Science Evaluation

Bucket 2 – Council Selected Restoration Component

PROPOSAL TITLE

Apalachicola Bay Watershed Restoration

LOCATION

Apalachicola Watershed within Florida

SPONSOR(S)

Florida

TYPE OF FUNDING REQUESTED (Planning, Technical Assistance, Implementation)

Planning/Technical Assistance/Implementation

REVIEWED BY:

DATE:

1/12/2015

Best Available Science:

These 6 factors/elements help frame the reviewers answers to A, B and C found in next section:

1. Have the proposal objectives, including methods used, been justified using peer reviewed and/or publicly available information?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

It is difficult to assess this fully, as this proposal contains six miniproposals. The proposal would have been much stronger if the argument supporting any had been linked instead of presented consecutively. The weakest justification was for the "sustainable harvesting" metioned in project 1. There was no scientific justification given for this.

Overall the proposal would have been much better as six independent proposals. It is practically impossible to assay a project of this breadth with the limited amount of information provided. It is not possible to check up on the claims of the proposing agency.

2. If information supporting the proposal does not directly pertain to the Gulf Coast region, are applicant's methods reasonably supported and adaptable to that geographic area?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

The proposal pertains directly to the Gulf Coast region.

3. Are the literature sources used to support the proposal accurately and completely cited?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

Within the limitations mentioned in point 1

4. Are the literature sources represented in a fair and unbiased manner?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

5. Does the proposal evaluate uncertainties and risks in the scientific basis for the proposal, including any identified by the public and Council members?

- ( ) YES
- (●) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

Again, the risks of logging in project 1 are not explored. Since logging is cited as the cause of several of the problems justifying this proposal it should be addressed in the risks section as well.

6. Does the proposal evaluate uncertainties and risks in achieving its objectives over time? (e.g., is there an uncertainty or risk that in 5-10 years the project/program will be obsolete or not function as planned given projections of sea level rise?)

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

Based on the answers to the previous 6 questions, and giving deference to the sponsor to provide within reason the use of best available science the following three questions can be answered:

A. Has the applicant made a reasonable determination that the proposal is based on science that uses peer-reviewed and publicly available data?

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] NEED MORE INFORMATION

Information Needed:

Except for the need for logging, which is cited based on economic reasons not scientific ones. The other parts of the proposal conform.

B. Has the applicant made a reasonable determination that the proposal is based on science that maximizes the quality, objectivity, and integrity of information (including, as applicable, statistical information)?

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] NEED MORE INFORMATION

Information Needed:

There are reassurances that the team has conducted similar work in the past. It would have been a better proposal if these had been fleshed out with actual statistics; e.g. acreage restored, measures of long-term success etc.

C. Has the applicant made a reasonable determination that the proposal is based on science that clearly documents and communicates risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects?

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] NEED MORE INFORMATION

Information Needed:

Science Context Evaluation

A. Have other methods been discussed and reasons provided to why the method is being selected (e.g., scientifically sound; cost-effectiveness)?

The project is comprehensive, there really are no other methods available to do the proposed restoration project. The project is not intrinsically a research project, just a rebuilding project, so the methodology aspect is not entirely relevant.

B. Has your agency/vendor/project manager conducted a project/program like the one proposed?

No

C. Is there a risk mitigation plan in place for project objectives? (captures risk measures as defined under best available science by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

There are assurances that risks will be monitored and the project will conform to the standards of previous similar projects.

D. Does the project/program consider consequences with implementation? (captures risk measures as defined under best available science by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

The project considers risks but this is not detailed.

E. Does the project/program have clearly defined goals?

Detailed measurable endpoints are not presented. Quantifiable outcomes (e.g. trees planted, flows as point X etc) would all have been helpful, especially given the size of the project.

F. Does the project/program have clearly defined objectives?

Yes, they are interested in restoring the watershed. This goal is wholly admirable and desirable.

G. Does the project/program have measures of success? (captures statistical information requirement as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

The measures of success are too qualitative. Quantitative targets are not set.

H. Is a monitoring program in place to determine project goals, success and help adaptive management (if applicable)? (captures statistical information requirement as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Quantitative goals are not set, rendering monitoring efforts largely irrelevant.

I. Does the project/program consider recent and/or relevant information? (captures statistical information requirement as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Yes.

J. Has the project/program evaluated past successes and failures of similar efforts? (captures the communication of risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Not quantitatively. In many ways this proposal was the introduction to six short proposals strung together.

Please summarize any additional information needed below:

It is very difficult to determine if this proposal transfers research $$ to private landowners through "restoration" activities.