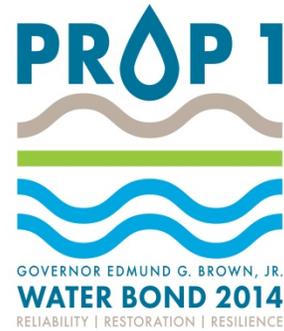




SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN
DELTA CONSERVANCY
 A California State Agency



Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program

2016-17 Concept Proposal Staff Recommendation

Project Title	Implementation of Rice on Staten Island for Sustainability, Ecosystem, and Water Quality Benefits		
Applicant	Conservation Farms & Ranches		
Project Number	Prop 1-1613	Category	2
County	San Joaquin	Funding Request	\$2,642,000.00
Score	75.5	Total Project Cost	\$2,732,000.00

Staff Recommendation:

Delta Conservancy staff recommends that the Board request a full application from Conservation Farms & Ranches for the Implementation of Rice on Staten Island for Sustainability, Ecosystem, and Water Quality Benefits (Prop 1-1613) project.

Project Description:

This concept proposal is seeking funding to convert approximately 300 acres of land on southern Staten Island from corn to rice. The Nature Conservancy acquired Staten Island because of its importance as winter roost and foraging area for over ten thousand Sandhill Cranes and tens of thousands of shorebirds, waterfowl, and shorebirds. As the land in the Delta and surrounding counties has been converted to permanent crops like grapes and olives, which do not provide bird habitat, the importance of Staten Island as bird habitat has increased. However, the peat soils on Staten have subsided below sea level and continue to subside due to the maintenance of drained conditions for corn and other crops. It is therefore important to find a crop that stops subsidence while at the same time providing roosting and foraging habitat for migratory birds and contributing to the Delta’s agricultural economy. This project will strive to prove growing rice is economically viable, provides high value foraging and roosting habitat, stops subsidence and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. The requested Proposition 1 funds will be used to cover the costs of site preparation, monitoring activities, carbon accounting, and modeling and analysis.

Consistency with Proposition 1 and State Priorities:

This project is consistent with Proposition 1 and other priorities of the State as noted in the Grant Guidelines. The project is a multibenefit ecosystem restoration, sustainable agriculture, and

carbon sequestration/subsidence reversal project that provides for the conversion of corn crop land to rice crop land that will benefit migratory birds and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with the purposes outlined in chapter 6 of Proposition 1. The project's ecological objectives implement the California Water Action Plan's Action 3: Achieve the Co-Equal Goals for the Delta and Action 4: Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems. The project's crop conversion and subsidence reversal objectives align with the Delta Conservancy's strategic plan's goal of to establish itself as a valuable partner with Delta growers and agriculture-related businesses to enhance the Delta's agricultural and working landscapes , and with the enabling legislation (§32300) that underpins those strategic goals. Creating important habitat for critical species and reversing subsidence on Delta islands while contributing to carbon sequestration is a multibenefit approach to ecosystem enhancement.