

Proposal Reviews

#122: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Initial Selection Panel Review

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review

San Joaquin Regional Review

External Scientific Review #1
#2

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding

Environmental Compliance

Budget

Initial Selection Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP Initial Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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:

The Selection Panel agrees with the comments from the Technical and San Joaquin Regional Panels. In addition, the Selection Panel believes that this important effort would benefit from a broader ecosystem-approach and stakeholder support.

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review:

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

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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	Two external reviews rated this proposal as poor, and one external review rated it as excellent. All panel members agreed that the proposed involvement of all stakeholders in a consensus-building process might be a good positive process, but it is not a scientific process. There was therefore no panel consensus regarding the scientific merits of this project. Indeed, two panel members expressed concerns that this is not a science project and/or that it could not be reviewed in the same fashion as the typical projects reviewed by our panel. In view of this wide disparity of opinions, we have rated this proposal as adequate.
-Above average	
XAdequate	
-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?

This project proposes to develop a detailed conceptual model of salmon production in the Stanislaus River and to develop some simple quantitative population models that might guide future management of this river system.

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?

External reviewers expressed extremely diverse opinions regarding this proposal and expressed varied opinions regarding prospects for success. Generally, it was felt that a thorough compilation of existing reports and data pertinent to assessment of production of salmonids in the Stanislaus was a worthy objective that could feasibly be achieved. It was

unclear, however, whether or not this objective has already been accomplished. Two external reviewers expressed concerns that it was impossible to judge whether or not this project would produce a sound plan for adaptive management studies, whereas one reviewer felt that success in development of such a plan seemed likely.

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?

This project should certainly produce a useful synthesis and compilation of existing data relevant to production of juvenile chinook, but the structure of a plan is not explicitly described. It is not obvious how to assess a hypothetical product.

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

The cost of this project seems relatively modest by CALFED standards (\$212k over 3 years), but one reviewer expressed concern that development of a conceptual model and compilation of data should not require funding of this magnitude.

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?

The single regional review gave this project a medium rating but expressed concern that the plan produced for the Stanislaus might not be useful for other systems. That concern seems valid, but it might alternatively be argued that each tributary has unique problems and settings that require tributary-specific plans.

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?

No problems were identified.

Miscellaneous comments:

None

San Joaquin Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

Overall Ranking: -Low **XMedium** -High

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

Could have been high except it needed broader focus. Did not refer to other models.

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

XYes -No

How?

Assuming Fish Group is representative- see answer to Q4. Wonder if homeowners have input on Fish group.

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

XYes -No

How?

Focused just on Stanislaus would like to see case made for regional benefit

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?

Qualified Yes. Responsive to Fish Group so it is tied to Stanislaus River activities. Regional case not made.

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

XYes -No

How?

Qualified yes. Does the Fish Group represent all stakeholders seems very weighted towards the government agencies and water agencies. What about local and regional public interest groups. Any staff from water agencies or just consultants.

Other Comments:

Good idea but would like to make it more broadly applicable and generalizable for other watersheds. May be directly responsive to Fish Group but did not make a case for its system wide ecosystem benefit.

Surprised that with all the funding and projects in Stan so far that this so sort of thing has not already been done.

External Scientific: #1

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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	It always is prudent to evaluate existing knowledge to figure out exactly what you know and need to know. This proposal offers a way to do this for the lower Stanislaus River and has the support of local stakeholders.
-Good	
-Poor	

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

At some point when a system has been the focus of several studies, an evaluation of what is and what needs to be known is needed This study proposes to develop a model that incorporates existing knowledge and experience regarding fish populations in the lower Stanislaus River. The model would then inform us on action that needs to be taken to better manage or better understand the system I believe this is a timely and important goal.

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 authors point out that a conceptual model for management of the system is not possible until all available data has been examined and shared with biologists and stakeholders - which is what they are proposing - collect the data, develop a conceptual model, answer questions with existing data, and from this, develop research and restoration priorities. This study is 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?

There has already been much discussion as to what is needed and how to obtain it. The approach is straightforward and fully discussed. The results will be useful to 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 authors have done similar work in other basins, and they have the support of the stakeholders.

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 have described general performance measures, and have a work schedule which details the time lines for each task.

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 project has the potential to directly inform management decisions for this basin. At a minimum, there will be an assessment of the current state of knowledge, or lack there of.

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?

SP Cramer and Associates have received much other funding on fish-related project. I have no knowledge of their performance on these other projects.

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

Yes, this seems quite reasonable.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #2

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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):

I worked with Steve Cramer as co-leader of ODFW's chinook salmon planning team from 1986-87.

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 hesitate to rate this project because I do not believe that it is a "science" project in the usual sense. Among other things, the submitted proposal is frustratingly vague and contains only 3 references. I am also concerned that the project at several points refers to "consensus-based" models and making sure that all "beliefs" are entertained in the adaptive management process. While that strategy might be a successful one for "getting all stakeholders on board", it seems to me that beliefs of some stakeholders are likely seriously in error and ought not be considered in an plan for management studies. One of the points of science is, I think, to weed out those "beliefs" that may have strong adherents but little or no evidence in their support. Perhaps there proposal should be submitted to a different competition?
-Good	
XPoor	

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

I had extreme difficulty reviewing this proposal and have no idea whether or not it is 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 proposal appears to indicate the steps that must be taken to develop a "shared" conceptual model, but Task 1 of the project would be devoted to developing two conceptual models: one for chinook and one for steelhead. This conceptual model would be based on a number of previous reports and studies.

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?

Again, I do not feel qualified to comment. Based on the proposal, it is impossible for me to pass judgment on these questions.

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?

I have only a vague notion of the kind of adaptive management planning process that might emerge from this project. For example, at p. 8 bottom there is reference to a "simple quantitative population model" with parameters derived from hypotheses in the conceptual model. I have no idea what this means and there are no references.

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?

physical work products, many posted on the web.

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?

no idea

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 consulting firm proposing this research claims to have carried out similar "information gathering and model building" in other basins, but provides no references to such work.

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

Budget (\$212k over 3 years) seems modest by CALFED standards.

Miscellaneous comments:

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding:

New Proposal Number: 122

New Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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)*

11332-0-M007 Juvenile Salmon Outmigration Monitoring at Caswell

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

Yes -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?

Yes -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?

Yes -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 -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 N/A

If no, please explain:

Other Comments:

Environmental Compliance:

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

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:

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

-Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Other Comments:

Budget:

Proposal Number: 122

Applicant Organization: S.P. Cramer & Associates, Inc.

Proposal Title: A Plan for Adaptive Management Studies for the Stanislaus River Basin

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

Yes -No

If no, please explain:

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).

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: