

I. Executive Summary

a. Project Title: Upper Sacramento River Fisheries and Riparian Habitat Management Program (SB1086) Implementation: Watershed Management Planning and Coordination

Applicant: California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

b. Project Description and Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives:

The proposed scope of work is for implementation of the riparian ecosystem portion of the Upper Sacramento River Fisheries and Riparian Habitat Management plan (SB1086) through the development of a local non-profit entity for watershed management and planning on the Sacramento River. The goal of the SB1086 plan is to establish and preserve a continuous riparian ecosystem along the Sacramento River which will benefit a number of CALFED priority habitats and priority species. Specifically, the proposed project involves hiring a coordinator for an interim time period to assist in the development of site-specific plans for areas within the Sacramento River Riparian Conservation Area (Map 1), and establish a new non-profit riparian land management entity that will coordinate activities and continue the process of building broader support and understanding for the goals of the SB1086 program.

c. Approach/Tasks/Schedule

A coordinator will be hired for a two-year period, under the direction of the Upper Sacramento River Advisory Council and Riparian Habitat Committee, to complete the establishment of a non-profit entity and finalize a formal agreement among participating parties, coordinate participation in the SB1086 program through a public outreach program, and work with landowners to resolve outstanding issues in developing site-specific plans for implementing natural process and meander zone restoration, key SB1086 objectives. At the end of this two-year period, it is anticipated that the non-profit entity will be established and able to do its own staffing and fundraising.

d. Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED

The purpose of the riparian habitat planning conducted through SB1086 is to provide for enhanced ecosystem function of the Sacramento River by preserving the remaining riparian habitat and by reestablishing a continuous riparian ecosystem using the natural processes of the river. By utilizing an ecosystem approach, the greatest environmental benefits can be attained and recovery of threatened and endangered species can occur at a broader scale while taking into account human-imposed constraints.

A collaborative approach between public and private interests is necessary for such a comprehensive program, and to create a long-term viable solution for the Sacramento River. A non-profit entity will provide a forum for coordination, cooperation and consistency among both public and private programs and interests. By utilizing an ecosystem approach, this project will result in the restoration of a broad range of habitats and species important to the health of the Bay-Delta system while taking into account human imposed constraints.

e. Budget Costs and Third Party Impacts

DWR requests \$200,000 (\$100,000 annually) to implement this 2-year scope of work. Year 2 funding is dependent on the funding of Year 1. Year 1 may be funded separately.

This project is designed to address and provide a forum to identify potential conflicts associated with restoration actions, and to avoid third party impacts associated with other programs and activities along the Sacramento River.

f. Applicant Qualifications

DWR Northern District has provided technical assistance, including contract administration, to the Upper Sacramento River Fisheries and Riparian Habitat Management Planning Process (SB1086) since its inception. DWR was requested by local landowners and other program participants to submit this proposal (Figures 1-7, letters of support).

g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation

Performance monitoring will be based on the success of bringing together entities to finalize and sign a formal agreement, evidence of public support through the formation of a Board of Directors, and the production of site-specific plans that result in implementable, fundable projects. Biological monitoring will be done for specific projects implemented and will be designed to measure biological benefits and effectiveness of activities. Monitoring results will be used to adaptively manage the overall program.

h. Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED objectives

Twenty seven public and private agencies and organizations are working together through the Upper Sacramento River Advisory Council (Figure 8) to develop a consistent approach to ecosystem-level planning and management on the Sacramento River. The Advisory Council supports this proposal as being critically important to the success of the SB1086 process.

The goals and objectives of the SB1086 program are shared, or are compatible with other programs including the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, California Department of Fish and Game's California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (Partners in Flight), and The Nature Conservancy's Sacramento River Project.

The proposed work will directly and indirectly address CALFED's objective for improving and increasing aquatic and terrestrial habitats and improving ecological functions by providing riparian habitat restoration and floodplain management techniques that help restore a healthy river ecosystem. Additionally, this work addresses CALFED's objectives for water quality improvement through restoration of riparian forest that provides a filter for agricultural run-off, improves water temperature conditions, and benefits downstream habitats and species through a number of ecosystem links including input of sediments, large woody debris, and dissolved and particulate nutrients.