

**I. Executive Summary**

**A. Petaluma River Watershed Restoration Program  
Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District (SSCRCD)**

**B.**

**Priority Species to be Benefited**

- Steelhead trout\**
- Sacramento splittail\**
- Migratory Birds*
- Striped bass*
- Fall-run chinook salmon\*\**

*\*indicates primary species*

**Priority Habitats to be Restored**

- Instream Aquatic*
- Shaded Riverine Aquatic*
- Saline emergent wetlands habitat*
- Ecological Processes**
- Natural Floodplain and Flood Processes*

*\*\*Robert Leidy, EPA, Personal communication, 6-25-98*

The Petaluma River Watershed Restoration Program (PRWRP) is a community based, collaborative public/private effort to weave elements of habitat restoration, conservation outreach, community volunteerism and watershed assessment together with adaptive watershed management. The **primary biological objectives** are to restore and enhance priority habitats currently supporting steelhead (see map), species identified above, and expand endangered species habitats for salt marsh harvest mouse, California clapper rail and black rail within the watershed.

The **primary ecological objectives** are to implement a scientifically based, technically sound program of watershed assessment and continue outreach efforts to: (1) maintain continuity with the current 205(j) watershed planning efforts and expedite implementation of enhancement recommendations; and (2) facilitate a coordinated, integrated program of watershed restoration by pooling resources and leveraging existing funds. Work with landowners, volunteers and organizations; and (3) identify potential diked bayland for restoration; and (4) implement a watershed science program to provide a scientific foundation for monitoring and restoration programs and begin to fill identified data gaps to help support and prioritize restoration work.

Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District (SSCRCD) working together with the City of Petaluma (City) and San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), have formed a partnership to expedite the restoration of Petaluma River Watershed by: (1) Implementation of priority habitat restoration projects recommended by the *Petaluma River Watershed Enhancement Plan* (SSCRCD, 1998), *Petaluma Marsh Enhancement Plan* (City, 1992), and *Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan* (City, 1995), and the City's Urban Creeks Restoration Program. **These projects will mitigate the following CALFED identified stressors:**

**Stressors**

- Channel Form Changes
- Water Quality
- Water Temperature
- Undesirable Species Interactions
- Land Use

**Sub-stressors**

- Channel Aggradation Due to Fine Sediment
- Loss of Existing Riparian Zone
- Lack of Regeneration Potential
- Competition from introduced plants
- Grazing/ Urbanization
- Forestry and Agricultural Practices

(2) funding a watershed coordinator to: (a) provide adaptive management and oversight of watershed restoration and assessment projects; (b) facilitate bi-monthly Technical Advisory

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Committee (TAC) meetings to provide forum for coordination of multiple community group efforts, review data, interim progress reports and provide direction; (c) continue outreach, e.g. watershed newsletter; (3) identify landowners of diked bayland willing to sell their land to expand the Petaluma Marsh habitat and improve floodplain function and capacity, (4) develop baseline data to fill identified data gaps through implementation of a scientifically based, technically sound method of watershed assessment developed by SFEI. A comprehensive assessment of hydrology, geomorphology, and sedimentation will provide water quality, flow, channel form changes, and other pertinent information (GIS format) and will bolster and integrate existing monitoring programs.

**C. Approach/Tasks/Schedule** The PRWRP will involve concurrent habitat restoration projects, implementation of watershed science/assessment plan, and watershed management by the watershed coordinator. This program of restoration will be accomplished over a one-year period (see Timeline). The SSCRCD will hire a watershed coordinator to continue outreach efforts and help integrate various water quality monitoring efforts to maximize coverage and effectiveness. SSCRCD staff will manage program and oversee sub-contractors - specifically City and SFEI. The watershed coordinator will report directly to the SSCRCD Board at monthly meetings.

**D. Justification**

- The projects in this proposal focus on implementation of a multi-stakeholder developed watershed plan and provide broad ecosystem benefits meeting the objectives for Local Watershed Stewardship and CALFED Bay -Delta Program.
- This proposal is a collaborative public/private/NGO effort to address priority species, habitats and stressors identified in the CALFED ERPP located in the CALFED North Bay Solution Area (see page 7).
- SSCRCD is currently developing a watershed plan with funding from SWRCB for this 146-square mile watershed. The watershed project is supported by the community, key local, state and federal agencies and private organizations (see section H).
- CALFED funds will leverage other funds (RWQCB) and expedite current restoration and assessment efforts underway (see page 5).

**E. Budget Cost and Third Party Impacts:** The CALFED request for this project is \$364,620 for first year funding to establish an ongoing restoration program. No adverse third party impacts are expected.

**F. Applicant Qualifications:** The Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District is well qualified to administer all elements of this proposal (see Section V).

**G. Monitoring and Data Evaluation:** Restoration projects in this proposal include one year of post project monitoring. Data collection will follow an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). CALFED may review QAPP if necessary to ensure QA/QC. Data will be submitted to SFEI's Bay Area Eco-Atlas and other local and state organizations on request. Data will be reviewed by local agency representatives, scientists and PRWRP Advisory Committee.

**H. Local Support/Coordination/CALFED Compatibility:** The project has local and regional support from school & community organizations, NRCS, NMFS and California Department of Fish and Game. This program will coordinate with other programs (see Section V) and complement previous and current efforts. This proposal is entirely consistent with CALFED objectives (see D above).

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