



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

11 August 2026

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST  
W9126G262SOI9667**

**Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Regions:** Alaska/Rocky Mountain/Pacific Northwest Regions

**Project Title:** Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW) Prey, Salmon Productivity Monitoring at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER).

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 recipient's CESU Joint and Cooperative Agreement (also known as the CESU Master Agreement).

**NOTE:** The established CESU indirect rate is **17.5%**. For any Cooperative Agreement entered into in response to this RSOI, a maximum 17.5% indirect cost rate will be paid on work covered by such agreement or any modifications thereto. Unless the agreement specifies otherwise, the basis of direct costs against which the agreement's indirect cost rate is applied must be either the same base identified in the recipient's federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement or, if the recipient does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) base.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential organizations for this project. Approximately **\$167,897.16** 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.

**NOTE:** This project will be awarded under the authority of 16 USC 670c-1, **Sikes Act**. For projects for the implementation and enforcement of integrated natural resources management plans, priority shall be given to award to Federal and State agencies having responsibility for the conservation or management of fish or wildlife.

**Period of Performance.** The base period of the agreement will extend 18 months from the date of award. There may be up to six (6) 18-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. **If selected to submit a full proposal, proposal turnaround time will be short and may be limited to 5 business days.**

**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, CESU Region, 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 (SOI) are due by **Noon Central Time, on 10 Sep 2026** via email to the parties listed below.
2. Direct questions no later than 10 calendar days from RSOI posting date to the parties listed below.

Nicholas A. Aprea  
Grants Specialist  
USACE, Fort Worth District  
Email: [Nicholas.a.aprea@usace.army.mil](mailto:Nicholas.a.aprea@usace.army.mil)

and

David Leptien  
Project Manager  
USACE, Fort Worth District  
Email: [david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil](mailto:david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil)

**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:** RSOIs are required to be posted on [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) for 30 days prior to the Government making a decision and requesting full proposals.

**TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR AWARD, THE RECIPIENT AND ANY PROPOSED SUBRECIPIENTS AND CONTRACT VENDORS MUST HAVE AN ACTIVE NIST SP 800-171 DOD**

**ASSESSMENT (PERFORMED WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS). Additional details are provided as a separate attachment to this document.**

Thank you for your interest in our Cooperative Agreements Program.

CHERYL R. VENDEMIA  
Grants Officer

Attachment: Statement of Objectives

**STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES (SOO)  
FOR  
U.S. AIR FORCE 673D CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON**

**COOK INLET BELUGA WHALE (CIBW) PREY, SALMON PRODUCTIVITY  
MONITORING AT JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON (JBER), ALASKA**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 This Statement of Objectives (SOO) provides the details of work to be performed to support the U.S. Air Force 673d Civil Engineering Squadron (CES), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Conservation Fisheries Program, through a Cooperative Agreement (CA). The purpose of this project is to characterize the prey species composition in JBER waters that serve as critical foraging habitat for the endangered Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW). The data collected will: (a) inform JBER's environmental management decisions regarding Beluga habitat quality, (b) support compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), (c) contribute to understanding of prey availability as a limiting factor in CIBW population recovery, and (d) support collaborative regional eDNA monitoring efforts. This SOO describes the high-level goals the government seeks to achieve. The Non-Federal Entity (NFE) shall propose a technical solution for meeting these objectives.

1.2 The Cook Inlet Beluga whale population was listed as endangered under the ESA in 2008. The population has declined from an estimated 1,300 individuals in the 1970s to approximately 331 whales as of the most recent abundance estimate. Prey availability has been identified as a key factor potentially limiting CIBW recovery. Belugas in Cook Inlet are known to prey on a variety of anadromous and marine fish species, including all five species of Pacific salmon (Chinook, sockeye, coho, pink, and chum), eulachon, Pacific cod, and various flatfish and smelt species.

JBER waters, including Eagle River and adjacent portions of Knik Arm, represent important CIBW foraging habitat. Eagle River, which runs through a dedicated Army impact area, the Eagle River Flats (ERF), before emptying into Knik Arm supports runs of all five species of Pacific salmon that serve as important prey for Belugas. Indeed, Belugas make far-reaching forays into ERF during the known salmon runs. They also, however, travel upriver outside of the known salmon windows, likely targeting an unknown, non-salmonid prey species. This lack of information regarding the composition, timing, and relative abundance of potential prey species in JBER waters represents a significant data gap. Understanding what prey species are present, when they are available, and in what relative quantities are essential for assessing habitat quality and informing management decisions that support CIBW recovery.

Environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring offers a non-invasive, cost-effective approach to characterizing fish community composition across spatial and temporal scales. This project will establish baseline eDNA monitoring protocols and generate data on prey species presence and investigate relative abundance in JBER waters as practicable.

## 2.0 AUTHORITY

Authority to enter into a Cooperative Agreement (CA) for the work: Section 670c-1, Title 16 United States Code, Sikes Act.

2.1 In agreement with the objectives found in this SOO, the NFE agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, in part, JBER responsibilities pursuant to the Sikes Act Improvement Act (16 USC 670 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), and Air Force and Department of Defense natural resources directives and instructions.

In general, cooperative agreements must carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation; however, under the authority of the Sikes Act (16 USC 670c-1(c)(2)), notwithstanding chapter 63 of Title 31 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq), a cooperative agreement under this section may be used to acquire property or services for the direct benefit or use 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), following necessary coordination with the JBER project manager
- 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

2.2 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.), substantial involvement is expected between the Department of Defense and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement.

The installation further (hence DoD) agrees to provide substantial involvement as directed under the appropriate master agreement to include, but not limited to, the following:

- JBER is involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing.
- JBER actively participates and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, helps train or select project staff or trainees.
- JBER 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 staff time to work on the project
- Coordinate research activities with other installation entities and scheduling of range time.
- Collaborating on appropriate course of action for attainment of site-specific objectives, including technical assistance and DoD guidance.
- Participation in status meetings including kick off meeting and Quarterly project update meetings.

### 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

This project directly implements goals from the approved 2021 JBER Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP). Understanding prey availability is essential to CIBW recovery efforts, as identified in the INRMP and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Recovery Plan. The NFE shall develop and execute a comprehensive plan to achieve the following objectives, which fall under:

*GOAL 4: Contribute to the recovery of the Cook Inlet Beluga whale (USAF 2021).*

**3.1 Objective 1:** Characterize fish species composition in JBER waters to identify prey species available to Cook Inlet Beluga whales. Sampling shall encompass Eagle River and adjacent Knik Arm waters to document the diversity of fish species present in known and potential CIBW foraging areas. *(Supports INRMP Project 4.1.1: Monitor prey species of CIBW in Eagle River and Knik Arm)*

**3.2 Objective 2:** Document temporal patterns in prey species presence. Sampling design shall capture seasonal variation in fish community composition, with emphasis on periods when Belugas are known to use JBER waters (approximately May through December). Multi-year data collection will enable assessment of inter-annual variability in prey availability. *(Supports INRMP Project 4.1.1)*

**3.3 Objective 3:** Integrate sampling design and data management with the regional multi-entity Cook Inlet eDNA monitoring effort. The NFE shall coordinate with JBER and regional partners to ensure sampling protocols, species reference databases, and data formats are compatible with the broader collaborative effort. This objective may expand in scope in follow-on periods 1-6 as the regional effort develops. *(Supports INRMP Goal 4 and regional CIBW recovery efforts)*

**3.4 Objective 4:** Develop and deliver a prey species monitoring protocol for long-term implementation at JBER. The protocol shall document sampling methods, laboratory procedures, data analysis approaches, and quality assurance/quality control measures suitable for continued monitoring by JBER or successor contractors. *(Supports INRMP Project 4.1.1 and long-term natural resources management at JBER)*

### 4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

The Non-Federal Entity (NFE) shall have recent experience and extensive expertise in environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring of aquatic ecosystems, with a strong preference

for experience with marine fish community assessment using metabarcoding and droplet digital polymerase chain reaction (ddPCR) approaches. Experience with Cook Inlet Beluga whales and fish communities is desirable. The NFE shall have access to, or partnership with, a laboratory capable of processing eDNA samples and appropriate protocols in place to control for and detect potential contamination of sensitive, low-template eDNA samples. The NFE will supply a PI with expertise in eDNA including the selection and optimization of genetic assays, bioinformatic processing for fish species identification, and the development of quantitative model frameworks for drawing ecological inference from eDNA species detections. The NFE shall demonstrate capability for secure data management, reproducible science practices, and integration with collaborative multi-institutional research efforts.

## **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

**NFE Responsibilities:** The NFE is responsible for providing qualified personnel, vehicles, and all equipment, supplies, and logistical support necessary to meet the objectives, except for that which is explicitly government-furnished. This includes all eDNA sampling equipment, sample preservation and shipping supplies, and laboratory analysis. The NFE shall develop sampling protocols in collaboration with JBER and regional partners and shall be responsible for all data analysis and interpretation.

**Government (Sponsor) Responsibilities:** Provide electronic copies of all available maps, GIS data, and historic data relevant to these projects. Provide access to study sites and coordinate access with other installation entities. Provide required escorts (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) as needed for access to Eagle River Flats Impact Area. Provide boat transportation with a qualified captain as available. Provide timely review and feedback on draft deliverables. Facilitate coordination with regional eDNA monitoring partners.

**Security:** Photos must be cleared by the appropriate security and public affairs offices prior to any external release.

### **5.1 NFE-Furnished Technical Capabilities**

To successfully meet the program objectives, the NFE's proposed technical solution shall include, at a minimum, the provision and operation of the following capabilities:

**eDNA Sample Collection:** The capability to collect water samples for eDNA analysis from multiple locations in Eagle River and Knik Arm. Sampling design shall account for tidal cycles, seasonal variation, and spatial coverage of CIBW foraging habitat.

**Sample Processing and Preservation:** The capability to properly filter, preserve, and transport eDNA samples to maintain sample integrity for laboratory analysis.

**Laboratory Analysis:** Access to laboratory facilities capable of extracting, amplifying, and sequencing eDNA for fish species identification. Metabarcoding approaches targeting fish communities are preferred.

**Bioinformatics and Data Analysis:** The capability to process sequencing data, assign taxonomic identifications using appropriate reference databases, and analyze species composition and relative abundance patterns.

**Data Management and Storage:** Secure data storage solutions and data management systems compatible with regional collaborative efforts. All raw sequence data and analysis outputs shall be archived and made available to the government.

## **6.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE AND FOLLOW-ON PERIODS**

**Base Period:** 18-months from date of award (3 months administrative period to complete on-boarding of employees, subcontractors, and project planning; 12-month technical period for conducting field work; 3 months administrative for completion of reports only with no new work)

**Six (6) 18-month Follow-On (FO) periods:** Any overlap periods are to accommodate on-boarding of personnel, subcontracting activities, and reporting activities as field work is required during the technical period of performance.

### **Example POP Schedule:**

**\*\*Note:** the exact schedule will depend on date of award

Base Period: 01 AUG 2026 – 01 FEB 2028 (18 months)

FO Period 1: 01 AUG 2027 – 01 FEB 2029 (18 months)

FO Period 2: 01 AUG 2028 – 01 FEB 2030 (18 months)

FO Period 3: 01 AUG 2029 – 01 FEB 2031 (18 months)

FO Period 4: 01 AUG 2030 – 01 FEB 2032 (18 months)

FO Period 5: 01 AUG 2030 – 01 FEB 2032 (18 months)

FO Period 6: 01 AUG 2030 – 01 FEB 2032 (18 months)

## **7.0 COORDINATION**

The NFE is required to notify the AF Technical POC and the USACE Project Manager of critical issues that may affect the project performance and/or human health and the environment. The types of issues that require notification include, but are not limited to, health risks, fuel spills, dive accidents (and near misses), unusual inclement weather conditions, unacceptable materials, Unexploded Ordinance (UXO), and changes in critical personnel. JBER POC and Recipient shall hold regular meetings to discuss needs, priorities, and updates as deemed necessary by parties to this agreement. The timing and frequency of the meetings shall be determined by the project needs and JBER POC staff.

### **David Leptien**

Project Manager

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC)

Email: [david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil](mailto:david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil)



Phone: 402-889-5570

**Andrea Gilstad**

USAF Technical Point of Contact 1

673d Civil Engineer Squadron

Email: [Andrea.Gilstad.1@us.af.mil](mailto:Andrea.Gilstad.1@us.af.mil)

Phone: 907-384-0276

**Christopher Garner**

USAR Technical Point of Contact 2

673d Civil Engineer Squadron

Email: [christopher.garner.9@us.af.mil](mailto:christopher.garner.9@us.af.mil)

Phone: 907-384-2479

**Scott Webb**

USAF Financial Point of Contact

AFCEC/CZOP

Email: [scott.webb.5@us.af.mil](mailto:scott.webb.5@us.af.mil)

Phone: 907-552-9618

## **8.0 DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE**

The NFE shall provide the following deliverables:

- 8.1 Kickoff Meeting and Work Plan: Within 30 days of award, a kickoff meeting will be held. A comprehensive Work Plan detailing the technical approach, sampling design, laboratory methods, and schedule shall be delivered for approval prior to initiating fieldwork. Draft Work Plan due within 60 days of award; Final Work Plan due within 14 calendar days after receipt of government comments.
- 8.2 Monthly Progress Updates: Monthly progress updates shall be due as of the last day of each month. Updates will include summary of activities, progress toward objectives, problems encountered and solutions, and planned activities for the next month.
- 8.3 Quarterly Progress Reports: Quarterly progress reports shall be due no later than the 10th calendar day following the end of each quarter. Reports shall detail technical progress, preliminary results, budget status, and any issues affecting project timeline.
- 8.4 Data and Analysis Packages: All raw and processed data (sequence data, taxonomic assignments, metadata, geospatial data), field notes, and records. All data, records, and equipment purchased under this agreement become the property of the U.S. Government.
- 8.5 Technical Field Reports: Draft reports summarizing each field season shall be delivered within 30 days after the end of each field season.

- 8.6 Prey Species Monitoring Protocol: A comprehensive protocol document suitable for long-term implementation shall be delivered as part of the final report. Draft protocol due with draft final report; Final protocol due with final report.
- 8.7 Final Comprehensive Report: A draft final report is due 30 days prior to the end of the period of performance, synthesizing all findings and addressing each Program Objective. The final report is due within 30 days of receiving government comments. Reports shall include response to comment matrix.
- 8.8 Annual Inventory – Federally Owned Property: An annual inventory listing Federal property in the custody of the recipient. Copies to be sent to USACE PM and JBER POC.
- 8.9 Records/Data Management: All digital files, source data, and related materials shall become property of the Government. Data management shall comply with DoD and USAF standards for Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI). All records must be managed in accordance with AFI 33-322 Records Management.

## 9.0 ADMINISTRATION

9.1 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 IDC rate (17.5%).

9.2 Any resulting cooperative agreement will be subject to, and NFE shall comply with 2 CFR 200.313 “Equipment”, 200.314 “Supplies”, and 200.315 “Intangible Property” which includes use of research data. NOTE: In addition to the General Terms and Conditions, the Recipient shall request disposition instructions from the Federal Awarding agency (USACE) PM, as applicable.

## 10.0 POST AWARD AND INVOICE PROCESS

10.1 Payment Requests and Progress Reports (Invoice Package): Submit Payment Request and additional required documents to: [swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil](mailto:swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil). Carbon Copy the assigned USACE Project Manager as well as your organization’s point of contacts (POCs) for the additional required documents and for delinquent accounts.

10.1.1 Frequency: Quarterly plus 30-day grace period (except for the final invoice package noted below). If the coverage dates are not quarterly or preapproved by the PM (or the first/last submittal), the invoice package will be **rejected**.

| Quarters    | Invoice pkgs due No Later Than (NLT): |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Q1: Oct-Dec | Q1: 31 Jan                            |
| Q2: Jan-Mar | Q2: 30 Apr                            |
| Q3: Apr-Jun | Q3: 30 Jul                            |
| Q4: Jul-Sep | Q4: 31 Oct                            |

10.1.2 Payment Requests **must** be submitted on form SF270 Request for Advance or Reimbursement **with the accompanying Standard Form-Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR), otherwise the SF270 will be rejected.**

### 10.1.3 SF270 Request for Advance or Reimbursement

10.1.3.1 Block 9, Recipient Organization. **For successful set up of Electronic Transfer of Funds (EFT), the Recipient's name and address shall reflect the exact name and physical address that appears in the System for Award Management (SAM), <https://sam.gov/>.**

10.1.3.2 Blocks 11, (a), (b), & (c) are for the description of funds. Preferred description is: CLIN/POP Type, POP start and end dates, amount awarded (see example below); at minimum include the CLIN. If the description or the minimum CLIN information is missing, the **SF270 and SF-PPR will be rejected**.

Example:

**CLIN 0001 / Base 22SEP23 – 21SEP24  
\$100,000.00**

Funding must be separated as specified on the Award document. Sub-CLINs that specify "for funding only" (e.g., numbered 000101, 000102, etc.) may be rolled into the primary CLIN (e.g., 0001) unless otherwise instructed. All others required PM approval.

The SF270 may have multiple pages. An SF270 in Excel format may be requested at: [swf-cesu- \[invoice@usace.army.mil\]\(mailto:swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil\)](mailto:swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil), however, **must be submitted in pdf format otherwise will be rejected**.

10.1.4 **SF-PPR Standard Form-Performance Progress Report:** The Recipient shall tailor the SF-PPR to include, at minimum, the following information:

- Separate details by CLIN as applicable
- Achievements (must detail work during quarter associated with the invoice)
- Percent Completion
- Project Status
- Problems encountered and impact of activities and personnel on schedule
- Anticipated work in next reporting period

**If the SF-PPR is incomplete, the SF-PPR and SF270 will be rejected.**

A tailored SF-PPR form may be requested at: [swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil](mailto:swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil).

10.2 **Final invoice package** is due no later than 90 days from final (funded/exercised) POP end date and must include the following documents:

- Final SF270
- SF-PPR
- Final SF425
- DD882
- SF428 plus attachment B (C&S if applicable)
- SF298
- Final Report

Forms may be requested from the district office at [swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil](mailto:swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil) or found at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms>

**References:**

- 1) Reference A: USAF. 2021. U.S. Air Force Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan – Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. 227 Pages.
- 2) Reference B: NMFS. 2016. Recovery Plan for the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*). National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region, Protected Resources Division, Juneau, Alaska.

**END OF STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**