Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Diane M Johnson

Initial Selection Panel Review

0055

Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

Applicant amount requested: **$**5,457,960

Fund This Amount: $**0**

Panel discussion

This project was reviewed as technically sound and recognized for its focus on high priority species. However, the panel recognized that the success of this project depends on access to the agricultural land. Landowner participation was not established. The Panel also questioned the need for such extensive baseline research without demonstrated ecosystem restoration given the level of cost. The proposal did not demonstrate a basis for selecting the number of or location of the test sites. The Panel noted support for the proposal's underlying concept of research tied to specific ecosystem restoration projects on the agricultural land. A future application may benefit if scaled back that includes greater justification of the site selection, benefits of the proposed projects and research, specific parcels on which projects would be located, and budget detail for the proposed demonstration projects.

Do Not Fund

Technical Panel Review

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

Amount Requested: $5,457,960

Panel Rating:
Good – Quality but some deficiencies

Panel Summary

The Panel felt that the proposal is clearly written and addresses four Solicitation priorities and goals important to the broader application of restoration activities on farms in the Sacramento Valley. There is a robust linkage between research and implementation, although the implementation phase appears very small in scope for the proposed costs.

Qualifications of PIs and collaborators are strong and the proposed project builds on a successful model that has been applied elsewhere in California. However, the proposal lacks detail on how biological data will be collected on some of the MSCS species. This information is necessary for the proposal as well as for recovery planning. Farm Bill cost-sharing and permit coordination are positive attributes of the proposal. However, panelists expressed considerable concern with the proposal's lack of evidence of agricultural involvement in this project. However, the proposed research and coordination of restoration permits was considered very positive and could feed into a number of projects in the Sacramento River corridor in particular.

External Technical Review #1

Proposal Number: 0055

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

Amount Requested: $5,457,960

Goals

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**The problem is well articulated. The proposal includes specific goals and objectives (e.g., baseline investigations, monitoring conservation value of present agricultural practices, and outreach), as well as generalized goals and objectives (e.g., investigation of beneficial land use practices and development and enhancement of farmer incentives). The proposal includes goals and objectives for both ecosystem and agricultural interests, and includes links to ERP objectives.** **Major program components are research/monitoring driven, and include pilot implementation of conservation practices and development of a permit facilitation framework that could be applied to broader geographic areas.** **The proposal addresses all PSP priorities: 1) identifying relative effectiveness of conservation-based farming practices, 2) implementing pilot agricultural activities that benefit MSCS species, 3) implementing pilot projects to benefit giant garter snakes and water management assessment, 4) facilitating permits and regulatory assurances that benefit MSCS species, and 5) implementing pilot**

	projects that protect farmland and MSCS-covered species. **According to the conceptual model, the proposal addresses rice, orchard, and range habitats, but not riparian. However, riparian enhancement is identified in pilot projects. These habitats are clearly linked to MSCS species, including giant garter snake.**

Justification And Conceptual Model

Rating	**fair**
Comments	**The conceptual model demonstrates general linkage of habitats, ecological function, actions, and species affected. Because the proposal is research oriented, the model does not predict specific biological outcomes, but identifies better understanding of the systems as the primary output. The model is not at the level of linking environmental changes with effects on species' life histories, but probably is adequate to demonstrate relationship of program components to species/habitat effects. The proposal's text refers to feedback loops in the model as means for adaptive management, but feedback loops are not shown in the model** **Proposed actions in the proposal are justified and supported by the model, including pilot projects. The model does not clearly portray hypotheses or hypothesis testing, but these aspects are implicit in the model structure, in a general sense.** **Conceptual models are not provided for proposed field studies on fish and wildlife species (giant garter snake, birds, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, or salmon).**

Approach

Rating	**very good**

Comments	**Proposed tasks, methods, and deliverables generally appear appropriate for addressing the stated problems and meeting project goals. Completing the tasks and deliverables, as stated, should produce valuable information on relative benefits of different farming practices; demonstrate conservation−based farming methods for broader future use; and identify species−habitat−farming relationships for several MSCS species, including giant garter snake, western pond turtle, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and fall−run Chinook salmon, and various bird species.** **The proposal comprises a complex set of actions and multiple facets and partners, and can be viewed as a set of individual studies and actions conducted under a common theme and project management structure. Effective coordination would be necessary to maintain coherence of the overall project, as viewed by the agencies and public. The common administration/management structure would probably be cost−effective in this respect.** **All studies and projects are at research and/or pilot level, but should facilitate future implementation of conservation−oriented land use practices on a broader scale. Public outreach and facilitation of regulatory compliance should improve incentives for participating farmers, reduce disincentives, help resolve species−land use issues, and result in increased applications of conservation−based farming.** **Proposed methods appear appropriate. Habitat relationship studies for targeted species appear based in science and well planned. Hypotheses are provided for species studies, except for birds (however, correlation analysis proposed for birds implies a hypothesis exists for agricultural practices/vegetation and bird abundance).** **The run(s) of Chinook salmon that would be addressed is not clear for all portions of salmon study, but it**

	appears it is fall-run in all cases. **Deliverables for some tasks (Appendix D) seem deficient in the area of reporting. Sufficient reporting would be important to maintain clarity and coherence of project results and maximize returns on the ERP's investment. For example, deliverables for tasks 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 should be provided in report format. Deliverables for task 3.2.1 should include educational publications and a report on success of the task.** **Although deliverables for task 3.3.2 includes a regulatory assurances agreement, this product is approved by the agencies and is not a true final product to be delivered by the grant applicants. A proposed agreement may be a better deliverable. Deliverable for task 2.1.2 is termed "support" and is not a true, verifiable deliverable, as presented.**

Feasibility

Rating	**good**
Comments	**The proposal's approach appears technically feasible. Some of the work involves interaction with a public that is skeptical and wary of species and habitat conservation. It would be important for grant applicants to establish tactful, trusting relationships with landowners, strong landowner participation, and robust conservation assistance tools, because future participation by landowners and achievement of biological benefits would be the payoff for investing in the research and pilot groundwork identified in the proposal.** **Because the proposed actions would result in relatively little actual conservation on the ground and future funded work would be required to achieve a species-habitat payoff, additional information by the applicant on plans for future implementation of project, potential funding sources, cooperation with**

	partners, and potential for future biological results would be useful for this proposal. **With dedicated implementation, the likelihood of success should be high. Requirements and process for achieving desired results are well addressed. Contingencies for dealing with unexpected difficulties are not identified.**

Performance Evalutation

Rating	**good**
Comments	**As a largely research, pilot study, and public outreach proposal, the proposal does not incorporate detailed performance measures or quantifiable targets, except for numbers of project locations and their total acreage. Hypothesis testing is described in basic terms for most species–habitat studies (a hypothesis is not offered for bird studies) and is probably sufficient (basically correlations would be calculated). Variables for hypothesis testing are described only in general terms for some species (e.g., a protocol is referenced for birds), and more detail for others (valley elderberry longhorn beetle). Water quality studies provide greater detail.** **Monitoring is proposed for demonstration project sites to track response of vegetation and habitat development, but generally not for responses in fish and wildlife populations. It is not clear whether landowner consent would be needed to monitor project sites, or whether species population monitoring would be a priority. It appears species monitoring could be done in some cases; e.g., giant garter snake monitoring and habitat evaluation at restoration sites is proposed, if opportunities are available (landowner consent). Possibilities for other**

	screening-level monitoring for species and habitat conditions is mentioned, but is not described in detail and is not guaranteed. At the minimum, qualitative assessments would be made. **In general, monitoring commitments could be clarified by grant applicants. To maximize ERP investment returns, demonstration projects should be done only on parcels where landowners would agree to subsequent monitoring.**

Proposed Outcomes

Rating	**good**
Comments	**Completing the tasks and deliverables, as stated, would lay a good foundation for future participation of landowners in implementing conservation-oriented land use practices and resolving species-land use issues in the project area. Completing the tasks and deliverables, as stated, should produce valuable information on relative benefits of different farming practices; demonstrate conservation-based farming methods for broader future use; and identify species-habitat-farming relationships for several MSCS species, including giant garter snake, western pond turtle, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and fall-run Chinook salmon, and various bird species. Value of the project may depend largely on success of permitting system, and quality and quantity of monitoring data.** **The basic approach for public outreach and permit facilitation could be a model for other locations and other ecosystems. Habitat specific information could be applicable to other locations with similar habitat types and fish and wildlife species.** **Data would be stored primarily in electronic form at CSU Chico. Availability of data produced is not clear**

	(e.g., aerial photos, GIS layers, and listed species surveys). Some of this data would be sensitive (e.g., GIS layers with private landowner information), but all data should be made available to the ERP implementing agencies. It should be required that detailed metadata be provided for all GIS coverages and other applicable forms of data. Data that is not sensitive and pertinent reports should be made available to the public, as appropriate.

Capabilities

Rating	**good**
Comments	**I have little personal knowledge of the track record of the project team. In reviewing the credentials provided in the proposal, the project team, RCDs, other NGOs, PRBO, and university appear to be well suited for the tasks at hand.**

Cost−Benefits

Rating	**good**
Comments	**Budget appears reasonable and adequate for work proposed.**

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**Although the proposal does not emphasize large scale conservation work on the ground, the intent of proposed actions has merit. Completing the proposed work would provide a needed foundation for future participation of landowners in implementing conservation−oriented land use practices and resolving species−land use issues in the project area. Deficiencies identified in this review are minor and can be easily supplemented with additional commitments by**

	grant applicants. Tracking project progress by the ERP to ensure project success would be important.

External Technical Review #2

Proposal Number: 0055

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

Amount Requested: $5,457,960

Goals

Rating	**excellent**
Comments	**The proposed project is a coordinated set of field study, farm assistance, and regulatory deal making to promote conservation practices on farms with integrated assessment of outcomes. This is a large project that would have coordinated field studies, farmer assistance, conservation funding, agency programming, and outreach. The basic idea is that field biology information, implementation capability, and farmer incentives are needed in concert to truly make gains in enhancing key species in decline. The proposal connects a diverse set of organizations with expertise in research, agricultural community extension, and regulatory affairs. There are success risks on parts of project from studying some species to getting legal arrangements in place. However, the use of very different experts and organizations to do their parts makes the whole seem realistic.**

Justification And Conceptual Model

Rating	**excellent**
Comments	**YES – the core logic (info+capability+incentives=effective action) appears sound, it is detailed in text and charted as a concept map. The apparently simple integrating idea actually**

	includes many complicated pieces. The proposal covers them and provides a good description of the methods, steps, approach, or tools that would be employed.

Approach

Rating	excellent
Comments	Again – YES, see above comments. This project has high potential for integrating agriculture and ecosystem restoration because there are meaningful activities from field biology of key species to societal controls on farms. The beneficiaries of ERP projects are in the project; often as participants, engaged interests, or monitors of project actions. There will be outreach efforts and lots of reporting – but the broad reach of project activities should make its presence and progress apparent to many.

Feasibility

Rating	very good
Comments	There will be many specific risks and impediments in a large and diversified effort. These may not be seen as failures because each would provide a piece of practical knowledge and draw attention to issues and problems in making conservation work on the ground in an intense agricultural area. I believe there is a high likelihood that many of the components of this project will succeed, and it will yield as a package a thorough demonstration of one approach to getting conservation done.

Performance Evalutation

Rating	very good
Comments	A performance evaluation plan is presented, and it relies primarily on accounting for activity of the project components and tasks. With a good level of overall organization, it

	is easy to recognize what will be available to judge project progress and accomplishment. The organization sub-proposals, while short, contain specifics on performance, activity, and reporting. The component on field research of key species will go beyond many other restoration proposals in actually knowing about the end product of conservation efforts - the species. However, I am skeptical that the field data will be able to detect species gains due to new conservation actions because of timing. I do not see this as a problem because it is simply a limitation of a fixed project period.

Proposed Outcomes

Rating	very good
Comments	This is a broad integrated effort to get conservation established in an agricultural landscape. The main outcome would be a case where assistance, support, and incentives yielded conservation actions in tune with species needs. I am confident that some lessons and experience will be gained in attempting this project. Specific products of field studies, outreach efforts, and regulatory dealmaking will likely vary, but the use of specialists in all areas increases the likelihood of gains.

Capabilities

Rating	excellent
Comments	The project is built around people and organizations with specialized expertise and capabilities. Careful preparation of the proposal and compilation of organized sub-proposals indicates overall coordination will be good. Finally, many of the pieces have been done before by the same people and organizations so the gain here is in the

	unified nature of the effort.

Cost−Benefits

Rating	very good
Comments	This is a costly project but that appears justified. Each of the main components (research, district assistance, regulatory affairs) could be a sizable project on their own. Task 2, agricultural research, appears high and might be negotiated to be more in line with other early tasks. Task 5 is the largest but this is implementation costs. There is not enough budget detail to know the adequacy of all requests so some furthert cost analysis would be desireable.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating

Rating	excellent
Comments	This is an ambitious and large project that is aimed at the center of restoration challenges in the valley. Major design features are a coordinated effort by specialists and varied organizations; a logical approach that blends species, farmers, and government; and the model of what elements are needed to make conservation happen. The proposal is well organized and this suggests the effort will be coordinated. Making conservation happen will likely require the proposed set of actions to co−occur. This large effort makes a good test case and the experience and lessons gained could be critical to ecosystem scale restoration planning.

External Technical Review #3

Proposal Number: 0055

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

Amount Requested: $5,457,960

Goals

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**Project proposal clearly addresses identified problems of biodiversity declines, and farmer's hesitancy to become involved with restoration because of possible regulatory constraints. The project ecosystem goals address 4 of the 5 ERP goals by researching and implementing conservation practices that help MSCS and water quality. The ag goals are addressed by the development of conservation practices that work for the farms and by incentives. Objectives seem clear and measurable, and the two RCDs have knowledge and experience to work with farmers to implement restoration.**

Justification And Conceptual Model

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**The conceptual model is laid out clearly in a way that will not only collect new important information, but will also make sense to farmers.**

Approach

Rating	**very good**

Comments	**Protocols for research, implementation and incentives are well defined and seem very appropriate for addressing the objectives of the project's three goals. Results will add to the growing knowledge of conservation-based agriculture, which will be useful to farmers and others in the region.**

Feasibility

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**Project is feasible and should have high level of success. The adaptive management should help with contingencies that always come up.**

Performance Evalutation

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**The several aspects of monitoring include both pre-post comparisons and treatment-control comparisons. The evaluations should show a measurable degree to which the changes benefit MSCS and farmlands.**

Proposed Outcomes

Rating	**very good**
Comments	**Research results will contribute to a broader understanding of how agriculture can accommodate native species and ecosystems processes. Transfer of knowledge is most appropriate for similar ecosystems in the Central Valley, but information will be useful in a general sense in other regions of the country.**

Capabilities

Rating	**very good**
Comments	

	Team has strong farmer contacts and outreach skills, and technical expertise ecosystem restoration and with many of the MSCS. Infrastructure to accomplish project is in place.

Cost−Benefits

Rating	good
Comments	Budget seems high

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating

Rating	very good
Comments	True to its title, this project has great potential to create partnerships using research and incentives that will benefit farmers and conservation.

Sacramento Regional Panel Review

Proposal Number: 0055

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

1. Applicability to ERP goals and regional priorities.

The proposal states that the project would address the following ERP Goals:

Goal 1 – At Risk Species &Native Biotic Communities "This project will provide or enhance habitat for targeted species such as VELB, giant garter snake, Chinook salmon, Swainson's Hawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo and other neotropical migratory birds. The restoration will help aquatic species as well."

Goal 2 – Ecological Processes "This project will reduce the erosion potential of the site,improve water quality, establish native plants in a short period of time, and create conditions that favor native plants in some areas."

Goal 4 – Habitats "This project will look at agricultural and conservation practices that benefit MSCS-covered species and their habitat. The reintroduction of native plant species onto the site will improve wildlife habitat for a variety of species, by improving structure, cover, and food sources."

Goal 5 – Non-Native Invasive Species "Weed control activities and the reintroduction of native plant species are designed to limit the establishment of additional non-native plant species. This will reduce the site as a potential source of non-native species in the Bay-Delta estuary and its watershed."

The proposed project seems to be a priority for regional restoration goals, in that it seeks to narrow the often contentious gap between agricultural interests and ecosystem restoration projects in an important area of the Sacramento River with significant past restoration investment. It remains uncertain, however, whether this project will accomplish more than funding extensive baseline condition monitoring (field surveys by CSUC faculty and students, PRBO and River Partners' scientists) and, possibly, the implementation of several demonstration restoration sites on actively farmed lands. Landowners (farmers)are a key stakeholder in this endeavor, and their support for the ideas set forth in this proposal has not been adequately demonstrated. Without support from local landowners, much of what is proposed in this project would not be feasible.

notes:

2. Links with other restoration actions.

This important link is only weakly established in the proposal and is stated as such: "This proposal will recognize the tremendous investments and advancements that have been made by the ERP, NRCS, CVP funded projects, USFWS, DFG, and irrigation districts throughout the North State for water use efficiency, water quality improvements, and habitat restoration. Two prime examples are the work along the Sacramento River and Butte Creek. To build upon the overwhelming success along Butte Creek in improved fish passage and the restoration of endangered Chinook salmon runs and the success of restoring lands along the Sacramento River, this project will look at how private property owners have and can further contribute to these goals. This project seeks to leverage the advancements in knowledge and technical ability of past ERP projects to increase public recognition of this work and the investment that can and has been applied to agricultural lands in Butte and Colusa Basins and along the Sacramento River."

However, simply recognizing past efforts and investments, along with looking at how farmers can further contribute to ongoing ecosystem restoration activities in their region seems like a pretty loose attempt to connect this proposal with other restoration actions. No specific linkages have been described.

That said, if this project is successful in bringing together the key stakeholders: landowners, RCDs, NGOs (River Partners and PRBO), federal and state governments (i.e., NRCS, USFWS, CDFG), and CSU Chico faculty and students to develop working solutions (build stakeholder−driven, partnership based consensus) to implementing ecosystem restoration on working landscapes, then it will have great potential to serve as a model in this contentious arena.

Unfortunately, the proposal does not fully explain how this process will be successful, other than to specify that "Project Coordinator" positions will be filled at the two involved RCDs, whose jobs will entail bringing all the involved stakeholders to the table and getting them involved in this project. A good plan, no doubt, but this does not ensure that necessary access to private properties will be granted in order to perform the baseline biological studies, nor that a sufficient number of landowners with the right combinations of location, farming practices, landscape matrices, and nearby remnant habitats for source populations will be willing to open themselves up to the risks inherent in developing a Demonstration Site for MSCS species recovery on their lands.

notes:

3. Local circumstances.

As mentioned in #2 above, the proposed hiring of two new Project Coodinators at the involved RCDs is a good first step in developing stakeholder buy−in, but this step does not

ensure that necessary access to private properties will be granted in order to perform the baseline studies, nor that a sufficient number of landowners with the right combinations of location, farming practices, landscape matrices, and nearby remnant habitats for source populations will be willing to open themselves up to the risks inherent in developing a Demonstration Site for MSCS species recovery on their lands. Considering the recent article in a Chico newspaper (see attached) that states that the Family Water Alliance (a landowners' farming advocacy group) is publicly announcing their opposition to any further ecosystem restoration activities in their constituents' region, there may be significant local opposition to this far-reaching project's implementation.

notes:

4. Local involvement.

As mentioned, landowners (farmers)are a key stakeholder in this endeavor, and their support for the ideas set forth in this proposal has not been adequately demonstrated. Without support from local landowners, much of what is proposed in this project would not be feasible. No letters of support from individual landowners, RCDs, irrigation districts, Boards of Supervisors, etc. are included to demonstrate that critical stakeholder buy-in for this proposal exists from the agricultural community. Also, the support from local landowners is notable lacking in the "Feasibility" section of the proposal. Further, as mentioned in #3 above, a recent news article (see attachment) details that landowner sentiment in this region runs directly contrary to this proposal's goals.

notes:

5. Local value.

If implemented, this project will determine the abundance, distribution and other key attributes of selected life forms and their habitats (passerine and wetland−dependant birds, VELB, GGS, western pond turtles and Chinook salmon) as related to agricultural practices and landscape (habitat) features at a given site. Further, this proposal intends to fund two Project Coordinators at local RCDs and implement up to four restoration "Demonstration Sites" focused on MSCS−covered species recovery in working landscapes. Additionally, a categorical, region−wide Safe−Harbor Agreement (SHA) would be developed and implemented to protect farmers who willingly engage in ecosystem restoration activities to benefit native species on their lands.

If all these objectives are accomplished as stated in the proposal, much will be learned in terms of what kinds of agricultural practices have benefitted, had a neutral effect, or harmed sensitive native species. Further collaboration and development of much−needed trust would be addressed to attempt to bring the farming and ecosystem protection &recovery groups in this region closer together toward workable solutions. Demonstration sites will allow for controlled study of the effects of restoration and agricultural activities upon targeted species. The SHA would, presumably, encourage otherwise disinterested farmers to participate in ecosystem restoration projects on their lands by eliminating the fear of future regulation due to the presence of T species.

All of these components are of great local value, in and of themselves. However, it is questionable, even with the large amount of money requested for this proposal, whether they can all be accomplished effectively and in concert. Local landowner support must be clearly identified in the region proposed for this study, for without access to agricultural lands to study, restore, and monitor, this project cannot be implemented.

notes:

6. Applicant history.

Yes. To my knowledge, all groups involved have a positive track record and the skills and expertise to perform the tasks outlined in the proposal.

notes:

7. Summary of Overall Panel Discussion and Review

This proposal is of regional priority but low feasibility. Landowner participation was not established a priori and is crucial to the project success. The cost of the project is high, yet it lacks technical expertise and synergy between project components is poor. The timeframes proposed are not long enough to observe effects.

This work would provide valuable information on the effects of agricultural practices on species. It would also be helpful to address farmers' fears and develop safe harbor agreements as part of the process. The research addresses priority issues but is not likely to be successful in the proposed form.

8. Panel Quality Ranking

Fair
notes:

9. Regional Priority Ranking

Medium
notes:

Environmental Compliance Review

Proposal Number: 0055

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

1. Is compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) required for this project?
No.

2. Is compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) required for this project?
No.

3. Does this project qualify for an Exemption or Exclusion under CEQA and NEPA, respectively?
Does not apply.

4. Did the applicant correctly identify if CEQA/NEPA compliance was required?
Yes.

5. Did the applicant correctly identify the correct CEQA/NEPA document required for the project?
Yes.

6. Has the CEQA/NEPA document been completed?
Does not apply.

7. If the document has not been completed, did the applicant allot enough time to complete the document before the project start date?
Does not apply.

8. If the document has not been completed, did the applicant allot enough funds to complete it?
Does not apply.

9. Did the applicant adequately identify other legal or regulatory compliance issues (Incidental Take permits, Scientific Collecting permits, etc,) that may affect the project?
No.

Comments:

The applicant will need a scientific collecting permit that covers each species they will be collecting. A State MOU is required for collection of listed species including candidate species (fall-run Chinook). Federal take permits also required.

Identify those additional permits that may be needed by this project:

State Scientific Collecting permit State MOU for collection of any listed/candidate species Federal 10(a)(1)(A) incidental take permit

10. Does the proposal include written permission from the owners of any private property on which project activities are proposed or, if specific locations for project activities are not yet determined, is it likely that permission for access can be obtained?
No.

Comments:

On page 18 of the application, Land Use, the applicant indicates that they will not require access to public or private property. However, pg. 4 of the application states that 70 landowners will be involved and the applicant will be surveying and trapping for several different species, which means they will need permission to access private property.

11. Do any of these issues affect the project's feasibility due to significant deficiencies in planning and/or budgeting for legal and regulatory compliance or access to property?
No.

Comments:

The project is feasible if they can obtain permission to access private property.

Budget Review

Proposal Number: 0055

Proposal Name: Creating Conservation Partnerships, Research, and Incentives to Benefit Farmers and Ecosystem Restoration in the Sacramento Valley

Applicant Organization: The CSU, Chico Research Foundation

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

Yes.

2. Does the Budget Form include a detailed budget for each task identified on the Task and Deliverables Form and in the proposal text?

Yes.

3. Are the costs associated with each task and deliverable reasonable costs for performing the services?

Yes.

4. Is each person (employee, consultant, subcontractor, etc.) identified on the Personnel Form also included on the Budget Form?

Yes.

5. Are there estimated hours and an associated hourly rate of compensation for each person identified on the Personnel, Tasks and Deliverables, and Budget forms?

Yes.

6. Does the budget include the benefit rate for all personnel identified on the Personnel and Budget forms?

Yes.

7. Are the proposed labor rates comparable to state rates?

Yes.

8. Is more than 25% of the work proposed to be performed by subcontractors?

Yes.

If yes, what is the exact percentage to be performed by subcontractors?

44.5% – Approximately $2.4 mill. Recommend budget detail worksheets for subcontractors for market and labor rate comparables.

9. Are project management expenses appropriately budgeted?

No.

If no, please explain:

Recommend evaluating cost for project management $328,896 since almost 50% of the project will be subcontracted and project management costs are also more than likely included in the subcontractor budget detail worksheets.

10. Does the proposal clearly state the type of expenses encompassed in indirect rates or overhead costs? Are indirect rates, if used, appropriately applied?

No.

If no, please explain:

No. However, the indirect cost rate appears to be reasonable at 20%.

11. Does the proposal adequately explain major expenses? Are the labor rates and other charges proposed reasonable in relation to current state rates?

No.

If no, please explain:

No major equipment dollars over $5,000 each was identified. However, operating costs appear to be high $287K (not including sub operating costs). Recommend if awarded that more detail be provided for operating costs and listing of minor equipment (items over $500 with a life span of 3 years or more) be provided for equipment tracking purposes.

12. For equipment >=$5,000, was a separate worksheet filled out?
Please note: No overhead or indirect rate charges are allowed on the equipment purchases

No.

13. Is the purpose for all travel clearly represented in either the proposal itself, or in the Tasks and Deliverable Form?
Please note: Recurring travel costs for a specific task or subtask may be combined into one entry on the Budget Form, but the number of trips and cost for each trip must be clearly represented.

No.

14. Are travel and per diem at rates specified by the California Department of Personnel Administration for similar employees?

No.

15. Are other agencies contributing or likely to contribute a share of the projects? costs?

Yes.
If yes, when sufficient information is available, please total the amount of matching funds likely to be provided:

$106,640.00 cost Share – No detail was provided regarding cost share $1,573,765 – In-Kind – No detail provided in the proposal for in-kind

16. If the applicant identified cost share or matching funds, are they also described in the text of the proposal?

No.

17. Does the applicant take exception to the standard grant agreement's terms and conditions? If yes, are the approaches the applicant proposes to address these issues a reasonable starting point for negotiation a grant agreement?

Yes.
If no, please explain:

Applicant is requesting modification of language for the 10%

withhold to be paid by at the end of completion of each task.

18. Are there other budget issues or "red flags" that warrant consideration?

No.

19. Provide revised amount requested based upon your review:
$

Other comments:

Recommend careful review of entire project budget detail including subcontractor budget detail to determine if project can be adjusted.