



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

July 21, 2017

REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST

NUMBER **W9126G-17-2-SOI-0015**

PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2017

Project Title: **T&E Species Monitoring for Avon Park Air Force Range, Florida.**

All SOIs must be submitted via www.Grants.gov by 4:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), on **August 4, 2017**.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by Avon Park Air Force range which provides professional and technical support services for its Endangered Species Management Program in order to facilitate successful implementation of the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP), compliance with Section Seven of the Endangered Species Act, and other requirements. Approximately **\$474,450** is expected to be available to support this project. Additional funding may be available for follow on work in subsequent fiscal years to the successful Recipient/Awardee.

Background:

The Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR) is responsible for managing over 106,000 acres of land and desires to protect and manage fish, wildlife, and other natural resources while simultaneously accomplishing its primary mission of providing a realistic training environment for military units from the United States Air Force and other Services. Twelve federally-listed endangered or threatened species have been documented within APAFR and numerous state listed species may occur or are known to occur. Knowledge of the population dynamics, ecology, and natural history of these species is crucial to managing the landscape for long term biodiversity

The cooperator will assist the government in the management of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW), the Florida Scrub-Jay (FSJ), and the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow (FGS) at APAFR and enable the government to meet the goals and objectives proposed for these species in the INRMP. This will allow compliance with the Endangered Species Act while ensuring uninterrupted continuation of the military training mission.

APAFR has a relatively stable population of RCW, but has habitat potential for a greater number. Demographic data collected over the past eleven years suggest that population growth may be limited by female recruitment. Since 2005, as a result of cavity augmentation, maintenance of existing cavities, creation of recruitment clusters, and translocation of RCWs, the population has grown to 31 active RCW groups. Continued monitoring is necessary to

understand how local habitat conditions, military activities, land management, and fire management interact with local demographic patterns. Currently the native pine flatwoods contain numerous undersized trees but relatively few mature pines necessary for long-term RCW population stability. Active management of foraging habitat, cavity trees, and artificial cavities will be necessary for many years until RCW habitat reaches optimal conditions.

The FSJ population has remained stable at approximately 50 breeding groups, following a drastic decline in the mid-1990s. As a result of reduction of over-story canopy cover and reintroduction of fire, FSJ populations have begun to increase in areas where substantial declines had occurred. As with the RCW, potential suitable, but unoccupied habitat exists such that the population can regain its former numbers. Several mission-related projects are proposed, including a high-explosive target area in the heart of FSJ habitat. Improvement of habitat quality on a range-wide basis will be critical to maintain a healthy FSJ population. Continued monitoring is necessary to examine population responses to habitat management and to changes in military activities.

The FGS population at APAFR has declined from an estimated 298 birds in 1997 to 6 birds in 2011. This sub-species, found at only three locations in central Florida, is currently on the verge of extirpation. Past actions, to improve FGS dry prairie habitat, include removal of pine plantations, reducing tree and shrub cover within prairies, increasing fire return intervals, and evaluating the interactive effects with cattle grazing. On-going monitoring is required to track the trend of FGS and its habitat at APAFR. Because of the dire state of the APAFR FGS population collaborative and cooperative studies with researchers at neighboring FGS sites (Kissimmee Prairie and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area) will be necessary to understand the regional dynamics of the species and reverse the current decline.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

This research focuses on the following objectives:

1) Population Monitoring Services:

Provide technical expertise and support to monitor the population size, trend, reproduction, recruitment and geographic distribution of RCW, FSJ, and FGS with APAFR. Monitor the expansion/reduction of these populations. Provide technical support to locate nest locations of RCW and FSJ; and to determine the territorial boundaries of FSJ and RCW groups. Determine the extent of mortality and population declines (or increases) and likely causes.

2) Threatened/Endangered Species Habitat Management:

Provide technical expertise and support to maintain a viable population of RCW and FSJ. Utilize technical expertise to maintain existing artificial cavities for RCWs and install new cavities to support population expansion. Utilize expertise to promote expansion of RCW and FSJ populations to fill currently vacant habitat as per INRMP goals and objectives. Provide technical expertise to support recovery of FGS populations into available prairie habitat.

3) Geographic Information System (GIS) and Database Management Services:

Provide technical support in maintaining and updating GIS and integrated databases utilized by the endangered species management program.

4) Habitat Monitoring Services:

Provide program support in monitoring species response to activities as designed to protect and/or enhance threatened/endangered species habitat. Provide program support in monitoring species response to activities that may be adversely affect threatened/endangered species and their habitat. Monitor species response to actions intended to halt and/or reverse FGS declines before FGS is extirpated from APAFR.

5) Threatened/Endangered Species documentation:

Provide program support by preparing yearly reports on the status and distribution populations and habitats of FSJ, RCW, and FGS within APAFR.

Period of Performance. The base year of agreement will extend one year from award. Four option periods extending for one year are anticipated pending funds.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Review of Statements Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to the Contract Specialist specified below. (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).

1. Name, Organization and Contact Information
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
 - a. Biographical Sketch,
 - 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. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.).

Note: All statements of interest received will be evaluated by a board, who will determine which statement(s) best meet the program objectives. Statements will be evaluated based on the investigator's specific experience and capabilities in areas related to the study requirements. The statement or statements selected shall be invited to submit full proposals.

Please send responses or direct questions to:

USACE

Mrs. Ali Marshall, Contract Specialist

CESWF-CT

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Office: 817-886-1068

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