

99C-120
panel B

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PROJECT SUMMARY

The SJRCD proposes to continue Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Program (referred to in this proposal as the Lower Mokelumne WSP) that was initiated in 1998-1999 under a CALFED grant. This first phase of Lower Mokelumne WSP has built a strong foundation of community support for the Program, and will result in the formation of a watershed steering committee and a vision for future watershed plan development by the end of 1999.

With this CALFED application, we propose to undertake Phases II and III of the program. The Lower Mokelumne WSP includes three elements:

- **Element 1. Watershed Stewardship Program.** Prepare the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Plan and implement priority stewardship actions;
- **Element 2. Environmental Farm Plan.** Expand and continue to implement the Environmental Farm Plan (referred to in this proposal as the EFP) by conducting 20 workshops. Assist workshop participants with self-assessment of their vineyard operation and implementation of action plans on their lands. Undertake a monitoring and evaluation program to assess the effectiveness of the EFP;
- **Element 3. Neotropical Bird Monitoring.** Continue neotropical bird monitoring for a second and third year, and integrate the three years of data collected under the program into ongoing studies of fish, amphibians, reptiles, raptors, songbirds, and mammals, along the Lower Mokelumne River. With our data, East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) will develop complete species occurrence, habitat association, and wildlife distribution patterns along the Lower Mokelumne River to promote informed decision-making on land management activities.

We believe it is critical to continue the Lower Mokelumne WSP for several reasons.

1. *Our watershed stewardship program will implement key natural resource restoration and management actions on the Lower Mokelumne River that are expressed in several planning documents, including CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan, California Department of Fish and Game's Lower Mokelumne River Fisheries Management Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, and the Lower Mokelumne River Project Joint Settlement Agreement (Federal Energy Regulatory Committee Project NO. 2916-004).*

2. *Voluntary Watershed stewardship has been demonstrated to result in a decrease in adverse human land use effects, and benefits to stakeholders within the watershed. Ecological benefits have been documented for anadromous fisheries, wildlife, and riparian ecosystems (Napa Resource Conservation District 1996). These enhancements will make significant contributions toward achieving CALFED's goal of improving conditions in the Bay Delta Estuary.*

3. *Our proposed Program is an important consensus-building forum for other related CALFED Programs, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Feasibility Study for the Lower Mokelumne River; the hydrologically-connected Cosumnes River Watershed Stewardship Program; and the City of Lodi and Woodbridge Irrigation District's planned improvements to Lodi Lake. Our program promotes and progresses these other key CALFED programs in a coordinated manner to the public. Without the community-based Stewardship program, the success of each of these other CALFED programs could be diminished.*

4. *Our proposed Environmental Farm Plan is a model for voluntary non-point source pollution reduction that can be widely applied, and its early development should be supported.*

5. *The Neotropical Bird Monitoring program expands other existing biological monitoring programs planned or being conducted by EBMUD and others, and allows us to access a complete biological data set when making decisions about watershed land uses.*

B. LOCATION

The proposed Lower Mokelumne River WSP is located in the Mokelumne River Ecological unit of the East-side Delta Tributaries Ecological Zone as defined in the ERPP (Figure 1). The Lower Mokelumne River watershed is defined as watershed of the Mokelumne River extending from Camanche Reservoir west to the confluence with the Cosumnes River encompassing roughly 18,000 acres (Figure 2).

C. PRIMARY ECOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES

1. **WP - Water Quality Improvement, Riparian Habitat Preservation/Restoration**
2. **EFP - Water Quality Improvement** (Develop a floodplain management plan for the Mokelumne River, develop and implement a cooperative program to improve management of existing, degraded seasonal wetland habitat, develop a cooperative program to restrict riparian vegetation, removal, and establish protection zones, develop a cooperative program to implement riparian restoration activities, encourage improved land management and livestock grazing practices along stream riparian zones, develop a program to restore riparian woodlands along the entire Mokelumne River, develop and implement a program to reduce invasive plant species from the riparian corridor along the Mokelumne River, and develop program to minimize agricultural pesticide and herbicide use into the Mokelumne River)
3. **ES - Endangered and Threatened Species (Neotropical Birds) - Improve nesting and foraging habitat for neotropical bird species and monitor trends in wildlife abundance.**

D. COSTS

We are currently requesting funding for Phases II and III (i.e., the remaining \$654,000 of the total \$813,000 Program). To date, CALFED has funded \$159,000 for Phase I.

E. ADVERSE AND THIRD PARTY IMPACTS

No direct or indirect adverse third party impacts from any of the elements are anticipated.

F. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

The SJRCD is currently administering the CALFED grant for Phase I of this Program, and has successfully administered several Environmental Protection Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service grants.

G. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This Program includes several monitoring and evaluation tasks, described in Section V of this proposal.

H. LOCAL SUPPORT/COORDINATION

This Program has substantial community support from agencies, environmental groups, and other stakeholders. Letters of support are included in Attachment A.

I. COMPATIBILITY WITH CALFED OBJECTIVES

Our proposed Program is consistent with CALFED's stated ERP and Strategic Plan Objectives, addresses multiple ecosystem issues and fosters community involvement in CALFED planning and implementation. Our program contributes to achieving non-flow ERPP targets for the Lower Mokelumne River. The Program fosters community involvement in CALFED planning, provides for ongoing implementation and adaptive management based on sustainable decision-making.

The Lower Mokelumne WSP meets CALFED's minimum requirements by complying with all applicable laws and regulation;, not prejudicing the ultimate decision on CALFED's long-term program; provides coordination and notification of local governments and public involvement; involves only willing landowners and stakeholders; and meets CALFED's limitations on funding.