural lands will be much harder to achieve, given the level of landowner investment and involvement needed to bring them about. Additionally, this second aspect is not well defined in the proposal to fully have the ability to assess their likelihood of success. The scale of the project is consistent with its objectives, as it will involve the protection of about a third of the river miles of the lower section of the Fall River. Again, given the nature of this project, it will be difficult to assess the success of this program. This would have to be obtained by comparing this river stretch to other stretches that did not have easement programs in place and comparing their relative habitat values to the lower Fall River. This program is not necessarily set up scientifically to have a control river system where similar monitoring efforts will track water quality and living resources over the long time frame that would be necessary for benefits to be visualized.

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 a place that is inadequately addressed by this proposal. The main reason why is the nature of this program, as it involves conservation easements. However, the other aspect of this program involves water quality and riparian restoration through "wildlife friendly agricultural practices" and erosion control measures, from which success criteria could be developed. The applicants indicate that they will be monitoring such things as water temperature, vegetative cover and species diversity, and suspended sediment and nitrates in the water, but these are indirect measures to assess the health of local wildlife and fisheries resources.

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 products of value from this program would be the setting aside and protection of 7 miles of river bank along the Fall River. Other than that, there would be no tangible products of value, e.g. novel technologies or devices. Additionally, as this program would not involve any science-based restoration or demonstration, there are likely to be no interpretative outcomes either.

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 seem to be adequately experienced to undertake the activities they outline in their proposal. They cite a multitude of involved partners in the process and landowner support. The main applicant could have more experience with conservation easements but he has involvement of a group with much experience in this. The applicants cite a few projects that closely mirror what would be involved in their proposed program, giving the reader some assurance that they will be able to achieve what they propose. They appear to have the partnerships needed to achieve the goals that they state.

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

Some of the budget figures are very high, even disregarding the high costs of purchasing conservation easements. I was not certain to what "present conditions report" referred, and it amounted to \$343,647, which is pricey. The purchase prices for the easements seem very strange, but they could reflect landowner donation. If that is so, those details should have been provided to reviewers of this proposal. For instance, why is the River Butte easement so much lower than the other two? Why aren't the purchase prices in line with the amount of acreage and/or river frontage they provide? Given these problems, it is still very difficult to put a price on the benefits gained through land conservation.

Miscellaneous comments:

The applicants seem to have a good program detailed in their proposal and justify the need for their program based on opportunity and timing of land availability and local development pressures. They also provide details on living resources in the region that would benefit from the protection of habitat. They list a note-worthy number of partners, most important being the

landowners themselves. Educating the stakeholders about the importance of preservation of their land and in agricultural practices which do not damage local waterways and wildlife.

However, whether or not CalFED wishes to place such a large amount of funds towards conservation in a small area of the state will be what decides whether this project gets funded or not. I thought the applicants adequately described the easement section, but could have provided much more site-specific details of what they envisioned the restoration aspects of their program to be.

External Scientific: #3

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

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	I think this project would benefit the region by protecting 7 miles of riverfront and improving agricultural management practices that would result in enhanced habitat for numerous species of interest. They should have provided more detail of the condition reports and monitoring program (especially the condition reports since they have such a big price tag).
XGood	
-Poor	

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

A major goal of the project is to acquire easements on three ranches - a total of 2,860 acres and 7 miles of river front (Fall River) in Shasta County. In addition to acquiring easements they will enhance habitat on the property which will enhance water quality in this spring-fed river where native rainbow trout and endangered crayfish species live. Sediment reduction will be obtained by increased streambank stabilization via cattle exclusion fencing, cattle access ramps, bank vegetation, and removal of non-native invasive species. Also there will be implementation of tailwater recovery systems to improve water quality. The landowners are very much involved with the habitat enhancement needs. The long-term goal of the Fall River Conservation Easement Program is to protect 20,000 acres/20 miles of river corridor. This project involves 3 of the 6 Phase I properties.

The goals are clearly stated. The concept is timely in that if easements are not obtained in a timely manner the land may be developed for residential use.

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 full-scale implementation project is justified in that they are addressing CalFed goals (riparian habitat enhancement, non-native species control, reduced sediment transport and reduced nutrients). The conceptual model is clear.

There needs to be significant detail of what will be in the Present Condition Reports to justify the nearly \$344,000 requested to prepare them. Likewise the monitoring program should be better outlined. I realize they are going to develop the monitoring plan as part of the project but still they could have included some details. Its price tag is not nearly so large as that for the condition reports so the fact that they don't have detail here is not so significant.

The idea of purchasing easements and the landowners maintaining ownership is cost-effective and benefits both sides.

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 approach is well designed and should meet the objectives. Easements will be purchased and Present Condition Reports will be prepared, after which conservation plans will be designed and implemented (e.g. habitat and water quality enhancement, including cattle exclusion fencing, cattle access ramps (rocked), bank vegetation, removal of invasive non-native species, and implementation of tailwater recover systems). They have a sample conservation plan (Attachment 4) for the landowners that looks reasonable. They will design and implement a monitoring program. The project will protect and enhance 7 miles of riverfront using techniques already common practice. If water quality is significantly enhanced decision makers will be able to point to this project as an example to follow. One concern is that they provide no details of how and what information will be collected for the Present Condition Reports and no details for the monitoring program.

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?

They have identified 6 landowners and have several more interested for Phase I of their overall project. For the funds requested in this project they have 3 willing landowners making the easement purchase feasible. They are currently negotiating easements and appraisals are underway. The landowner is required to maintain enhancement in perpetuity. With each easement acquisition they will secure a stewardship endowment to insure FRRCD's ability to monitor and enforce easements.

The project is feasible but not fully documented in that they give no detail of what the \$344,000 Present Condition Reports will contain. The project scale is consistent with objectives.

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 measures include easement purchase, success of enhancement, water quality improvement (temperature, turbidity, and NO3 levels), lack of violations to easement terms. There are not details given for a monitoring plan which surprises me since there have been other water quality improvement/monitoring projects in the region and they could have drawn on information coming from those projects. How the direct measurement of fish and wildlife health will be measured is not described.

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 products they list include the easements on the three ranches, implemented conservation plans, implemented monitoring programs, improved terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic habitat, and improved water quality. These are all products of value. Products of value coming from the monitoring will be to verify that habitat enhancement is taking place, but until monitoring details are available we can't assess how well this will be done. I don't see any indications of interpretive outcomes from the project.

They do have a detailed list of species that will benefit from the project and indicate how they will benefit.

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 FRRCD has experience working with private landowners - in the last 4 years they have executed agreements, which require 10 years of annual inspections, with 10 landowners for restoration, bank stabilization, and fencing. They get oversight from two technical advisory groups and their Board of Directors.

The individuals involved seem to be well qualified.

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

I can't determine whether the easement costs are appropriate or not without local knowledge but I will assume they are. Except for the extremely high cost of the Present Condition Reports for which we have no detail of what they will include, the other budget items seem reasonable, although its difficult to assess the cost of enhancement, etc. without a developed plan in place.

Miscellaneous comments:

Environmental Compliance:

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

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

-Yes No

If no, please explain:

There should only be 1 Lead Agency for CEQA not 2. Environmental compliance is not required for phase 1 of this project. But if phase 2 and 3 are funded this year, NEPA compliance is required for the federally listed Shasta crayfish. Year 2 work will require a 1601 and the applicant may need to apply for an Encroachment Permit and State Land Commission Land Use Lease. The applicant will also need to comply with CESA and obtain a 2081 for the Shasta crayfish.

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

-Yes No

If no, please explain:

Money is only allocated for obtaining legal advice to assist with document planning and preparation not for the actual document writing or permit fees.

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

Yes -No

If yes, please explain:

It is unclear if the applicant wants all phases funded this year but if that is the case, they must obtain the proper permits to complete this project.

Other Comments:

Budget:

Proposal Number: 70

Applicant Organization: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Proposal Title: Fall River Conservation Easement Program

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

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

for both years

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

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

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

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

4. Are appropriate project management costs clearly identified?

Yes -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?

-Yes No

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

Don't know. This is a cost share. 17.a. = \$330,000.00

corresponding amount not found in total budget for project, but they're asking for less than the total.

6. Does the budget justification adequately explain major expenses?

Yes No

If no, please explain:

7. Are there other budget issues that warrant consideration?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Other Comments: