

**1999 RESTORATION COORDINATION PROGRAM
ECOSYSTEM ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATION
July 8, 1999**

99-B131 - Yuba Tools: Collaborative Watershed Management for Flood Control
Proponent: Yuba Watershed Council & SYRCL

Staff Recommendation: Ecosystem Roundtable should develop a process to achieve the objective of the proposal in a collaborative manner. Potentially use process similar to Englebright, or expand Englebright process to broader watershed issues.

ECOSYSTEM ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATION:

The Ecosystem Roundtable members took under consideration the proposal and the public comment provided at the June 16, 1999 Ecosystem Roundtable Meeting. None of the members recommended funding the existing proposal as submitted. Members felt that the inability of SYRCL and Yuba County Water Agency to work together in the past, and the local conflict over the proposal would likely result in a plan which could not be implemented. Options that the Ecosystem Roundtable considered included:

- Not recommending the funding of the proposal. Suggest that the interested parties work together on their own and come back for future funding if they are able to resolve their issues. The Ecosystem Roundtable felt that considering the past efforts of these groups to work together have been totally unsuccessful it was unlikely to occur in this situation. The subcommittee felt there was an opportunity to bring opposing upper and lower watershed interests together, but that it was unlikely to happen on its own.
- Recommend providing funding for a facilitator to develop a collaborative process. No funds would be set aside for the implementation of a subsequent collaborative proposal. Members recognized the value of providing funds to facilitate a broad regional plan in a collaborative manner. Members felt that use of a facilitator was likely to move the process forward, but that without the promise and constraints for potential future funding significant funds could be expended without achieving the desired objective of developing a region wide watershed plan which addressed both environmental and flood damage reduction concerns.
- Members agreed that the preferred option would include providing funding for a facilitator to develop a collaborative process and that funds would be set aside for the implementation of a subsequent collaborative proposal. The Ecosystem Roundtable felt that CALFED is being presented with an opportunity to move regional watershed planning forward in the Yuba basin. It was recognized that future restoration activities in this area will only be able to move forward with broad local support and in the context of addressing other critical issues in the region including flood control. It was also recognized that the Yuba river supports an important anadromous fishery and that significant restoration opportunities exist

to improve it. The Ecosystem Roundtable also acknowledged that the process used on the Yuba river if successful could be a model for other watershed to bring together upper and lower watershed interests.

A number of restrictions were placed on this option. It was strongly felt that the locals need to take the initiative and make a commitment to move the process forward. Accordingly Ecosystem Roundtable members recommended that \$30,000 be committed towards a facilitated process to develop a collaborative proposal which would be funded with the remaining \$193,500. The \$193,500 would be set aside for this project until 9/30/99. At this time if a collaborative proposal had not been submitted to CALFED, considered and approved the funds would be returned to the pool and made available for other projects. In addition, the Ecosystem Roundtable requested that:

- The local participants provide 25% cost share of the \$30,000 as a commitment of good faith (\$22,500 CALFED, \$7,500 Local).
- All interested parties be included as participants in the proposal including local governments from Yuba, Sutter and Nevada Counties, USFS, Corps, local water agencies and local environmental groups.
- The general scope of B131 - Yuba Tools would be used as a focus/starting point for a new proposal.