Geographic Review Panel 3 – American River/Eastside Tribs

Proposal number: 2001-I213 **Short Proposal Title:** Educating Farmers and Landowners in Biological Resource Management

1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region. The Applicants have correctly noted that this project could contribute to improved water quality, one of CALFED's goal. As a pilot project, this effort could be very informative to decision makers. From a regional perspective, there may be little immediate incremental benefit to the Sacramento Valley water quality. The Putah Creek watershed is relatively small and the project proposes to work with relatively few growers (8-10), so improvements may be modest. Our hope is that this project could help to catalyze similar efforts by growers in the region. If so, this project could have long-term benefits.

2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region. The project represents the continued efforts of a CALFED-funded project. We were surprised that the application did not propose coordination with the Yolo Basin Working Group, a CALFED-funded watershed group or the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee, a group formed as a consequence of the recent Putah Creek settlement. These are two of the most important restoration efforts in the region and the project would benefit from linkages with these groups. Given the proposed project budget, this should not be a difficult task to add.

3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner. The project appears feasible considering the group's prior "track record" with farmers.

4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project. The qualifications of the group are excellent.

5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance). Local involvement appears good, but could be improved by coordination with the Yolo Basin Working Group, the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee, and the Merced River stakeholder group.

6. Cost. As noted by the Technical reviewers and Scientific panel, this project is costly. One independent reviewers made suggestions to reduce costs.

7. Cost sharing. None.

8. Additional comments. This is a worthy proposal, with a high price tag associated with it. A strength of the proposal is that CAFF is a proven known quantity in the field, also the watershed approach is good. There is still a concern about the commitment of farmers; the TARP thought that greater commitment from farmers is essential to pulling this off.

The TARP recommends deleting Task 4 as there are already demonstration sites. Could also just choose to fund one of the geographic areas.

This Geographic Panel reviewed several similar education proposals and felt that some effort should be directed toward coordinating these similar projects with similar goals.

Reviewers ranked proposal VERY GOOD, EXCELLENT and VERY GOOD, TARP rated it EXCELLENT.

Regional Ranking

Panel Ranking: Medium high

Provide a brief explanation of your ranking. This appears to be a well-planned effort. However, it is expensive, the budget should be better explained, and the Panel strongly feels that costs should be reduced. The project could also benefit from better coordination with other efforts in the Yolo Basin and the Merced watershed. Immediate water quality benefits and associated improvements for aquatic species would be modest, but the effort could be a valuable model for future work.