

Oregon Water Resources Department
Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage Grant Program
Evaluation for September 2, 2008 Applications

APPLICANT:	Kerns Rainbow Ranch, Inc.		
STUDY TYPE:	Above Ground Storage		
APPLICATION NO.:	GA0024 09		
STUDY NAME:	Surface Water Storage Assessment		
BASIN:	Powder	WRD DISTRICT:	8
WRD FUNDS REQUESTED:	\$67,000	TOTAL COST:	\$134,000

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

Kerns Rainbow Ranch, Inc. currently operates without any storage capability, which creates problems for managing and effective irrigation water management program. The basis for an effective irrigation water management program is to apply the correct quantity of water when needed. In the Kerns' situation the excess spring run-off escapes them and they experience water shortages later in the season which prevents adequate irrigation and reduces yields and crop quality. In late season, the Kerns depend on groundwater, but the energy costs associated with the groundwater has been increasing and the groundwater level is declining.

The assessment study will evaluate the feasibility of, and potential for, construction of six supplemental irrigation water storage structures located on the Kerns' property. The storage is needed for irrigation during mid-July through October. The assessment study will include site geologic and soil evaluations, suitability for dam construction, analysis of hazard potential, water storage and fill volume calculations, preliminary engineering of dam/retaining structures, necessity/options for sealing of containment area, specifications and location of construction materials, and preliminary design of a connecting delivery system to the existing irrigation system. There will also be an evaluation of any necessary wetland mitigation(s) as well as wildlife benefits and enhancements.

APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM EVALUATION:

The Application Review Team was generally supportive of this application, as it clearly addresses a water supply problem and does not appear to do harm to instream resources. As such, it appears to be consistent with the Oregon Plan and Senate Bill 1069. The application focuses on capturing water that comes from intermittent streams that do not "go anywhere." However, the applicant does raise the possibility of filling the reservoirs during drought years from Rock, Willow or Pine Creeks. Consequently, the feasibility study would need to address any potential instream impacts to fish and aquatic life on these streams.

Tasks 8 -11 (Preliminary design review and approval; Begin permit applications for selected sites; Design at 75% for selected sites; Approve designs of selected sites) seem to go beyond the feasibility study phase and into the project design phase.

The study is not a priority for funding under SB 1069 since it does not includes provisions for using stored water to augment instream flows to conserve, maintain and enhance aquatic life, fish life or other ecological values. The study could begin on January 1, 2009 and be completed by September 30, 2010.

Application Review Team Funding Recommendation: Do Fund: Contingent on Adequate Funding. If funds are available, fund Tasks 1-7 only (for \$46,000); do not fund Tasks 8-11 (Preliminary design review and approval; Begin permit applications for selected sites; Design at 75% for selected sites; Approve designs of selected sites).

COMMENTS:

None received.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do Not Fund.