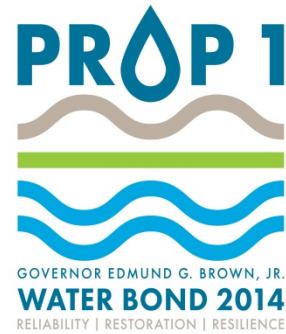




SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN
DELTA CONSERVANCY
 A California State Agency



Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program

2016-17 Concept Proposal Staff Recommendation

Project Title	Mello Conservation Easement		
Applicant	Sacramento Valley Conservancy		
Project Number	Prop 1-1603	Category	2
County	Sacramento	Funding Request	\$2,000,000.00
Score	83.3	Total Project Cost	\$3,600,000.00

Staff Recommendation:

Delta Conservancy staff recommends that the Board request a full application from Sacramento Valley Conservancy for the Mello Conservation Easement (Prop 1-1603) project.

Project Description:

Sacramento Valley Conservancy proposes to purchase perpetual conservation easements over approximately 1,000 acres of land on Tyler Island in the north Delta. This project protects family farms that support sandhill cranes (a listed species) and other migratory waterbirds from conversion to permanent crops. With funding from the Delta Conservancy and matching funds from The Nature Conservancy, the applicant will have funds in hand to purchase at least 275 acres, and will continue to seek other funding sources to purchase a conservation easement over the entire proposed 1,000-acre area. Money from the Delta Conservancy will be deposited directly into escrow, with a projected close date of December 2017. By implementing this project, Delta agricultural lands will be maintained in agriculture and managed for the benefit of listed and migratory species in perpetuity.

Consistency with Proposition 1 and State Priorities:

This project is consistent with Proposition 1 and the other priorities of the State as noted in the Grant Guidelines. The project proposes to protect migratory bird ecosystems and assist in the recovery of a listed species (Sandhill crane), consistent with the purposes outlined in chapter 6 of Proposition 1, and with the California Water Action Plan's Action 3: Achieve the Co-Equal Goals for the Delta. The project is consistent with the Delta Plan's recommendation DP R10, which calls for encouraging wildlife-friendly farming, and aligns with the Delta Conservancy's strategic plan's goals of leading efforts to protect Delta ecosystems, working in partnership with

Delta growers to protect and enhance the Delta's working landscapes, and engaging in activities that support the Delta ecosystem and economy. The Delta Conservancy's enabling legislation requires using conservation easements to accomplish ecosystem restoration wherever feasible (§32366(b)). Purchasing a conservation easement on Tyler Island utilizes a proven strategy to protect and enhance habitat for listed species in the Delta while preserving the ability of landowners to continue farming the land.