

47B-126
Parcel D

Executive Summary

Project title: Floodplain Acquisition and Sub-Reach/Site-Specific Management Sacramento River (Red Bluff to Colusa)

Applicant: The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Project Description: The Nature Conservancy requests a grant of \$13,964,900 for fee acquisition of nine parcels (1,733 acres) within the SB 1086 Sacramento River Conservation Area (Red Bluff to Colusa); **baseline assessment/start-up stewardship** for newly acquired parcels; **site-specific management planning** for the “Beehive Bend Sub-Reach” (river miles 165–176); **monitoring**; and **project management**. The project is located in Tehama, Glenn and Butte Counties.

This application builds on cumulative funds awarded by CALFED and others, and it directly addresses the Stage I Action for the Sacramento River to **protect, enhance, and restore the meanderbelt between Red Bluff and Chico Landing** (Strategic Plan For Ecosystem Restoration, February 1999, p. 64). This project is consistent with SB 1086’s vision of an inner river zone with limited meander and a goal for a continuous riparian corridor. Furthermore, it fulfills the SB 1086 recommended action for site-specific management planning.

The project meets CALFED objectives by:

- Allowing natural restorative processes of erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and succession to occur and working to prevent further degradation of riverine and riparian habitats that are critical for chinook salmon and other at-risk native species.
- Providing for adaptive management and ecological monitoring of key habitats.
- Involving local landowners and local governments in achieving project goals through the site-specific management planning and the SB 1086 process.

Acquisition of floodplain parcels in active erosion/deposition zones is an essential precursor to restoring river meander and natural riparian regeneration and succession. Streamside tributary parcels present outstanding opportunities to restore gravel recruitment to spawning beds and to increase and enrich salmon rearing habitat by reconnecting the river to its traditional floodplain. Long-term ownership (whether by federal or state government, by The Nature Conservancy, or by another qualified private organization) will be determined following baseline assessment. Selection of properties for acquisition is based on willing sellers and consistency with the goals of the SB 1086 management plan.

Baseline assessment is the conservation strategy used at the parcel scale when properties are first acquired. This involves an in-depth, on-the-ground analysis that is necessary to determine the suitability of a parcel for protection, enhancement, and restoration of natural processes (see Figure 2). **Start-up stewardship** corrects items of deferred maintenance and finances improvements required by interim management plans, such as fencing, public access trails, and signage.

Site-specific management planning is proposed for the Beehive Bend sub-reach (river miles 165–176; see Figure 3). Site-specific management planning, which focuses on protection at the sub-reach scale, is the bridge between individual parcels and the development of the Sacramento River Conservation Area (see Figure 2). Site-specific management planning is central to the implementation of a limited meander corridor as described by SB 1086. Site-specific management planning also addresses CALFED’s Focused Action for the Sacramento River by “addressing potential changes in hydrology and geomorphology, local economic impacts, and other issues associated with ongoing riparian protection and restoration work” (PSP, p.21). Actual levee setback or removal is not a part of this project.