Proposal Reviews

#88: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Final Selection Panel Review

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review

Sacramento Regional Review

#1

External Scientific Review

#2 #3

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding

Environmental Compliance

Budget

Final Selection Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP Final Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 88

Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

Please provide an overall evaluation rating.

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:

A comment letter from the applicant criticized the project's ranking, asserting that prior reviews had missed key information and shown insufficient understanding of Putah Creek's issues. The selection panel, however, continues to recommend against funding for the project. This project was not supported by regional reviewers. The technical components of the proposal are weak in that methods are not adequately described, such as explanations of logistics of replanting and engineering. The conceptual model has inconsistencies with the proposal and existing information on the relationships of riparian parameters. Monitoring methods and use of quantitative data to test the hypotheses are not provided. Although one external reviewer considered this an excellent proposal, that reviewer overlooked its major weakness -- the absence of sufficient detail to allow readers to fully understand the project.

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review:

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

Proposal Number: 88

Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

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	While this proposal has clearly stated objectives, it does not specify how hypotheses will be tested nor does it adequately describe the methods to be used in the work. Specifically, the logistics of the re-planting process and the engineering are not described in sufficient detail. There were also concerns over the quantitative evaluation of the performance measures and the outreach work.
-Above average	
-Adequate	
XNot recommended	

1. <u>Goals and Justification.</u> 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?

Generally well written with clearly stated objectives but the proposal does not clearly specify how the hypotheses will be tested. Indeed, only one testable hypothesis was identified and yet no monitoring activities aimed at this were presented. While the work has a lot of local involvement, the PIs do not present convincing scientific or procedural justifications. The conceptual model is presented but is not really consistent with some of the ideas presented in the proposal.

2. <u>Likelihood of Success (Approach, Feasibility, Capabilities and Performance Measures).</u> 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 proposal falls very short on details of how the work will be done the logistics of the re-planting efforts and the engineering work are largely left to the reader to imagine. The methods were inadequately explained. The lack of a geomorphologist on this project (or not making it clear to the reviewers if there was one) is a major concern. A lack of focus on quantitative measures raised concerns that the performance could be assessed.

3. <u>Outcomes and Products.</u> 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 outreach work was complemented by the reviewers but due to an inadequate quantitative evaluation of the project (and concerns over what the exact design was), led the reviewers to question the utility of the products. It is not clear that decision-makers will be able to use the results or that this will contribute to the broader knowledge.

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

The costs are viewed as very high given the many concerns.

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?

This was ranked as low by two regional panels. Concerns included whether or not all the necessary parts exist for this project successful. They felt this was inadequately linked to existing efforts and that no specific project descriptions that lend themselves to assessment were presented.

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?

No major concerns

Miscellaneous comments:

None

Sacramento Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 88

Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

Overall Ranking: XLow -Medium -High

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

It is hard to determine from the proposal if all of the necessary parts exist to be successful in this effort. This is a next phase effort that would address many different things. There is a lot of local involvement. Linkages to existing efforts and a more comprehensive description of who, what, when and where would improve this proposal. It would be interesting to finding out how the current phase is progressing. There were also concerns about the budget.

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

XYes -No

How?

There are no specific project descriptions that lend to assessing feasibility. For example, the bank erosion project, they dont have a geomorphologist listed to do the work and dont have a design in mind. This is a next phase project and it is likely that it is all feasible, but it is hard to determine that from the proposal.

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

XYes -No

How?

The project addresses PSP priority Sac Region-2 and SR-4 priorities. Specifically, habitat restoration and restoring channel dynamics.

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?

This is a continuing phase of a larger local planning effort.

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

XYes -No

How?

Landowners and local government entities are highly involved.

Other Comments:

Positives: Good local involvement, and committed group with a positive track record. Landowners ready to implement stream restoration project (permission to others), remove NIS & develop a corner of a farm to demonstrate wildlife-friendly farming techniques to the public. That landowner is on board and dedicated to the project as Exec. Dir. of the FARMS program.

Negatives: Project doesn't mention having a geomorphologist evaluate the possibilites or possible failures of bank stabilization in this spot using trees. Inconsistencies in budget and budget justification. Internet publication is \$60K one place and \$90K another. Budget is large and some things not spelled out particularly well, like the toxicology outreach program. Also, the Streamkeeper's listed in budget justification at 450hrs @ \$36/hr, but the proposal says his time would be a match. There is a lot going on here and the entirety feels rather disparate, however needed, appropriate to the sites, and interesting. Feels like it needs some tightening up. Panel would like to see more specifics on the toxicology lab idea, too.

External Scientific: #1

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: 88

Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

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 am concerned about the impacts of the proposed vegetation removal on the healthy fish and riparian wildlife communities. There is likely little monitoring to detect any negative impacts.
-Good	
XPoor	

1. **Goals.** 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 clearly stated. A number of hypotheses are listed, however only a few of them will be evaluated by this project. The only testable scientific hypothesis relates to the effects of bank stabilization on water quality. No monitoring activities targeted at this hypothesis were identified in the proposal.

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?

There appear to be some inconsistencies in the conceptual model in relation to existing knowledge. In the problem statement, the proponent specifies that Putah Ck. has a remarkably diverse fish community and some of the best remaining wildlife habitat. The goal of the project is to provide high quality habitat for fish and wildlife. Based on the information provided, the riparian system does not appear to be broken, why are we trying to fix it?

In the conceptual model (see Figure in proposal) the proponent suggests that invasive vegetation reduces the quality of wildlife and fish habitat but this hypothesis is not listed on p. 2 of the proposal. It may be that the diverse fish community and wildlife habitat that exists is responding positively to the exotics, yet the plan is to eradicate this invasive community.

It sounds like the cause of erosion at the Hoskins property is related to Arundo development causing a change in the course of Pleasant Ck. However in the mainstem, weed abatement could lead to reduced bank stability as the roots likely stabilize the bank material. I saw no monitoring activities targeted at this issue.

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?

I'm a bit unsure of some of the approaches for meeting the wildlife and fish benefits of the project.

Task PIII-2: Invasive riparian vegetation will be removed and banks stabilized using grading and protective berm construction. I admit I don't have extensive experience in this area nor local knowledge, but I'm not sure the end product will be better for fish and wildlife.

Task PIII-2.3. Weed abatement implementation. Herbicide application at a large scale on a stream bank? Could this be harmful to the remarkable fish community the proponents are trying to enhance?

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 proponent has excellent documentation for the tasks and extensive local involvement - the work that is proposed appears technically and logistically feasible. The overall success, in terms of wildlife and fish benefits is uncertain.

5. <u>Project-Specific Performance Measures.</u> 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?

Many of the project components relate to community interaction and education. My concern relates to potential unforeseen negative consequences associated with non-native vegetation removal to wildlife and fish. The proponent specifies that perpetual funding for fish and wildlife has been secured. The monitoring is not well described, all that is stated is that work is performed by streamkeepers on a monthly basis by canoe. Maybe I'm being a bit of a science-snob here, but this doesn't sound too quantitative to say the least! Will the program be able to detect shifts in fish community structure or abundance, or changes to bird and reptile populations? Does the design of the monitoring program include sampling of restored and

unrestored habitats to quantify the benefits of restoration activities?

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?

Increased community awareness, involvement, education etc. are possible benefits. I would say the project is weak on monitoring, hence interpretive outcomes are unlikely. The emphasis of this project is on the doing, not on the evaluation.

7. <u>Capabilities.</u> 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 proponent apparently has a successful history of projects with CALFED.

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

The costs are high, but much of the budget is focused on the ground for weed abatement and bank stabilization.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #2

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: 88

Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

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	This proposal is potentially very interesting but unfortunately not adequately developed at this time. Information on the monitoring and the quantitative evaluation of those data to test their hypotheses are not provided. Further, the
-Good	
XPoor	engineering plans are not well developed and it is not clear they have the expertise for this.

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

This is an generally well written. The objectives are very clearly stated and hypotheses are provided but the proposal is not internally consistent in that how these hypotheses will be tested is not clear. The work is timely as prior funding from CALFED and others has gone to this group & this site and the work proposed here will extend that, enhance the restoration efforts and education.

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 conceptual model is outlined in the text and in Figure 2; however, there are some inconsistencies between the model and the text and many ideas presented. It is not truly clear how the community (e.g., fish) has responded to the non-native species and if this level of work is necessary (other than simply preferring natives). Further, the work is not really justified because of inadequate development of how the hypotheses will be tested using field collected data (see 3, 4, and 5 below)

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 shy on details of the engineering and re-planting efforts. An engineering firm will do the planting and design of much of the project and the reviewer is left to assume this can be done with no problems. I would like to have seen more on the methods. Having said that, the biological data that is being collected (no cost to this project; collected for 20 yrs by the Coordinating committee) and the follow-up weed counts, site assessments, etc. should provide valuable information on the benefits of the restoration. Given the large number of restoration activities it will be hard, however, for managers to determine which activity had the most benefit to wildlife (e.g., sedimentation reduction vs. riparian replanting etc.). Further, the lack of a geomorphologists on this project seems odd given the focus on the engineering aspects.

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?

Much of the project may be feasible as they have documented it (assuming they get the engineering right without a gemorphologist). However, on the replanting and the sediment ponds & traps we have no way to judge the probability of success. Further, it is not clear that we will be able to evaluate the outcome given the lack of attention in the proposal to quantitative descriptions of the monitoring.

5. <u>Project-Specific Performance Measures.</u> 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?

As stated above, the details of the monitoring and how the data will be analyzed quantitatively are absent. Further, they do not discuss how the effects of the ponds and traps will be assessed i.e., I dont recall specific mention of suspended or bedload sediment samples would be taken. Again [see 3) above] it will be hard to determine which task contributed (any/most) to improved habitat.

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 outreach work is excellent in theory module for schools and internet learning will be very valuable. Interpreting outcomes will be complex due to the problem(s) outlined in 3) above.

7. <u>Capabilities.</u> 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?

Quality of team is high based on prior work. I cannot evaluate the EDAW consulting firm based on what I see here.

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

the Costs are very high. Not sure this \$s are well spent given the concern over evaluation and outcome assessment.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #3

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: 88

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Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

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
X Excellent	Overall the proposed restoration effort appears to be well thought out with a number of specific tasks each with its own set of deliverables. These deliverables will be important in judging both the progress and short-term success of the restoration efforts. The long-term success of the project will be judged based on the percentage of riparian landowners that adopt conservation practices on their land and changes in the fish and wildlife community in the watershed. It appears that the Lower Putah Creek Coordination Committee is well organized and has the necessary commitment to achieve that long-term success.
-Good	
-Poor	

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

Goals and objectives of the project are clearly stated and internally consistent. The hypothesis that is being tested is that farmers can learn to be good stewards of their riparian properties and will adopt good environmental practices on their land if those involved in a restoration effort explain what is needed and work with farmers to reach common goals. In most cases, the best way to do this is to establish demonstration projects in the watershed to show the benefits of conservation practices.

2. <u>Justification</u>. 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 Lower Putah Creek Coordination Committee appears to have a very good understanding of the watershed and the voluntary cooperation of a number of landowners along the stream system. The restoration practices proposed are for the most part, proven conservation practices and appear to be justified.

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 proposed by the Lower Putah Creek Coordination Committee is very straight forward. They propose to work with cooperative landowners to implement proven conservation practices in riparian areas along Lower Putah Creek. They will then use these as demonstration areas to show the benefits of the conservation practices to other farmers in the area.

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 fully documented and technically feasible. I believe that if properly implemented there is a very good likelihood of success. The scale of the project is also consistent with the 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?

The project does contain appropriate performance measures both for the completion of short term objectives and in judging in the long-term success of the restoration effort. While the proposal does not provide specific details on the environmental monitoring that will be done, it does indicate that funds have been put aside as part of earlier court case (Putah Creek Accord) to monitor fish and wildlife in Putah Creek. One possible weakness of the proposal is that it done not propose to monitor specific restoration practices to quantify their effectiveness. This however may not be necessary since the restoration practices being proposed use mostly existing conservation practices.

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 proposal does specify a number of deliverables, which can be used to measure the success of the project over its 3-year funding period. Two very important aspects of the project in addition to the establishment of demonstration sites are the use of an Internet site to disseminate information about the project and engaging local schools to help test for toxins in the stream. This project has a strong community outreach component, which should help add to the overall success of the project.

7. <u>Capabilities.</u> 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 Lower Putah Creek Coordination Committee appears to have the necessary staffing, expertise and infrastructure to carry out this project. It is important to note that as a result of an earlier court case, there is an existing full time Streamkeeper working to restore Putah Creek and that the Streamkeeper will be overseeing implementation of the proposed project.

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

The budget appears to be reasonable and adequate for the work proposed.

Miscellaneous comments:

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding:

New Proposal Number: 88

New Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

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

00-F11 Arundo Eradication and Coordination ** This applicant is not the applicant/project manager for the 00-F11 project, but is a project participant and colloborator.

- 2. Prior CVPIA project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)
- 3. Have negotiations about contracts or contact amendments with this applicant proceeded smoothly, without persistent difficulties related to standard contract terms and conditions?

-Yes -No XN/A

If no, please explain any difficulties:

N/A there have not been any negotiations with this applicant. Please see #1 above.

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?

-Yes -No XN/A

If no, please explain deficiencies:

N/A - reporting, record keeping, and financial management for 00-F11 are not the responsibility of this applicant.

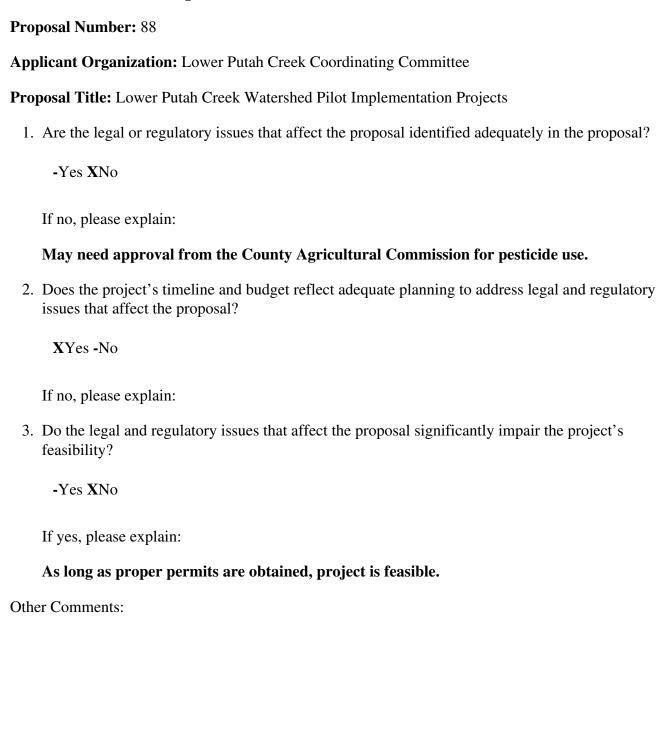
7. Will the project(s) be ready for next phase funding in 2002, based on its current progress and expenditure rates?

If no, please explain:

N/A this is not a next phase for 00-F11, though this project will complement the actions of 00-F11.

Other Comments:

Environmental Compliance:



Budget:

Proposal Number: 88

Applicant Organization: Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee

Proposal Title: Lower Putah Creek Watershed Pilot Implementation Projects

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

XYes -No

If no, please explain:

for all 3 years.

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:

Indirect costs are identified as forgone. Overhead costs maybe identified; check last page of Budget Justification.

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).

17.a. = \$1,098,269.00

Grand Total \$1,098,269.00

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: