

Proposal Reviews

#168: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

The Nature Conservancy

Final Selection Panel Review

Initial Selection Panel Review

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review

Delta Regional Review

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Environmental Compliance

Budget

Final Selection Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP Final Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 168

Applicant Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

Please provide an overall evaluation rating.

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

Amount: \$2,476,835

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

The Selection Panel recommends that project implementation is consistent with the terms and conditions of the previous contracts that funded acquisition of the McCormack-Williamson Tract by The Nature Conservancy.

Provide a brief explanation of your rating:

The Selection Panel continues to recommend full funding of the project. The Panel agrees with the comments submitted by the Delta Protection Commission and the Department of Water Resources' North Delta Planning Branch, both of whom emphasized the importance of carefully coordinating this project with Delta flood protection planning, in order to avoid project improvements that may be inconsistent with future flood management solutions. The panel therefore recommends that the project be developed to assure consistency with the development of the CALFED Delta Regional Implementation Plan and the CALFED North Delta Improvements. The panel believes the condition recommended will assure this coordination.

Initial Selection Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP Initial Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 168

Applicant Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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

Amount: **\$2,476,835**

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

None

Provide a brief explanation of your rating:

The Selection Panel recommends funding this proposal in full, and that The Nature Conservancy continues to work with the CALFED North Delta Improvements Group and the Mokelumne-Cosumnes Watershed Alliance during implementation.

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review:

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

Proposal Number: 168

Applicant Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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 the applicants have a well thought out approach to this project. They have a good team to accomplish the project tasks. Some monitoring details were lacking. Performance measures regarding the success of the habitat creation are not spelled out. The location of the borrow sites was questioned if the fill is to be taken from the island this could cause problems. The large size of the budget concerned the panel, e.g. the overhead is considered too high and the panel recommends negotiating this rate with CALFED. If these issues can be addressed to CALFEDs satisfaction, the panel highly recommends funding. The regional reviewers ranked it high, but say it needs to be coordinated with the DWR island wide plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Above 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. The goals and objectives are clearly stated. The hypothesis is that re-sloping and planting the levee will strengthen and stabilize it in addition to increasing riparian habitat.

Reviewer: There is not much measurement directed towards evaluating whether the goals of reducing local flooding, improving wetland habitat and biological condition will be achieved.

Project completion and monitoring not funded in this phase will be needed if information useful for the program regarding levee configuration and erosion reduction by plants is to be generated by this long-term project. Excellent information regarding planting techniques will be generated for this phase.

Justification. This project when complete will address a CalFed goal of increasing tidal wetland and will provide flood control. The conceptual model is clearly stated. The project is justified for full implementation.

Is there any relevant literature from the West coast? The model is extremely general would like it more grounded in the local conditions. How will the key unknowns listed on p. 4 be addressed?

Since there are 45,000 feet of levee and previous work (5,000 feet) plus this work (20,000 feet) leaves 20,000 feet remaining that is susceptible to failure. What is the condition of these remaining levee sections, what work is planned for them, how does the work for the funding requested fit into achieving the stated goal?

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. They gave a good description of construction protocol. Using local fill will be cost effective. It will be planted based on an adaptive management approach with information derived from the 2001 pilot project. Planting protocol is described well.

What are the methods and what is the duration for monitoring vegetation?

The project would benefit from a complete survey of the levees around the entire island. The applicant will not be able to answer the basic questions during the funding cycle because the area will not be flooded and vegetation takes years to develop. To benefit CALFED project completion and several years of monitoring is required.

Feasibility. Breaching levees will restore tidal inundation to the island and in order to do this they must reinforce some interior levees. Since they have done this before and they have a detailed protocol there is a high likelihood of success. The vegetation needs a long lead time to establish so flooding will not be in the near future. The scale of the project is consistent with the objectives.

It is not clear whether sediment removal from the floodplain of the island to build these levees will negatively impact the development of tidal wetlands planned for the site.

Capabilities. The team is well qualified and The Nature Conservancy has a lot of experience in restoration as evidenced by the many projects they have undertaken for CalFed and CVPIA.

Performance Measures. They will develop a monitoring program measuring the survivorship of the plantings and the presence of non-native invasive species for two years. They will use bird diversity, species richness, and abundance during the breeding season as an ecosystem health indicator.

Project actions will be assessed as linear feet of levee re-sloped, the slope of the levee, and elevation of the toe and crown. MBK Engineers will inspect the levee every 5 years for integrity and performance. They don't say how long the 5-year inspections go on.

One reviewer asks Why bird counts? Are there baseline data? What are the performance measures related to flooding? If the overarching hypothesis is that restoration of tidal inundation will create tidal wetlands, where are the performance measures for this?

Indicators are listed for habitat establishment, but no design details or criteria are included and so this aspect of the planned work cannot be evaluated.

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?

Their products will be the replanted levee and its ecological values and quarterly and final reports. The monitoring program will simply verify that everything is working as planned. One reviewer felt that the learning that will emerge is not convincingly demonstrated, but TNC does good work.

It is not clear whether the final configuration would then allow a portion of levee removal for seasonal or tidal flooding.

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

The \$500,000 for project management and overhead on the consultants fee was considered exorbitant and it would make sense to negotiate with TNC to reduce overhead on the contracted services.

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 = High

The project is feasible; the applicant is the owner; a similar project on the island has been successfully completed. It supports region priorities and builds on on-going restoration activities on the tract. They work with local stakeholders and institutions (North Delta Improvements Group, Mokelumne-Cosumnes Watershed Alliance, DPC, and Cosumnes River Task Force).

The applicant needs to coordinate with the island-wide plan being developed by DWR so as not to conflict on plans for particular levee sections.

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 Two reviewers stated that previous projects proceeded smoothly and that the applicant did excellent work and submitted timely and accurate reports. One reviewer cites difficulties with contract negotiations. Apparently the applicant raised additional terms for re-negotiation beyond that originally outlined. The State did so as well. This resulted in unanticipated negotiations over terms not raised during the PSAP process which took considerable time.

Environmental Compliance Levee work needs Reclamation Board approval and CEQA documentation. May need local grading permit. The reviewer questions whether time for addressing regulatory requirements is included in Project Management.

Budget no problems.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific Review. 1 Excellent, 2 - Good

Delta Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 168

Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

Overall Ranking: -Low -Medium **XHigh**

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

Proposal has potential to directly contribute to ongoing ecosystem restoration planning and implementation on M-W Tract but will need to be well-coordinated with existing efforts.

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

XYes -No

How?

TNC, the proposal applicant, is the current owner of McCormack-Williamson Tract (Purchase of the Tract was funded with a previous CALFED ecosystem restoration grant). A recently completed similar project on the tract demonstrates that the action can be successfully completed.

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

XYes -No

How?

The project will provide for riparian habitat on the levees and will advance preparation of the island interior that will be necessary for future tidal wetland restoration. This satisfies priorities 1 and 6. As well, the projects planting design will evaluate the success of different species and planting methods to find the most cost-effective method, closely related to priority 7.

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?

TNC has been actively engaged in the North Delta planning process. They participate in the North Delta Improvements Group, and stakeholder and Agency group that addresses CALFED North Delta Improvements specifically and Mokelumne-Cosumnes Watershed Alliance, a group that coordinates restoration and other activities on a watershed basis. The project builds on the on-going restoration activities on the Tract.

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

XYes -No

How?

TNC has coordination with local stakeholders and institutions through the vehicles mentioned above and also coordinates with the DPC and Cosumnes River Task Force. As well, the Cosumnes River Preserve has a regular program of outreach.

Other Comments:

Recent Subventions program funding cuts will make it difficult to receive funds for this effort through the Subventions program Early pursuit of levee sloping and establishing revegetation could potnetially support future implementation of CALFED flood control improvements in the North Delta area as well as the ecosystem restoration goals. As mentioned in the proposal, TNC will need to coordinate their efforts well with the design of the island-wide restoration plan (this effort is going forward though an existing ecosystem restoration grant to DWR and coordinated with North Delta Improvements) so as not to build-up any levee section being considered for a breach location. They are currently very actively engaged in this design effort. Technical review should address whether the width of area they propose for riparian habitat will be able to provide quality habitat.

External Scientific: #1

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **168**

Applicant Organization: **The Nature Conservancy**

Proposal Title: **McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management**

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 favor wetland restoration thru re-engineering levees and vegetation plantings. The flood control and wetland restoration benefits seems likely to follow. I am bothered by lack of specificity about what they hope to accomplish in terms of flood passage, wetland inundation, wetland topography, and biological recovery. I am bothered by what I see as weak monitoring. Indeed, this feels like an earth-moving proposal with little else around it. But I expect TNC to choose their projects wisely and the engineering firm to get their part right, so my assumption is that a useful project will be completed.
<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?

goals, objectives and hypotheses are well stated on p 2 and internally consistent. The hypothesis, "resloping the interior levee slopes to 5:1... will increase the strength and stability is a sensible engineering design hypothesis, but hardly a sufficient rationale to invest \$2.5m of restoration money.

However, these statements are not entirely consistent with the following (p 5): "The overarching hypothesis is that restoration of tidal inundation will create tidal freshwater wetlands"

My main concern with the overall project is that the framework and rationale is about flooding - the island with its levees impedes flows and exacerbates flooding; breaching levees will presumably (a) reduce local flooding, (b) improve wetland habitat on the island, and (c) improve habitat and biological condition. However, these are not stated as goals, nor is there much measurement directed towards evaluating whether they will be achieved. I can appreciate why the PIs would not want to propose things that are too long-term to measure, or too dependent on other, uncontrolled factors - but then, aren't the objects and goals largely disconnected from the rationale and justification for this work?

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

The justification is good. The proposal reviews some relevant literature on tidal wetlands, and presents a sensible model in figure 2. But on the other hand, this literature is from the east coast -- might there be relevant lit from the west coast? Also, the model is extremely general - I would have liked to see something that appeared more 'grounded' in the local conditions.

I like the 'key unknowns' on p 4. However, in the rest of the proposal, I don't get the sense of how these will be addressed. For example, will alternative breachings be investigated? Should they "just add water", or create hummocks and channels, etc?

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 appears to be based on a recently completed engineering plan. PP 6 and 7 are quite specific about plantings, and it seems likely that some useful lessons will be learned from the outcome. They may be highly specific lessons - that is a bit hard to tell.

Monitoring of vegetation plantings is proposed here as well, which is good, but there is no statement of methods, duration, etc.

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?

Feasibility looks just fine. They have done pilot work, and one presumes they have a good engineering design. While little is said about the design, and I do not have the background to evaluate it, I have the sense that they will successfully implement what is proposed.

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 will include linear feet of restored levee, success of vegetation plantings, and bird counts.

I have substantial reservations about this aspect of the proposal. A small issue is, why bird counts? Are there baseline data? this seems to come out of the blue. Much more importantly, where are the performance measures related to flooding? Will anyone look at the passage of future floods once the project is completed? At water levels inside the restored wetland?

Consider again this quote (p 5): "The over arching hypothesis is that restoration of tidal inundation will create tidal freshwater wetlands". I don't see much connection of this hypothesis and performance measures.

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 product is a new levee. Maybe there are some breaches as well - I never figured that part out. Maybe there will be ## acres of restored wetlands -- that part is also vague. The monitoring seems poorly developed. I can easily be persuaded, because TNC does good work and I have no reason not to believe likewise of the engineering firm, that after all the earth is moved and vegetation is planted, this island will be a better place. The learning that will emerge from it is not convincingly demonstrated.

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?

While I have no personal knowledge of the TNC team or engineering firm, I gather they are experienced and qualified.

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

well, \$2.5 m is getting up there. looks like a lot of earth gets moved and vegetation gets planted. I have no idea if the cost is appropriate, but also have no reason to question it. My above comments indicate my sense of uncertainty about the benefits - not because I doubt the benefits, but because I feel the case was insufficiently made.

Miscellaneous comments:

please see above. nothing further to add here

External Scientific: #2

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **168**

Applicant Organization: **The Nature Conservancy**

Proposal Title: **McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management**

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 like the project, but the approach and context of this long-term project are inadequately presented to make substantive judgements regarding critical components of this phase. I rate it 'good' because it is part of a long term project, but based on the project description alone, I would rate it lower.
<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?

The goal of the project will be to restore tidal freshwater wetlands to a large island (1,600 acres). The three-year project under consideration will implement a major task in support of the goal. It will reslope (5:1) and plant 20,000 feet of levees in anticipation of opening the levees to the Mokelumne River. A clear, general hypothesis follows the goal and objectives. The plan fulfills several of CALFEDs ERP goals and restoration priorities. Project completion and monitoring not funded in this phase will be needed if information useful for the program regarding levee configuration and erosion reduction by plants is to be generated by this long term project. Excellent information regarding appropriate planting techniques will be generated for this phase.

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 and illustrated, with most of the documentation discussing uncertainties in how the system behaves with respect to floodplain evolution and habitat development. The point this project addresses in the larger picture is whether the construction work will reduce erosion of inner levees and provide better habitat than the steep levees currently in place. Full-scale implementation is desired at this point. However, since there are 45,000 feet of levee and previous work (5,000 feet) and this work (20,000 feet) there will still be 20,000 feet remaining that would be susceptible to failure. The reviewer is left to wonder what is the condition of these remaining levee sections, and what work is planned for them, and how does the work for the funding requested fit into achieving the stated goal.

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

This project would benefit from a complete survey of the levees around the entire island. The results would indicate: 1) how many linear feet need maintenance (and would be regraded by this project); 2) how many feet are sound and would be resistant to interior wave erosion; and 3) how many feet in need of maintenance would be avoided to minimize impacts to beetle habitat (elderberry). The long-term approach appears to be good and well reasoned, but the project will not be able to answer the most basic questions posed by the applicant within the current funding cycle. 1) Will the levee resist erosion by floodwaters? Since the area will not be intentionally flooded during the project, there can be no assessment. 2) Will the regrade and planting maximize desired habitat attributes? Since the vegetation will require several years to develop, the final monitoring within the project period would not be able to answer this question. The final report might be able to project (predict) habitat development, since it appears that monitoring will be carefully planned. These are not reasons to reject this proposal, but it should be understood that information to benefit the CALFED program will require project completion, including opening the levee to seasonal or tidal flows and the synthesis of several years of monitoring data.

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?

Levee regrading and subsequent planting to develop riparian habitat should be straightforward. It is not clear whether sediment removal from the "floodplain" of the island to build these substantial levees will negatively impact the development of tidal wetlands planned for the site.

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?

As built assessments and periodic (5 yr) inspections for integrity are important measures of levee construction activities. Baseline vegetation and bird assessments have been completed, and further habitat assessment will examine changes from construction and subsequent habitat development (one or two years). Indicators are listed, but no design details or criteria are

included and so this aspect of the planned work cannot be evaluated.

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

It appears that the product will be a strengthened levee system around the island with weak spots along some the 20,000 feet of levee that is left unimproved. The regraded sections will be revegetated with native species to provide habitat and erosion protection. The final report will contain useful information on revegetation techniques that can be applied throughout the Delta/Baylands. It is not clear whether the final configuration would then allow a portion of levee removal for seasonal or tidal flooding.

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 applicant has extensive experience with similar projects in the area. The engineering firms appear competent, but there is no construction firm chosen.

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

Of the 2.5 million budget, almost 500,000 is project management and overhead charged on the consultants fee. This appears to be exorbitant, and it would make sense to negotiate with TNC to reduce overhead on the contracted services.

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #3

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **168**

Applicant Organization: **The Nature Conservancy**

Proposal Title: **McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management**

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	The applicants have a well thought out approach to this project as described in their well written and documented proposal. They have a good team to accomplish the project tasks.
<input type="checkbox"/> -Good	
<input type="checkbox"/> -Poor	

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

This on-going project proposes to re-slope a 20,000 foot levee so that when the interior area is flooded when tidal inundation is restored the levee will withstand wind and wave erosion. Riparian habitat will be restored on the inside slope of the levee. They will create shallower interior levee slopes (5:1) and stabilize it with vegetation. Fill will be taken from nearby borrow sites where possible, depending on local water table depth. Improved levees will allow use of the island as a floodway during major floods.

The goals and objectives are clearly stated. The hypothesis is that re-sloping and planting the levee will strengthen and stabilize it in addition to increasing riparian habitat.

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?

This project when complete will address a CalFed goal of increasing tidal wetland and will provide flood control. The conceptual model is clearly stated. The project is justified for full implementation.

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 to change the slope of a 20,000-foot section of levee and plant it. The applicants believe this will strengthen it so it can withstand flooding and increase riparian habitat. I didn't see any references listed to support the choice of a 5:1 slope, but they say that increasing a levee's cross section is a proven technique for increasing stability. They will use adaptive management based on the outcome of a 2001 5:1 re-sloping pilot project. Initially they will repair levee sections that protect homes, businesses, and farmland. Using local fill will be cost effective. They gave a good description of construction protocol. It will be planted based on an adaptive management approach with information derived from the 2001 pilot project. Planting protocol is described well.

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?

Breaching levees will restore tidal inundation to the island and in order to do this they must reinforce some interior levees. Since they have done this before and they have a detailed protocol I think there is a high likelihood of success. The vegetation needs a long lead time to establish so flooding will not be in the near future. The scale of the project is 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?

They will develop a monitoring program measuring the survivorship of the plantings and the presence of non-native invasive species for two years. Vegetation will be measured as % cover. They will use bird diversity, species richness, and abundance during the breeding season as an ecosystem health indicator.

Project actions will be assessed as linear feet of levee re-sloped, the slope of the levee, and elevation of the toe and crown. MBK Engineers will inspect the levee every 5 years for integrity and performance. They don't say how long the 5-year inspections go on.

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?

Their products will be the replanted levee and its ecological values and quarterly and final reports. The monitoring program will simply verify that everything is working as planned. I think they should add a paper to a refereed journal so the information that results from the

project gets broad distribution.

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 team is well qualified and The Nature Conservancy has a lot of experience in restoration as evidenced by the many projects they have undertaken for CalFed and CVPIA.

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

I really don't have the expertise to say whether the budget for the engineering and construction portion is reasonable or not. The portion allocated to project management seems reasonable.

Miscellaneous comments:

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #1

New Proposal Number: 168

New Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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

97-N02, Sacramento River Floodplain Acquisition and Riparian Forest Restoration 97-N03, Sacramento River and Riparian Forest Restoration 97-N04, Sacramento River Meander Restoration 97-N08, Lower Mill Creek Riparian Restoration 97-N14a, Cosumnes Floodplain Acquisition and Restoration 01-N10, Cosumnes/Mokelumne Corridor Floodplain Acquisitions, Management, and Restoration Planning 01-N23, Staten Island Acquisition All Ecosystem Restoration

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

N/A

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

-Yes XNo -N/A

If no, please explain any difficulties:

There were two related difficulties: first, after outlining six terms during the PSP process to be reconsidered, applicant raised several additional terms for renegotiation; and second, the State brought several terms back to the table as well. Both difficulties resulted in unanticipated negotiations over terms not raised during the PSP process which diverted considerable time as well as State resources. This situation was amplified due to NFWF's limited ability to negotiate contract terms."

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 -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:

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #2

New Proposal Number: 168

New Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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

96-MO6

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

TNC does excellent work. I have had other experiences with TNC staff and have only praise for their performance.

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #3

New Proposal Number: 168

New Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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

ERP 99-C01 Cosumnes River Feasibility Study

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

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #4

New Proposal Number: 168

New Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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

99 F05, McCormack Williamson, Wildlife Friendly Management; 98-F19 Cosumnes River Floodplain Acquisition and Restoration , CALFED ERP

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

Applicant submits accurate and timely reports and is very responsive to inquiries.

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding: #5

New Proposal Number: 168

New Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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)*

Hartley Island Acquisition, CVPIA 11332-7-G017 Singh Walnut Orchard, 11223-0-G014 L&L/Hamilton, 11332-7-G030 Birkes, 11332-8-G124 Dana, 11332-8-G048 Latimer, 11332-8-G123 Deer Creek Fencing, 11332-0-G016 Eagle Canyon (Pelton) Ranch, 11332-0-G104 Leininger easement, 11332-7-G030

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:

Although none of the above AFRP funded projects were cited in this proposal, I have listed all the projects funded by the AFRP through The Nature Conservancy. Excellent contractor to work with. Always on time and within budget and provides high level products.

Environmental Compliance:

Proposal Number: 168

Applicant Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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

-Yes No

If no, please explain:

Levee work requires Reclamation Board approval and thus CEQA documentation. Project may require a local grading permit, depending upon the volume of cut-and-fill activity.

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:

Unless regulatory requirements are accounted for under Project Management.

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: 168

Applicant Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Proposal Title: McCormack-Williamson Tract Restoration: Wildlife-Friendly Levee Management

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: