

Executive Summary

Project Title: Formation of Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group
Applicant Name: Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group

Project Description:

Form a comprehensive organization to address the entire Cottonwood Creek watershed and oversee the implementation of the plan. This planning effort would evaluate and develop recommendations for watershed stewardship including: timber harvesting, land use, fire and fire suppression, managing oak woodlands to reduce erosion, maintaining riparian zones, and providing more sustained runoff patterns in the upper watershed area. The plan will also seek to restore, reactivate and maintain natural sediment supply, flood plain and flood processes, gravel recruitment and stream meander, and protect salmon spawning and rearing habitat in the lower watershed area.

Project Approach:

Identify and organize the landowners to work with public land management agencies, interested parties and resource managers to form consensus on issues and their importance. Coordinate with resource managers which have studied regional needs and correlate those studies with input from stakeholders. Research previous studies within the watershed.

Tasks: Identify the watershed's geographic boundaries and sub-regions' boundaries, identify stakeholders, form organization structure, collect input from stakeholders, research literature from resource management agencies and list the watershed's needs.

Schedule: Work will start immediately upon funding and will continue throughout the planning program.

Justification:

CALFED states the need for this proposal in its Vision for Ecological Units, (ERPP, vol.2, page 196). The project will produce an assessment of current watershed conditions which could be used by any agency to prioritize and address objectives needed to achieve ERPP's vision for Cottonwood Creek's Ecological Units.

The Cottonwood Creek Ecological Zone is located many miles from the Delta, but its status and health are reflected in the health of the Delta. The first step in developing a locally based plan must be to form a Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group.

Collaboration between public and private interests is necessary for a comprehensive program to create and sustain long term, viable solutions for Cottonwood Creek. This non-profit entity will provide a forum to coordinate cooperate and maintain consistency among public and private interests.

Cottonwood Creek watershed 's 930 square miles impedes a grassroots organization's ability to form, receive and represent the community concerns without technical and financial assistance. The watershed is too vast for citizens to accomplish all that needs to be done on a volunteer basis. The process of identifying stakeholders, establishing and maintaining communications with them is too time consuming and too costly for citizens to fund from their own financial resources.

Budget Costs: \$161,000

Third Party Impacts:

Improved watershed processes will maintain and restore seasonal water runoff patterns, water yield, and water quality and reduce sediment load to downstream storage reservoirs. Healthier watersheds will provide ancillary benefits to upper watershed habitats and species.

Applicant Qualifications:

The Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group is a group of landowners, some of whose families have lived in the watershed since the late 1800's. These landowners are forming with more recently arrived residents, business owners and other private parties to improve watershed conditions, fisheries and habitat.

The purpose of the grant is to enable the Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group to hire a qualified coordinator and organize the watershed's landowners and interested parties. The applicant will use the services of Battle Creek, Mill Creek, Deer Creek Watershed Conservancies, State and County Farm Bureaus and the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District to define the job description and qualifications of the Coordinator Position.

Monitoring and Data Evaluation:

The Group will hold monthly meetings and engage speakers to inform the organization. Annual progress reports will be prepared to list accomplishments. Data evaluation will concentrate on mapping site specific features.

Local support:

This is a landowner based group supported by local public and private entities and State and Federal agencies.

Coordination with other Programs:

The applicant will research and coordinate with other watershed programs in the watershed. The applicant will coordinate with the Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan and the Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Plan.

Compatibility with CALFED Objectives:

The proposal will accomplish the first process in watershed improvement and management described in ERPP, vol. 2, pp. 192-206.