

II. Executive Summary

a. *Project Title:* Rhode Island Floodplain Management and Habitat Restoration

*Applicant:* California Department of Fish and Game

b. *Project Description and Primary Biological Objectives:* A proposal to improve the fish and wildlife carrying capacity of Rhode Island, a breached (in 1938) 67 acre island in the Old River channel between Holland Tract and the northern end of Bacon Island. This island is owned in fee by the DFG. Improvement would occur by increasing the width, height, and stability of the island's (breached) levees. Increased width and height would result in additional woody SRA. Additional improvement could result from construction of small wooded islands in the interior of the (flooded) island. Open water areas could be modified by deepening or shoaling, improving freshwater marsh and open fish habitat. An abandoned barge would be removed from the west levee breach. These goals are consistent with the long term objectives of the island's 1990 management plan, "To maintain Delta riparian habitat and tidal freshwater marsh habitat."

c. *Approach/Tasks/Schedule:* This project is divided into three phases: (1) A team of DFG biologists will survey current conditions to determine specific improvement needs. (2) The Project Manager would develop contracts with the appropriate parties for engineering and construction, with construction expected to be completed in one year. (3) The success of the work would be monitored over a five year period.

d. *Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED:* The proposal is consistent with the stated Goals of CALFED's ERPP, to restore wetland and riparian habitat. Activity at this site will also help to answer questions about the hydrology of flooded small islands. ERPP objectives and targets: Natural Floodplain and Flood Processes, Central and West Delta Ecological Unit, page 42; Tidal Perennial Aquatic Habitat, Central and West Delta Ecological Unit, page 46.

e. *Budget Costs and Third Party Impacts:* An improvement would result from an expenditure of approximately \$935,000. This figure could be reduced by funding from the Delta Flood Protection Program (AB 360), or AB 360 funds could supplement this figure. We anticipate no significant Third Party Impacts. The area is already publically owned. It is open for hunting, fishing, bird watching, boating, and related uses. No significant changes in use patterns are anticipated.

f. *Applicant Qualifications:* Applicant qualifications are those of the State Department of Fish and Game. The principal investigator, Ed Littrell, is an Environmental Specialist IV, Specialist, in the DFG's Delta Flood Protection Program (AB 360, 1996). He was contract

manager for the program under SB 1065 (1991) which provided DFG with \$3,000,000 for habitat work. The appropriation was encumbered on time and on budget. Similar habitats to the current proposal were constructed, and these are now being used as examples for the ERPP.

*g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation:* Monitoring will be conducted by contract biologists. A monitoring plan will be developed to determine if modifications to the island result in increases in resident and anadromous fishes. Bird species will be determined and counted. Responses of aquatic species, in particular, may be used to help assess the validity of certain types of restoration activities in the tidal Delta.

*h. Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives:* The proposed project is compatible with Delta Flood Protection Program habitat construction and may be proposed for cost-sharing. It is compatible with the management objectives of the Department of Fish and Game for this site. It is compatible with the Delta Protection Act. And it is consistent with the general CALFED objectives of habitat work in the Delta.