a. PROJECT TITLE

Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Program.

b. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PRIMARY ECOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES

The San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District (SJRCD) presents this proposal to CALFED to implement the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Program (Program or LMRWSP). The $565,783 Program involves implementing three key elements.

- Development and implementation of a community-based stewardship program
- Continuation and expansion of an environmental farm plan
- Expansion of biological monitoring programs to include neotropical landbirds

For the first element the SJRCD plans to take a community-based ecosystem management approach to developing a comprehensive plan for the LMRWSP.

The second element of the Program involves the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission (LWWC) developing and implementing Environmental Farm Plans (EFP). EFP's are documents prepared by growers with some outside assistance to raise their awareness of the environment on their farms.

Element three augments East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD) biological monitoring program to include neotropical migratory birds. California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) will expand and continue the neotropical bird monitoring program developed by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) and EBMUD. This monitoring program will provide feedback to the stewardship plans implemented through the LMRWSP.

Several programs are underway within the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed (LMRW) including restoration projects, fish passage improvement, research and monitoring, and sustainable agriculture development. Expansion and improvement of these programs will best be accomplished through an umbrella stewardship plan that involves stakeholder participation.

c. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT APPROACH, TASKS, AND SCHEDULE

Our approach is to provide a forum of community-based meetings to develop a shared vision and stewardship plan for the watershed (Task 1a-d); continue and expand environmental farming programs in the watershed (Task 2a-e); expand an existing biological monitoring program (Task 3a-c); and provide incentives for stakeholders to implement stewardship programs developed cooperatively through the community forum. This Program meets CALFED's minimum requirements by complying with all applicable laws and regulations, not prejudicing decisions on CALFED's long-term program, and by involving willing landowners and stakeholders only. Each element is a task that will be implemented simultaneously over a three year period. The Program consists of three phases implemented over three years (1999-2001), but will continue as it evolves through community input and biological need.

d. JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT FUNDING BY CALFED

Our community-based program implements key provisions for the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed as expressed in key natural resource restoration and management documents prepared for the Lower Mokelumne River over the past 7 years, including CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP), Department of Fish and Game's Lower Mokelumne River (LMR) Fisheries Management Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Anadromous Fish Restoration Program

Commission Project No. 2916-004). Our proposal addresses multiple ecosystem issues and fosters community involvement in CALFED planning and implementation. Our program involves participation of a key audience, the agricultural community, which is important to the success of CALFED program implementaion.

Community involvement in developing a watershed stewardship program has been shown to result in substantial benefits to stakeholders of the watershed, anadromous fisheries, wildlife, and riparian ecosystem integrity and diversity (Napa RCD 1996). The LMRWSP is a comprehensive program that will ultimately protect and enhance priority habitats and priority species by addressing the primary land use stressors on the Lower Mokelumne River. Our program contributes to achieving non-flow ERPP targets for the Mokelumne River while developing a sustainable shared vision for the Lower Mokelumne River. The Program is community-based, contributes to local watershed stewardship, fosters community involvement in CALFED planning, addresses multiple ecosystem issues, provides for ongoing implementation, and fosters adaptive management based on sustainable decision-making.

e. SUMMARY OF BUDGET COSTS AND THIRD PARTY IMPACTS

The total program costs $565,783. Total cost for developing and implementing Element 1 the LMR Watershed Stewardship Program is $95,872; Element 2 the Environmental Farm Plan is $420,426; and Element 3 expansion of the biological monitoring program to include migratory birds is $49,485. Phase I (1999), Phase II (2000), and Phase III (2001) costs are $158,940, $203,421, and $203,422, respectively. EBMUD will provide substantial in-kind services to this Program for monitoring as well as restoration efforts. No adverse third party impacts from any of the elements are anticipated, either directly or indirectly.

f. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

The SJRCD has successfully administered Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grants for the development and implementation of public outreach and education programs regarding natural resources in San Joaquin County. As the primary applicant, the SJRCD provides the key element of a non-regulatory entity to encourage broad based participation in this Program. We have chosen a high quality team based on its unsurpassed experience and knowledge regarding facilitation, watershed stewardship planning, public outreach, agriculture, and natural resources in San Joaquin County as well as throughout California. We believe this team has the best ability to successfully develop and implement this program.

g. MONITORING AND DATA EVALUATION

EBMUD will provide substantial in-kind services to this Program to conduct monitoring and data evaluation. The LWWC will monitor and evaluate the influence of the EFP ratings and action plans on individual vineyards by comparing vineyard inputs before and after EFP action plans were implemented. CSUS will evaluate, analyze, and incorporate data into existing EBMUD databases.

h. LOCAL SUPPORT/COORDINATION/CALFED COMPATIBILITY

The Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Program has a high degree of implementability. It has widespread support, a high quality team, is consistent with existing resource management documents, will be coordinated with existing agriculture and natural resource management programs, and is community-based.