RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

This Funding Announcement is not a request for applications. This announcement is to provide public notice of the Bureau of Reclamation's intention to fund the following project activities without full and open competition.

ABSTRACT	
Funding Announcement	BOR-LC-17-N007
Project Title	Lake Mead Hatchery Native Fish Rearing
Recipient	Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW)
Principal Investigator / Program Manager	Brandon Senger
Anticipated Federal Amount	$1,128,911.00
Anticipated Non-Federal Amount	N/A
New Award or Continuation?	Continuation
Anticipated Period of Performance	Five-year
Award Instrument	Cooperative Agreement
Statutory Authority	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 as delegated by Department Manual (DM) 255 DM 1.1.B
CFDA # and Title	15.538, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program
Single Source Justification Criteria Cited	(2) Continuation – The activity to be funded is necessary to the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of an activity presently being funded, and for which competition would have a significant adverse effect on the continuity or completion of the activity; (4) Unique Qualifications – The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based upon a variety of demonstrable factors such as location, property ownership, voluntary support capacity, cost-sharing ability if applicable, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications.
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OVERVIEW

NDOW will provide, operate, and maintain dedicated fish rearing facilities at Lake Mead Hatchery (LMH) and Overton Wildlife Management Area (OWMA) for production of razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus,* RASU), bonytail (*Gila elegans,* BONY), and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*, FLSU). Activities include rearing of wild-caught larvae, grow-out of post larval and sub-adult fish, and annual stocking of multiple year classes of native fish.

The RASU is one of four endemic, large-river fish species of the Colorado River Basin currently listed as endangered under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (USFWS 1991). Historically abundant and widespread throughout the Colorado River Basin, RASU were predominantly found in the mainstem river and major tributaries in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming (USFWS 1998). The current distribution and abundance of RASU are generally reduced from historic levels, mainly due to mainstem dam construction and the introduction of nonnative game fishes in the resultant reservoir habitats (Holden and Stalnaker 1975, Joseph et al. 1977, Wick et al. 1982, Minckley et al. 1991). Populations have however persisted following the creation of reservoirs in the lower Colorado River Basin (LCRB), but this has mostly been possible due to recruitment events occurring soon after dam closures (Minckley 1983) and ongoing fish augmentation (Mueller 2006).

BONY is another one of the four endemic, large-river fish species of the Colorado River Basin currently listed as endangered under the ESA. Similar to the RASU, BONY were once common throughout the Colorado River Basin, with known distribution ranging from Mexico to Wyoming (Behnke and Benson 1980, Deacon and Minckley 1991, Mueller and Marsh 2002). BONY experienced a range-wide decline in abundance during the 1950s, presumably due to habitat alterations through mainstem dam construction and introductions of nonnative fishes. However, unlike the RASU, BONY have had difficulty persisting in reservoirs in the LCRB. A captive brood stock has been developed from 34 BONY that were captured from Lake Mohave during 1976-1988 (Minckley et al. 1991).

FLSU were historically the most abundant large fish species in the Upper Colorado River Basin (UCRB) (Vanicek et al. 1970; Holden 1973; Holden and Stalnaker 1975; McAda 1977). They were found to be declining in the LCRB, and for a period they were largely restricted to the Colorado River above Lake Mead and a short segment of the Salt River (Minckley 1973). FLSU are currently listed as species of special concern in Arizona, and are an extinct species in California. They are included in the LCR MSCP due to potential of the species being listed under the ESA or CESA, or becoming protected under Nevada or Arizona law.

RECIPIENT INVOLVEMENT

In cooperation with Reclamation and other partners, NDOW will provide assistance for capture, rearing and eventual release of the RASU, BONY, and FLSU. Activities include, but are not limited to, the capture of wild larvae from Lake Mead in spring months;

fish receipt and transport; monitoring of water quality and maintaining sufficient environmental conditions for fish rearing; regular inspection of the health and condition of native fish; marking of fish with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags prior to their transfer off station; recording biological data (e.g. total length, weight, origin) and general health/condition of native fish prior to the transfer of fish off station; and eventual stocking of native fish into Reclamation designated waters when they reach sufficient size for release.

RECLAMATION INVOLVEMENT

Reclamation will monitor and provide federal oversight of activities performed under this Agreement. Monitoring and oversight includes review and approval of financial status and performance reports, payment requests, and any other deliverables identified as part of the Scope of Work. Additional monitoring activities may include site visits, conference calls, and other on-site and off-site monitoring activities. At the Recipient's request, Reclamation may also provide technical assistance to the NDOW in support of the Scope of Work and objectives of this Agreement.

Substantial involvement by Reclamation is anticipated during the performance of activities funded under this cooperative agreement. In support of this Agreement, Reclamation will be responsible for the following:

1. Reclamation will assist with marking all native fish of sufficient size with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags prior to their transfer off station.

2. Reclamation will assist with recording biological data (e.g. total length, weight, origin), and examining and documenting the general health and condition of native fish being transferred off station.

3. At the request of the NDOW, Reclamation will assist with stocking native fish into Reclamation designated waters.

SINGLE-SOURCE JUSTIFICATION

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
SINGLE SOURCE POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Department of the Interior Policy (505 DM 2) requires a written justification which explains why competition is not practicable for each single-source award. The justification must address one or more of the following criteria as well as discussion of the program legislative history, unique capabilities of the proposed recipient, and cost-sharing contribution offered by the proposed recipient, as applicable.

In order for an assistance award to be made without competition, the award must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

(1) Unsolicited Proposal – The proposed award is the result of an unsolicited assistance application which represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach which is not the subject of a current or planned contract or assistance award, but which is deemed advantageous to the program objectives;

(2) Continuation – The activity to be funded is necessary to the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of an activity presently being funded, and for which competition would have a significant adverse effect on the continuity or completion of the activity;

(3) Legislative intent – The language in the applicable authorizing legislation or legislative history clearly indicates Congress' intent to restrict the award to a particular recipient of purpose;

(4) Unique Qualifications – The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based upon a variety of demonstrable factors such as location, property ownership, voluntary support capacity, cost-sharing ability if applicable, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications;

(5) Emergencies – Program/award where there is insufficient time available (due to a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety) for adequate competitive procedures to be followed.

Reclamation did not solicit full and open competition for this award based the following criteria:

(2) CONTINUATION
(4) UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS

Single Source Justification Description:

The NDOW has actively conducted and cooperated in monitoring and research activities for RASU augmentation on Lake Mead, Nevada/Arizona since 1989. Beginning in the late 1990's and early 2000's limited rearing of RASU began at NDOW's Lake Mead Hatchery, a facility which had primarily produced rainbow trout as a sport fish since 1973. In 2005-2006, NDOW completed their renovation of the then 30-year old hatchery and allowed for the inclusion of dedicated rearing space for threatened and endangered fish species including the RASU and other fish native to the Colorado River. These renovations enhanced NDOW's ability to rear wild-caught Lake Mead RASU larvae, and provided the additional rearing space required to contribute adult RASU towards future augmentation efforts.

In more recent years, the hatchery has ceased trout production allowing the entire facility to be used for the rearing of native fish species. Since 2006, NDOW has been rearing Lake Mead RASUs for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP). Since 2008, NDOW has assisted the LCR MSCP by rearing additional Lake Mohave RASU and flannelmouth sucker to meet conservation objectives. Prior year work has been funded under Reclamation assistance agreements R11AC30015, R12AP30003 and R12AP30004.

Utilizing the Lake Mead Fish Hatchery for this program has significant benefits over other existing facilities such as Willow Beach Nation Fish Hatchery. The proximity of the Lake Mead Fish hatchery to Lake Mead itself allows for a reduction in fish transportation costs for captured larval fish and for reared fish to be released back to the lake, and also provides a potential reduction in fish mortalities due shorter hauling times. Due to the available rearing space at the Lake Mead Hatchery, it is also better equipped to isolate Lake Mead and Lake Mohave RASU stocks from one another, provide space for flannelmouth sucker, and avoid overcrowding of fish at other facilities which are currently at or near capacity.

In addition, the Lake Mead Hatchery is the only local facility capable of receiving the number of BONY required to meet future augmentation goals for this species. Reclamation is awarding this agreement to ensure that rearing space for native fish species will be available in future years, to continue monitoring and research of the Lake Mead RASU, to continue pre-stocking flow conditioning of native fish species, and to ensure that additional fish are available for future research purposes.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The authority for the Bureau of Reclamation to enter into this agreement is derived from the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as delegated by Department Manual (DM) 255 DM 1.1.B. The following section, provided in full text, authorizes Reclamation to award this financial assistance agreement:

1.1 Delegation. Subject to the exceptions in Section 1.2, the Commissioner of Reclamation (Commissioner) is delegated the authority of the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science to:

B. Take the following actions, either directly or by providing financial assistance to non-Federal parties, pursuant to the Conservation of Wild Life, Fish and Game Act of March 10, 1934 (Pub. L. 73-121; 48 Stat. 401) as amended by the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of August 14, 1946 (Pub. L. 85-624; 72 Stat. 563; 16 U.S.C. 661-666c); Section 5 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, December 28, 1973 (Pub. L. 93-205; 87 Stat. 884; 16 U.S.C. 1534); and Section 7(a) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1956, August 8, 1956 (70 Stat. 1122; 16 U.S.C. 742f(a)), regarding the construction and/or continued operation and maintenance of any Federal reclamation project:

(1) plan, design, and construct, including acquiring lands or interest therein as needed for:
    (a) fish passage and screening facilities at any non-Federal water diversion or storage project; or
    (b) projects to create or improve instream habitat.

(2) acquire or lease water or water rights from willing sellers or lessors; or

(3) monitor and evaluate the effect of Reclamation actions on Endangered Species Act-listed species.

The Lower Colorado River Multi Species Program (LCR MSCP) is actively working to conserve the native endangered RASU, BONY and other species in the Lower Colorado through monitoring, research, habitat enhancements and conservation initiatives. The principal objective of this action correlates to the delegated authority of monitoring and evaluating the effect of Reclamation actions on Endangered Species Act-listed species. This project will provide the Recipient with assistance in helping to advance species conservation efforts by rearing fish which will support ongoing research efforts seeking to identify reasons for, or absence of, active recruitment of wild fish in LCRB populations, and contribute to ongoing recovery and conservation efforts for LCR MSCP covered species.