

Final Selection Panel Review

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Riparian Sanctuary (Phase II) – Bringing Agricultural and Ecological Interests Together for Pumping Plant Protection and Riparian Restoration (Sacramento River Mile 178) – Design Development and Environmental Compliance River Partners

Applicant amount requested: \$660,665

Fund This Amount: \$0

This proposal would fund Phase II of an effort to study potential alternatives to protect the Princeton, Cordura, Glenn, and Provident Irrigations District's pumping plant and fish screen facility and develop management options for the Riparian Sanctuary, a component of the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. This project takes an innovative approach and follows well with previously funded work. Additionally, it is recognized that this project is a high priority for the region. However, the finding is that the proposal is not responsive to the objectives of the current PSP.

The primary reason the Selection Panel did not recommend this proposal for funding was that the proposal did not assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration as it was defined in the October 2005 Proposal Solicitation Package. The applicants addressed this concern in their comment letter where they pointed to headers for priorities of the PSP: (1) projects that facilitate permitting or regulatory assurances that support agricultural activities benefiting MSCS-covered species, and (2) projects that protect farmland that benefit MSCS covered species.

The Selection Panel noted that under these headers the PSP specifically states:

Projects that facilitate permitting or regulatory assurances that support agricultural activities benefiting MSCS-covered species "should coordinate/assist landowners with acquisition of restoration permits; develop regulatory assurances (such as "safe harbor" agreements and biological evaluations/opinions); or develop good neighbor policies that underpin agricultural activities benefiting species with MSCS goals of recovery or contribute to recovery in an agricultural landscape." (p.5)

Projects that protect farmland that benefits MSCS-covered species and provide a buffer for restored habitats from adverse effects of encroaching incompatible development should "secure long term protection (using easements, acquisitions, or management agreements) of agricultural lands that buffer important habitat areas from incompatible land uses while continuing agricultural practices beneficial to wildlife and fish with MSCS goals of "recover" or "contribute to the recovery" on those protected lands." (p. 5 and 6)

The Panel recognized that although the headers were broad, the specific text of the PSP was much narrower and continues to conclude that this proposal is not responsive to this PSP.

The Panel also recognized the value of the project and continues to encourage the proponent to seek other sources of funding for this proposal.