



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

27 June 2025

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST  
W9126G-25-2-SOI-4435**

*Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Regions: **South Florida-Caribbean and Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast CESU Regions***

**Project Title:** Monitoring Support for Wood Stork Reproduction in Lake Okeechobee and Overlapping Core Foraging Areas for USACE Jacksonville District.

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 Master Agreement.

Note the established CESU Program indirect rate is: **17.5%**.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will be used to identify potential organizations for this project.

This RSOI seeks merit-based competitive procedures to encourage participation in USACE (DoD) programs by a broad base of the most highly qualified performers and will be evaluated on Technical Merits of the proposed research and development (R&D) and the potential relationship of the proposed R&D to USACE (DoD) missions.

Approximately **\$159,135** 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 four 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: 3 pages, single-spaced, 12 pt. font):

1. Name, Organization, CAGE Code, Unique Entity ID, CESU Region, and Contact Information (Email)
2. Statement of Technical Ability & Qualifications (including):
  - a. Biographical sketch of the Principal Investigator (PI), to include specific experience and capabilities in areas related to this project's requirements, meeting the qualifications of a master's degree or higher and shall have published scientific research and/or have experience with South Florida ecosystems, AND experience with Wood Stork and other wading bird monitoring, reproductions, and productivity analyses.
  - b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects.
  - c. Biographical sketches of personnel available to support this project, meeting qualifications in the SOO, and their areas of expertise relevant to this project's requirements.
  - d. Innovative techniques and description of other capabilities to successfully complete the project: (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, subject matter experts, etc.)
3. Summary of the potential relationship of the proposed research and development to the USACE (DoD) missions.

#### **Submission of Your Statement of Interest**

- Statements of Interest (SOI) are due by **2:00 P.M., Central Time**, on **28 July 2025**, submit via email to the parties listed below.
- Direct questions no later than **14 July 2025**, via email to the parties listed below.

Nicholas Aprea  
Grants Specialist  
USACE, Fort Worth District  
Email: [nicholas.a.aprea@usace.army.mil](mailto:nicholas.a.aprea@usace.army.mil)  
Office: (817) 886-1925

AND

Brian Hesford  
Project Manager  
USACE, Fort Worth District  
Email: [brian.d.hesford@usace.army.mil](mailto:brian.d.hesford@usace.army.mil)  
Office: (402) 200-8268

#### **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 to determine the which statements have the highest rated technical merit, highest capability to successfully meet the program objectives as

outlined in the Statement of Objectives, and closest alignment between the proposed research and the USACE mission.

#### Overall Evaluation Ratings.

**Good/Excellent:** The SOI demonstrates a thorough understanding of the project's goals and objectives, and has demonstrated the ability, qualifications, resources to exceed performance and capability standards and includes at least one strength. Strength is an aspect of a proposal that, when judged against the overall evaluation criterion, enhances the merit of the proposal or increases the probability of successful performance of the Assistance Award.

**Acceptable:** The SOI demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the project's goals and objectives, and has demonstrated the ability, qualifications, and resources to meet performance and capability standards. The SOI meets the overall evaluation criterion.

**Unacceptable:** The SOI does not demonstrate an understanding of the project's goals and objectives, and has not demonstrated the ability, qualifications, and resources that meet the performance and capability standards. The SOI includes at least one weakness. Weakness is an aspect that increases the risk of unsuccessful performance.

Respondent's SOI receiving the highest ratings, Good/Excellent being the highest, and Acceptable the lowest, will be requested to submit a full proposal for further evaluation.

**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 ASSESSEMENT (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**

Monitoring of Wood Stork Reproduction in Lake  
Okeechobee and Overlapping Core Foraging  
Areas for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
Jacksonville District  
April 2025

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this monitoring project is to conduct field data collection of wood stork and reproductive responses in Lake Okeechobee and overlapping Core Foraging Areas (CFAs).

The wood stork is the only stork breeding in the United States and is federally listed as threatened. Historically, south Florida was the core reproductive habitat for the species. However, since the 1930s, the breeding population has been in decline due to a variety of factors, including the loss of wetland habitats and loss of wetland function that has resulted in reduced prey availability. Wood stork reproductive success is highly dependent on the availability of aquatic prey (fish), which are easy to find and feed upon when concentrated at high densities in shallow water during the dry season (winter-spring). To successfully fledge their young, wood storks require a continuous supply of abundant and concentrated fish throughout the reproductive period.

The Lake Okeechobee littoral zone provides important foraging, nesting, and roosting habitat for wood storks in south Florida. The Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) was initiated in late 2024, replacing the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS) as the new operational plan for Lake Okeechobee. LOSOM controls water management operations in Lake Okeechobee and may affect wood stork foraging, nesting, and roosting by altering available habitat and changing littoral wetland hydroperiod. Additionally, LOSOM water management operations can also result in fragmentation of stork habitat, reduction in spatial extent of habitat, impacts to wood stork prey base, and degradation of stork habitat due to hydrologic alterations and water quality. Due to anticipated hydrological impacts in Lake Okeechobee under LOSOM, wood stork nesting, foraging, and roosting habitat in the littoral zone of Lake Okeechobee may be adversely affected. Thus, it is critical to monitor the reproductive success of wood stork populations that may be affected by LOSOM.

This support represents an opportunity for monitoring wood stork reproduction in Lake Okeechobee and overlapping CFAs in response to hydrologic changes associated with the current water control plan (i.e. 2024 Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) Water Control Plan) that guides operations in Lake Okeechobee. Currently, this would include monitoring foraging and nesting wood storks in the Moonshine Bay, Gator Farm, Lemkin Creek, and

Cypress Creek Bluefield Road colonies as well as any new colonies within the Lake Okeechobee littoral zone that may be established during LOSOM.

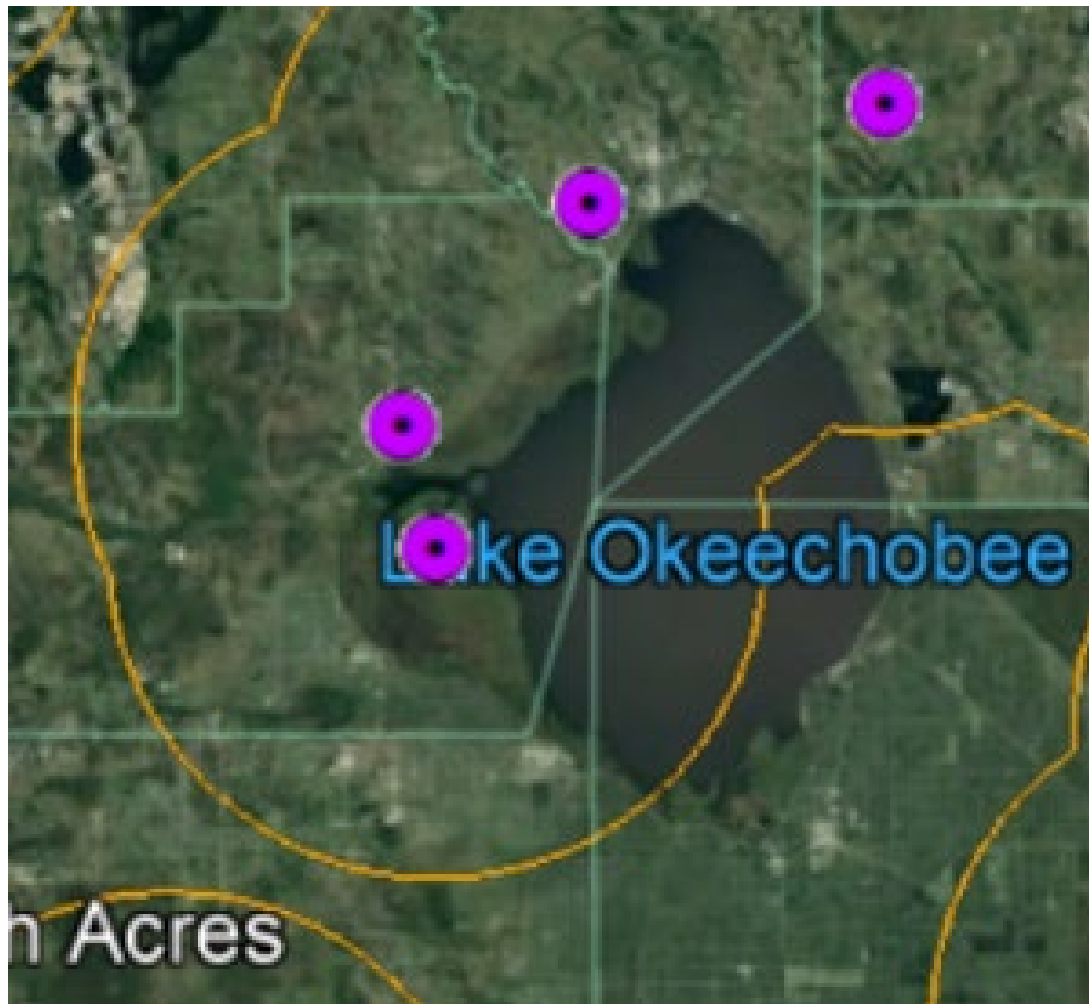


Figure 1. Nesting colonies of wood stork in the LOSOM study area. Purple points represent active colonies and orange boundaries represent colony foraging areas (2010-2019).

## 2.0 AUTHORITY

In agreement with the above stated purpose, the recipient/cooperator shall provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps) objectives pursuant to the authority 10 U.S.C. § 4001 - Research and Development Projects.

Each cooperative agreement awarded under this statement of objectives will be governed by 2 CFR 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost

Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”, 2 CFR 1100 Subchapter D—Administrative Requirements Terms and Conditions for Cost-Type Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Nonprofit and Governmental Entities and the DoD research general terms and conditions located at <https://www.onr.navy.mil/work-with-us/manage-your-award/manage-grant-award/grants-terms-conditions>.

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

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.), involvement is expected between the Corps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the recipient/cooperator when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The Corps agrees to participate at a national level in support of the CESU program as accepted in the Master MOU for the establishment and continuation of the CESU program Article II 1-4 and Article VI 1-7.

The principal investigator (PI) will be responsible for identifying study site selections, sample design(s), research study methodologies, and field sampling, assessment and monitoring plan development with input from agencies, including the Corps, USFWS and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

The Corps will provide input to data interpretation for final reports, as well as review weekly/bi-weekly email updates and quarterly and annual reports. The

Corps will incorporate the data and analysis into a system-wide database that assesses and evaluates ecosystem restoration efforts in central and southern Florida. Scientific and technical information generated from the project will be utilized to evaluate project/restoration performance and system responses to be used in the development of assessment reports describing and interpreting those responses.

### **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES**

Specific project objectives include the following:

Objective 1: Collection of field data required to evaluate wood stork reproductive responses in the Lake Okeechobee and overlapping CFAs using standardized techniques with modifications to allow more accurate assessment as appropriate.

Objective 2: Collection of additional field data to evaluate the response of other wading bird species to hydrologic modifications using similar protocols - as the opportunity presents itself.

Objective 3: Evaluate collected data to determine impacts of hydrologic changes on wood stork reproductive success. Provide recommendations for ecosystem alternations that would favor preservation and protection of existing wood stork populations.

### **PROJECT TASKS**

#### **3.1 Task 1 – Kickoff Meeting**

The PI shall conduct a kickoff meeting with the Corps within ten (10) business days of cooperative agreement award. This meeting shall be an informal, virtual discussion between the PI and USACE. All deliverable submittals shall include the USACE Jacksonville District and the USACE Fort Worth District Cooperative Agreement Project Manager. Meetings shall include meeting minutes supplied by the recipient/cooperator.

Within ten (10) days following the Kickoff Meeting, the PI shall submit meeting minutes and an electronic summary of the meeting and a draft field sampling, assessment and monitoring plan to the Corps. LOSOM Project Manager (PM) and/or Lead Biologist will respond with comments to the PI within ten (10) business days after the receipt by the Corps of the draft field sampling, assessment and monitoring plan. The PI shall address the Corps' comments and submit a final field sampling, assessment and monitoring plan, which will be submitted to the Corps within ten (10) days of its receipt by the PI. Upon its approval in writing by the Corps LOSOM Project PM, the final field sampling, assessment and monitoring plan shall become the working document. The PI shall proceed with the approved field monitoring, assessment, and sampling

plan. The field monitoring, assessment, and sampling plan will be updated as necessary at the beginning of each awarded option period.

The PI shall also begin preparations to support field monitoring, assessment, and sampling activities within ten (10) days of finalization of the field monitoring, assessment, and sampling plan. This includes acquiring and assembling any specialty equipment needed and working with Corps and USFWS staff to become familiar with monitoring, sampling, and assessment objectives and tasks. All equipment and supplies shall be provided by the recipient/cooperator.

### **3.2 Task 2 – Monitoring and Assessments**

The PI shall obtain information on the annual status of wood stork populations with Core Foraging Areas overlapping Lake Okeechobee. This includes determining the number of wood storks initiating nesting within Lake Okeechobee or overlapping Core Foraging Areas and determine the success rate of those efforts. Prior to the first season of monitoring, the PI should coordinate the development of a wood stork field sampling, assessment, and monitoring plan. The development of this plan should include input and review by the Corps, USFWS, FWC, species experts, and other interested parties.

### **3.3 Task 3 – Reporting Requirements**

Reporting requirements include bi-weekly updates, quarterly status reports, annual reports, and a final report. See Section 9.0 – Deliverables below for more detail about these reports. Prior to the initiation of monitoring, the PI will work with the Corps and USFWS to finalize any specific reporting requirements that should be provided in the reports.

### **3.4 Task 4 – Yearly Meetings**

Yearly Meetings: A yearly virtual meeting will be scheduled with the USACE, Jacksonville District as needed following completion of the final annual report and final report, as described above, to discuss work accomplished.

## **4.0 CONSIDERATION**

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.

## **5.0 QUALIFICATIONS**

Biographical sketches and resumes are required for each of the personnel supporting this project. The recipient/cooperator must have a master's degree or higher and shall have published scientific research and/or experience with South Florida ecosystems. The recipient/cooperator must also have experience with wood stork and other wading bird monitoring, reproduction, and productivity analyses. The cooperator will coordinate with the Corps before any key



personnel changes or hiring.

## **6.0 OPTION PERIODS**

Four (4), twelve (12) month follow-on Option periods are anticipated, subject to availability of funds.

## **7.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

The base period and each follow-on (option) period will be 12 months each.

## **8.0 COORDINATION**

### **Brian Hesford**

Cooperative Agreement Project Manager  
Fort Worth District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Email: [brian.d.hesford@usace.army.mil](mailto:brian.d.hesford@usace.army.mil)  
Phone: 402-200-8268

### **Michael Bumgarner**

Project Manager  
Jacksonville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
701 San Marco Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207  
Email: [michael.w.bumgarner@usace.army.mil](mailto:michael.w.bumgarner@usace.army.mil)  
Phone: 904-437-7001

### **Jacob Thompson**

Biologist  
Jacksonville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
701 San Marco Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207  
Email: [jacob.s.thompson@usace.army.mil](mailto:jacob.s.thompson@usace.army.mil)  
Phone: 904-232-1893

## **9.0 DELIVERABLES**

Bi-weekly email updates: During the wood stork nesting season, briefly include any relevant updates on wood storks in Lake Okeechobee and overlapping CFAs. Email updates should include at minimum, the number of active colonies, the location of the colonies currently being monitored, and an estimate of the number of nests with general status (i.e., eggs, chicks, fledglings, abandoned etc.).

**Quarterly Status Reports:** Quarterly status reports will be delivered every 90 days on a quarterly basis. Each report will summarize work done and problems encountered during the reporting period, as appropriate.

**Annual Report:** A draft and final annual report will be submitted at the completion of each year of the cooperative agreement. The draft and final annual report will contain at minimum, an introduction section, a description of the methods used, an evaluation of the data collected during the reporting period for a given year, and a conclusion section. Each annual report should provide updated information and results on each of the project objectives above to include metrics that evaluate the relationship between hydrologic changes and wood stork reproduction. A draft annual report will be submitted upon completion of each year of the cooperative agreement and will be reviewed by the USACE, Jacksonville District, with comments provided as appropriate. Submittal of the final annual report will occur after incorporation of the provided comments as necessary. An accompanying dataset will also be made available.

**Final Report:** A final report will be submitted one month prior to completion of the cooperative agreement. The final report will be a substitute for the annual report described above. The final report will contain at minimum an introduction section, a description of the methods used, an evaluation of the data collected during each year of the cooperative agreement, and a conclusion section. The final report should provide updated information and results, and summarize findings, for each of the project objectives above to include metrics that evaluate the relationship between hydrologic changes and wood stork reproduction. The purpose of the final report will be to provide a summary of all years of work conducted under the cooperative agreement. A draft of the final report will be submitted and reviewed by the USACE, Jacksonville District, with comments provided as appropriate. Final submittal of the report will occur after incorporation of the provided comments as necessary. An accompanying dataset will also be made available.

## **10.0 POST AWARD AND INVOICE PROCESS**

**10.1 Payment requests and Progress (Invoice Package) - Submit Payment Request and additional required documents to:**  
[swf-cesuinvoice@usace.army.mil](mailto:swf-cesuinvoice@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.

Quarter	Invoice packages due No Later Than (NLT)
Q1: Oct-Dec	Q1: 31 Jan
Q2: Jan-Mar	Q2: 30 Apr
Q3: Apr-Jun	Q3: 31 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 require 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), however, must be submitted in pdf format otherwise it will be rejected.

10.1.4. SF-PPR Standard Form-Performance Progress Report: The cooperator 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. The final invoice package is due no later than 90 days from final (funded/ exercised) POP end date and must include the following documents: If any of the required information below is missing, the final invoice package will be rejected.

- Final SF270
- SF-PPR
- Final SF
- 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>.

**11.0** 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.

## **12.0 REFERENCES:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2023. Biological Opinion Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM).

## **END OF STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**