



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TX 76102-0300

April 17, 2023

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST
W9126G-23-2-SOI-2590**

*Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units
Regions:*

Gulf Coast / Great Plains / Piedmont South Atlantic Coast / Southern Appalachian Mountains CESU
Regions

Project Title: Rivercane Science and Tribal Engagement Support for the U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise

A cooperative agreement is being offered ONLY to members of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Program Region(s) identified above. Award will be made upon mutual agreement and acceptance of the terms and conditions contained in the request for proposal and the of the recipient's CESU Master Agreement. Note the established CESU Program indirect rate is 17.5%.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential organizations for this project. Approximately **\$100,000** is expected to be available to support this project for the **base period**. Additional funding may be available to the successful recipient for optional tasks and/or follow on work in subsequent years.

Period of Performance. The base period of the agreement will extend 12 months from date of award. There may be up to one 12-month follow-on periods based on availability of funding.

Description of Anticipated Work: See attached Statement of Objectives

NOTE: At this time we are only requesting that you demonstrate available qualifications and capability for performing similar or same type of work by submitting a Statement of Interest. A full proposal and budget are NOT requested at this time.

Preparation of your Statement of Interest: Provide the following (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced, 12 pt. font):

1. Name, Organization, Cage Code, Unique Entity ID, and Contact Information (Email)
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
 - a. Biographical sketch of the Principal Investigator, to include specific experience and capabilities in areas related to this project's requirements
 - b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects
 - c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise

d. Brief description of other capabilities to successfully complete the project: (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.)

Submission of Your Statement of Interest

1. Statements of Interest are due by 5:00 P.M., Central Time, on **18 May 2023**.
2. Submit your Statement of Interest via e-mail attachments or direct questions to:
Maria Lopez
Grants Specialist
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: Maria.E.Lopez@usace.army.mil
Office: 817-886-1881

Chanley Jenkins
Project Manager
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: chanley.r.jenkins@usace.army.mil
Office: 918-798-9628

Review of Statements Received: All statements of interest received from a member of the CESU Region(s) identified above will be evaluated by a board comprised of one or more people at the receiving installation or activity, who will determine which statement(s) best meet the program objectives: offer the most highly qualified Principal Investigator, have the most relevant experience and the highest capability to successfully meet the program objectives. Submitters whose statements are determined to best meet the program objectives will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest: RSOL's are required to be posted on www.Grants.gov for 30 days prior to the Government making a decision and requesting full proposals.

Thank you for your interest in our Cooperative Agreements Program.

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ALICE AUSTIN
Contracting Officer

Attachment: Statement of Objectives

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Rivercane Science and Tribal Engagement Support for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise Sustainable Rivers Program

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1** The Army Corps of Engineers has a nationwide effort called the Sustainable Rivers Program (SRP). The mission of SRP is to improve the health and life of rivers by changing water infrastructure operations to restore and protect ecosystems, while maintaining or enhancing other project benefits. SRP was launched in 2002. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise (TNTCX) has been involved in SRP since 2021. This Cooperative Agreement will focus on a rivercane restoration study at the Robert S. Kerr Lock and Dam and Reservoir.
- 1.2** The Robert S. Kerr Lock and Dam and Reservoir is a unit in the multipurpose plan for development of the lower Arkansas River Basin for the authorized project purposes of recreation, hydroelectric power, and navigation. The reservoir contributes to navigation on the Arkansas River through sediment control and flow regulation. Hydroelectric power is produced by four Kaplan units with an installed capacity of 27,500 kilowatt (kW) and total capacity of 110,000 kW. Typical of the Arkansas river valley, much of the lake is relatively shallow, and there are numerous islands and sand bars potentially suitable for rivercane, especially in the mid to upper areas of the lake. This site is unique in that it includes the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), which was established in 1970 as an overlay project of the USACE Robert S. Kerr Reservoir and occurs within the boundaries of the Cherokee and Choctaw Nations of Oklahoma.
- 1.3** The SRP has benefited greatly from the expertise and experience of non-Corps practitioners in the development and implementation of environmental flow prescriptions at reservoirs. Extensive experience in ecology, biology, adaptive management, monitoring and assessment have proven to be instrumental in guiding reservoir releases. Comprehensive support of researchers in dam operations aids basin-wide efforts and Corps relationships with Tribes and stakeholders, as well as examines the effectiveness of water management to

achieve the desired outcomes. All work will be closely coordinated with USACE Tulsa District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Sequoyah NWR, and the Tribal partners.

- 1.4** For this work, the TNTCX is interested in advancing rivercane science and restoration at the project site, testing implementation of water management and/or land management practices that promote rivercane restoration, and ultimately incorporating those environmental strategies into a SOP or other appropriate guidance document(s). This includes genetic testing of local rivercane populations to inform population viability and advance understanding of canebrake habitat variability.

2.0 AUTHORITY

- 2.1** In agreement with the above stated purpose, the recipient/cooperator agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, in part, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)-TNTCX objectives pursuant to the authority 10 U.S.C. § 2358 - Research and Development.

- 2.2** In accordance with section 6305 – Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), all CESU projects must carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation, instead of acquiring goods or services for the exclusive direct benefit of the United States Government. Examples of carrying out a public purpose may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Project results are made available to a wide audience (including nonfederal entities)
- Project results/outputs add to the scientific literature/knowledge base, with applicability and utility beyond the scope of the project footprint/study area
- Academic and other nonfederal partner institutions (and their personnel) gain professional experience, increase knowledge, and develop skills and abilities
- Students benefit from direct interaction with federal scientists, program and technical staff, and field unit managers

- 2.3** In accordance with section 6305 – *Using cooperative agreements* of the *Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977* (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), substantial involvement is expected between the TNTCX, Tulsa District, USFWS, Tribal partners, and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The USACE agrees to participate at a national level in support of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) program as accepted in the Master Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the establishment and continuation of the CESU program Article II 1-4 and Article VI

1-7.

The US Army Corps of Engineers agrees to provide substantial involvement as directed under Article II (A) of the above listed CESU Master Agreement to include, but not limited to, the following:

- The TNTCX is involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing
- The TNTCX actively participates and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, helps train, or select project staff or trainees
- The TNTCX incurs in-kind or direct expenditures in carrying out the activities specified in the project agreement. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Providing computing services such as GIS support and/or webpage updates
 - Providing staff time to work on the project

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

- I- Tribal engagement support: The Robert S. Kerr Lock and Dam and Reservoir is unique in that it includes the Sequoyah NWR, which was established in 1970 as an overlay project of the USACE Robert S. Kerr Reservoir and occurs within the boundaries of the Cherokee and Choctaw Nations of Oklahoma. Rivercane is crucial to the continuity and culture of many Native American communities from the Southeastern United States (including the Choctaw and Cherokee). In addition to the many environmental benefits of this species, such as erosion control and water quality, the harvested material is utilized for both sacred and everyday cultural practices critical to the cultural continuity of Indigenous lifeways. It's important that this project be co-developed with willing Tribal partners. Potential partners include the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee, and other interested Tribes.
- II- Rivercane science advancement: Despite its once prolific presence on the landscape, there is still much to learn about rivercane management, restoration, and propagation. Genetic sampling will advance our understanding of local population viability and microclimate habitat variability. The previously developed rivercane conceptual ecological models should be refined for use at the project site and as an aid for the development of land and water management recommendations for enhancing rivercane populations at Kerr Reservoir.
- III- Rivercane restoration: Background research on rivercane restoration site selection and propagation techniques is needed for this restoration effort. This background research will include documentation of indigenous approaches to rivercane restoration site selection, propagation, and canebrake maintenance as

well. A site or sites will be selected for rivercane restoration experimentation and monitoring of the restored sites will be documented by photo/video, field notes, and data analysis.

- 3.1 Task 1:** Prepare a detailed work plan and schedule for completing all tasks. The work plan and schedule shall include:
- Introduction with points of contact (POC) information for TNTCX, SWT, NWR, and the Tribal partners
 - Background details on the scope and needs of the project
 - List of project details (pertinent info for Robert S. Kerr Reservoir and Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge)
 - Project goals and objectives
 - A strategy and schedule for completing Mandatory Tasks within each of the period of performances
- 3.2 Task 2:** Conduct Tribal outreach with Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee, and other interested Tribes. Recipient will be responsible for supporting efforts to plan and organize partner calls/meetings and prepare meeting minutes. Through interviews, discussions, and collaboration recipient will also collect indigenous knowledge data and solicit and consolidate input from Tribal partners and other information necessary to develop reports for leadership.
- 3.3 Task 3:** Participate in field visit(s) with interagency and Tribal team. Site visits and field exploration are necessary to evaluate existing rivercane brakes, identify restoration sites, and evaluating land/water management impacts on rivercane restoration success. Recipient will be responsible for participating in field visits, photo documentation, and trip summaries.
- 3.4 Task 4:** Develop a genetics study plan. Recipient will be responsible for developing and documenting the study plan to conduct genetic testing of local rivercane populations to inform population viability and advance understanding of canebrake habitat variability. Plan should document and follow proper DNA QA/QC protocols for sample collection, sequencing, and data analyzation in a laboratory.
- 3.5 Task 5:** Conduct genetics data collection and analysis. During field visits the recipient will collect genetic samples from various rivercane brakes at RS Kerr Reservoir. The samples will be collected, stored, and transported according to the genetics study plan. Recipient is responsible for providing all necessary equipment for collecting and analyzing the samples. The results of the genetics study will be documented in a report and/or draft publication document.
- 3.6 Task 6:** Refine rivercane conceptual ecological models (CEM). During the previously funded SRP Rivercane Restoration project, workshop attendees prepared about 10 (ten) different CEMs depicting various rivercane

relationships. Based off these CEMs the recipient will be responsible for developing a site-specific rivercane CEM for use in planning the rivercane restoration study and education/outreach about this project.

3.7 Task 7: Contribute intellectual capacity and technical review to the TNTCX and partners (SWT, NWR, and Tribes) as they develop restoration alternatives at Kerr Reservoir. The recipient will be an active member of the project delivery team (PDT) responsible for participating in meetings, site visits, and phone calls. Recipient will take meeting minutes and prepare trip reports as needed.

3.8 Task 8: Provide quarterly check-ins with the TNTCX on all activities and deliverables. Regular engagement with the TNTCX is critical to the success of this project. The recipient will prepare quarterly status updates during the period of performance that document the percent completion of the various tasks/deliverables. Recipient is responsible for scheduling and hosting these in progress review meetings. Meetings can be held virtually.

3.9 Task 9: Participate in implementation of the rivercane restoration activities. The recipient will actively engage in all rivercane restoration activities at the project site including site preparation, rivercane transplanting/propagation/seeding, monitoring, and maintenance. Recipient will keep detailed notes, photographs/videos, and other necessary items to document the restoration planning, execution, and monitoring.

3.10 Task 10: Develop education and outreach materials. Recipient will co-author a poster on the results of the project for presentation at various conferences and/or the NWR or SWT offices. Recipient will draft indigenous approaches to rivercane restoration pamphlet or similar educational material.

3.11 Task 11: Draft rivercane access and collection agreements between the Tribes and Sequoyah NWR and/or the Tulsa District.

3.12 Task 12 (Mandatory): Contribute intellectual capacity and technical review to the TNTCX and partners (SWT, NWR, and Tribes) as they develop SRP water/land management recommendations.

4.0 CONSIDERATION

4.1 Some tasks may require traveling off-road, working in boats, and in variable weather conditions. Applicant is responsible for travel to field sites, field gear, and safety. Off-road vehicles/equipment and boats will be provided by the Government.

5.0 QUALIFICATIONS

5.1 Biographical sketches are required for each of the personnel/project delivery team (PDT) members supporting this project and recipient will coordinate with USACE before any key personnel changes or hiring.

6.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY

- 6.1** Physical Data: Data sets and information furnished by the government for this project are the property of the Army Corps of Engineers. No release of information or data is allowed without a written approval from the Army Corps of Engineers. The Army Corps of Engineers has exclusive Data produced from the funding of this project.
- 6.2** Title to any Materials developed with CESU funds vests with the cooperator, with the Army Corps of Engineers getting royalty-free, nonexclusive, irrevocable license to use, publish or distribute all such copyrighted, trademarked, patented Materials, or inventions, trade secrets or other intellectual property rights. The word “Materials” may include, but is not limited to reports, studies, photographs (and negatives), computer programs, drawings, writings or other similar works or documents, along with all supporting data and material, produced under this Agreement. The cooperator agrees to provide the Army Corps of Engineers with copies of the Materials at no cost.
- 6.3** Equipment, Supplies, and Materials:
Government furnished materials or property is governed by 2 C.F.R. Part 200.312 which states that a) Title to federally-owned property remains vested in the Federal government. The non-Federal entity must submit annually an inventory listing of federally-owned property in its custody to the Federal awarding agency. Upon completion of the Federal award or when the property is no longer needed, the non-Federal entity must return the property to the Federal awarding agency for further Federal agency utilization.

7.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

- 7.1** Base Period be for a 12-month period from the award.
- 7.2** Option Period 1 will be for a 12-month period from the award and shall be exercised prior to the expiration of the Base Period.

8.0 COORDINATION

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Regional Planning and Environmental Center
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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Senior Biologist/Tribal Liaison
Special Programs Manager
USACE Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise (TNTCX)
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9.0 DELIVERABLES

- 9.1** Task 1 Deliverable: Cooperator will submit a detailed work plan and schedule for completing the assigned tasks and deliverables within the period of performance. The draft work plan and schedule are due within 14 calendar days at the award of a period of performance. The final work plan and schedule is due within 7 calendar days of receiving TNTCX comments on the draft. The cooperator will update the work plan and schedule throughout the study and provide current versions during quarterly IPRs.
- 9.2** Task 2 Deliverable: Document Tribal engagement in a correspondence log that includes date, Tribal contact(s), type of engagement (call, web meeting, face-to-face meeting), and a summary of the purpose and information learned. Prepare a report documenting indigenous knowledge about rivercane propagation, care, uses, and related topics. Ensure Tribal partners are aware that any information shared is subject to public release. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.3** Task 3 Deliverable: Document PDT field visits to discuss rivercane restoration opportunities, site selection, lessons learned, and management activities. Documentation will include photos of PDT, existing rivercane sites, prospective restoration sites, and maps/figures of pertinent locations. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.4** Task 4 Deliverable: Prepare a study plan for the rivercane genetic analysis. The plan will detail the mutually agreed upon goals and objectives of the genetic study, the sample selection, collection, and analysis methodologies, and how the results will be presented. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.5** Task 5 Deliverable: Prepare report documenting the findings of the genetics study including any recommendations for future study needs or management approaches. Provide the data, graphs, and figures that support the findings. The TNTCX respects the rights of the cooperator to publish the data. The TNTCX will receive permission from the cooperator if sharing in reports or presentations ahead of publication. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.6** Task 6 Deliverable: Review and refine the previously prepared rivercane conceptual ecological models (CEM). The refined CEM will be specific to Kerr Reservoir rivercane restoration effort and illustrate the relationships relevant to the design, implementation, and maintenance of this site-specific rivercane restoration. Ideally the CEM will be used as additional educational material and may be incorporated into the educational materials described in Task 10. The

graphics should be high resolution and sufficient quality for that purpose. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.

- 9.7** Task 7 Deliverable: As needed, cooperator will provide verbal and/or written comments to the PDT regarding all aspects of the restoration study. Cooperator will provide meeting minutes and trip reports. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.8** Task 8 Deliverable: Host quarterly in progress reviews (IPR) with the TNTCX (virtual is acceptable). Cooperator will provide an electronic copy of a presentation (or word document) that summarizes the study effort, data collected, preliminary results, deviations from the work plan, status of budget, and lessons learned.
- 9.9** Task 9 Deliverable: Document rivercane restoration activities in a report. At a minimum, the report shall contain an introduction section, site selection plan, methods, and results. The report should include figures, graphs/charts, and photos that illustrate the key components of the restoration effort. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.10** Task 10 Deliverable: Co-author a poster on the results of the rivercane restoration project for presentation at various conferences and/or the NWR or SWT offices. Cooperator will draft indigenous approaches to rivercane restoration pamphlet or similar educational material. Poster and pamphlet will be in color and suitable resolution and quality for professional presentation. Draft and final documents will be provided electronically. Submittal will adhere to approved schedule in work plan.
- 9.11** Task 11 Deliverable: Draft initial versions of access and collection agreements between the appropriate Federal landowner/manger and Tribes. Cooperator will coordinate with the NWR, SWT, and the Tribes to determine the format and content of the agreements. The agreements will document approved access for collection of rivercane for the cultural heritage purposes, maintenance of canebrakes, and education. If appropriate, the agreements will identify limits on the quantity of material collected and the timing of collections. NWR/SWT will be responsible for ultimately executing the agreements with the Tribes.
- 10.0** This cooperative agreement may be administered through a CESU only upon mutual agreement and official authorization by both parties of the acceptance of the application of the CESU Network Indirect Cost Rate (17.5%).

Any resulting cooperative agreement will be subject to and recipient/cooperator shall comply with 2 CFR 200.313 “Equipment”, 200.314 “Supplies”, and 200.315 “Intangible Property” which includes use of research data.

[End of SOO]