



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

January 12, 2024

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST
W9126G-24-2-SOI-1138**

Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Regions:
Californian and Colorado Plateau

Project Title: *Natural Resources Support – Desert Tortoise Support, Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB), CA.*

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 **\$379,147.00** 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 agreement will extend 15 months from date of award (three months administrative for onboarding/preparation and 12 months technical support) and six 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, 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 are due by 5:00 P.M., Central Time, on ~~12 February 2024~~ **26 February 2024**.
2. Submit your Statement of Interest via e-mail attachments or direct questions to:

Sheri Vendemia
Grants Specialist
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: cheryl.r.vendemia@usace.army.mil
Office: 817-253-3341

David Leptien
Project Manager
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil
Office: 402-889-5570

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 [Grants.gov](https://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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Paige E. Poorman
Grants Officer

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Attachment: Statement of Objectives

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES SUPPORT ACTIVITIES – DESERT TORTOISE for EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB) environmental program ensures military mission activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and policies with cooperation and assistance from the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's (AFCEC) Installation Support Section (ISS). Article I B of the master agreement states the objectives of the CESU are to: provide research, technical assistance and education to federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their potential partners; develop a program of research, technical assistance and education that involves the biological, physical, social sciences needed to address resource issues and interdisciplinary problem-solving at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context at the local, regional, and national level; and place special emphasis on the working collaboration among federal agencies and universities and their related partner institutions.

1.2 This work may require full-time onsite support person(s) located at EAFB. This work also requires off-site support for less than full-time projects that are seasonal in nature and require limited field work at EAFB. The work will involve natural resource management activities, field surveys, reporting, coordination, and travel to and from EAFB for off-site personnel, attendance at meetings, project management, and GIS data management.

2.0 AUTHORITY

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

2.1. In agreement with the above stated goals, the Non-Federal Entity (NFE) agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, in part, the EAFB responsibilities pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 et seq.), the Sikes Act Improvement Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and applicable implementing regulations, such as Air Force Manual 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*; 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

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

- EAFB and AFCEC ISS are involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing.
- EAFB and AFCEC ISS are active participants and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, helps train or select project staff or trainees.
- EAFB and AFCEC ISS 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

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

Conduct tasks in accordance with this Statement of Objectives, as prioritized by AFCEC ISS Project Manager (PM) and Base Natural Resource Manager (NRM). Only work aligned with the original AF programming and approved (via the executed Cooperative Agreement) by the USACE Grants Officer (GO) will be completed as part of this support.

Travel, Coordination, and Project Management for all tasks is as follows:

Travel: Provide transportation and fuel for all NFE staff to get to and from all field sites. Retain current proof of insurance, current registration, and REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses for all modes of transportation.

Coordination: Coordinate concurrently with the Base NRM, AFCEC ISS, and USACE PM. All work shall be approved by the AFCEC and be consistent with the Project Schedule & Work Plan (Deliverable 9.3) approved by the Base NRM. Schedule changes can be made; trade-off decisions will be jointly made by the USACE-PM, Base NRM and AFCEC ISS and align with the Sikes Act compliant INRMP and original budget programming. Any changes in scope or cost must be approved by the USACE Grants Officer. All coordination with state and federal regulators will be by the Base NRM or AFCEC ISS only.

Project Management: A Project Manager shall be assigned to coordinate across tasks, manage all personnel hired to complete work, and ensure all scoped objectives are completed under this agreement on time. Level of effort for Project Management is expected to be at least 6 hours per month with additional hours as needed, generally at the beginning and end of the agreement period of performance and before and after monthly meetings. Project manager shall provide monthly meeting agenda, track deliverables, provide meeting notes, etc.

Within 30 days of award, the NFE will schedule an initial project kick off meeting with all parties involved (Edwards AFB, AFCEC/Edwards ISS, USACE, etc) to develop a project work schedule to implement the SOO. All deliverables/tasks will be submitted within the required timeframes as identified.

Access: Access to Edwards AFB is restricted. General base access requires sponsorship by a government civilian employee, and should be coordinated at least two weeks prior to the visit. Long-term base access will require additional security clearances and access processing. Access to the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), the Precision Impact Range Area (PIRA), the airfield, and other restricted facilities on EAFB may require additional security clearances and training. Access to some areas may be limited by ongoing military activities such that personnel access is limited to weekends or brief periods of a few hours. Access procedures are described in further detail in the most recent version of the Edwards AFB Contractor Access Request Procedures Template.

Photography Use: Photography at Edwards AFB is restricted, requiring an authorization letter that must be in the photographer's possession at all times. Cell phone photos are not allowed. Any photos/reports released to the public must be reviewed and authorized by Public Affairs. A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is required for use of photographs for data analysis and report preparation prior to authorization by public affairs for release of photos/reports to the public.

Environmental Awareness Training: All NFE project personnel working on Edwards AFB shall attend desert tortoise awareness training prior to commencing work or visiting the work site.

Biological Security Measure: The NFE shall follow applicable Biological Security Best Management Practices identified in the most recent version of the Edwards Air Force Base Invasive Species Management Plan.

3.1 TASK 1: Mgt, Species: Desert Tortoise and Other Wildlife

Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB) encompasses approximately 308,180 acres in the Antelope Valley in southern California. The installation lies in the western Mojave Desert in portions of Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties. Approximately 226,876 acres of suitable desert tortoise habitat occurs on base including 65,554 acres of the Fremont-Kramer Critical Habitat Unit. The perimeter fence is approximately 170.11 kilometer (km) in length consisting mostly of 4-strand barbed wire attached to T-posts. The entire boundary fence is posted with warning signs (AFVA 31-211) approximately 18"wide x 15" high. There is approximately 62.47 km of desert

tortoise exclusionary fencing constructed per USFWS specifications on roadways and test areas. There are approximately 184 pitfalls in desert tortoise habitat. There are 20 desert tortoise road signs. There are 7 desert tortoises in the EAFB desert tortoise adoption program. Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Area 2 is approximately 15,040 acres and ORV Area 3 is approximately 4,328 acres with 32 miles of trails. Carsonite signs with stickers are used to designate appropriate type of ORV trail use within ORV areas. Signs are used to designate ORV area boundaries. Trailhead bulletin boards display ORV area rules and safety information.

The most current EAFB Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) revision/update is used by EAFB personnel as the guiding document for integrating natural resources stewardship with the EAFB mission. The terms and conditions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion for: Operations and Activities Edwards Air Force Base, California (8-8-14-F-14) guide desert tortoise management regarding the effects on the federally threatened desert tortoise and its critical habitat. The Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) is supported through monitoring activities for compliance with minimization measures.

The NFE shall establish procedures and provide services and equipment to implement the following:

- Provide a desert tortoise authorized biologist to implement the terms and conditions of the EAFB Biological Opinion (8-8-14-F-14).
- Inspect all EAFB boundary fence and repair/maintain up to 1 km of boundary fence annually.
- Inspect all existing desert tortoise exclusionary fence and repair/maintain/remove up to 1 km of desert tortoise exclusionary fence annually.
- Inspect and repair/maintain up to 50 pitfall enclosures and coverings annually.
- Inspect all desert tortoise road signs and install and/or repair up to five desert tortoise awareness road signs and posts annually.
- Provide a quarterly fencing report and cumulative annual fencing report covering inspections and repairs/maintenance of EAFB boundary fence, desert tortoise exclusionary fence, pitfalls, and desert tortoise road signs.
- Coordinate and perform pre-activity surveys and monitoring of project sites to accomplish natural resource EIAP compliance and provide a quarterly report and a cumulative annual report.
- Evaluate and report habitat disturbance from ground disturbance projects and provide quarterly and reconciled cumulative annual report data.
- Establish habitat disturbance monitoring protocols for ORV Areas 2 and 3 and monitor ORV Areas 2 and 3 per protocols and provide an annual report to include updated monitoring protocols annually.
- Provide desert tortoise awareness training to base population and contractors.
- Provide natural resource education to base population and contractors.
- Prepare and provide Public Affairs announcements for current wildlife activities for wildlife such as desert tortoise, bobcats, coyotes, snakes, stray animals, and nesting birds.
- Provide one video script/video, one brochure, and one poster of an aspect of this project of public interest annually.

- Provide and install signage to encourage dumpster lid closure on 50 dumpsters.
- Manage the EAFB desert tortoise adoption program and prepare an annual report.
- Prepare and provide the EAFB Biological Opinion Annual Report for submission to the USFWS annually.
- Provide wildlife call availability and implement appropriate responses per current Wildlife Call Procedures.
- Remove from EAFB existing and ongoing stray animals including but not limited to dogs, cats, goats, cattle, horses, exotic snakes, and exotic birds.
- Remove from or relocate on Edwards AFB nuisance wildlife including but not limited to coyotes, bobcats, bears, mountain lions, raccoons, snakes, and birds.
- Provide veterinary services to treat and/or euthanize injured nuisance animals and wildlife including but not limited to coyotes, bobcats, desert tortoises, owls, and raptors.
- Identify/document illegal trash dumps on EAFB and remove trash debris from EAFB per established protocols.
- Provide updated procedures for the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Desert Tortoise and Other Wildlife Management document every three months.
- Provide and install, annually, signs and posts for up to 50 base boundary fence signs, 20 Carsonite ORV trail use signs, and 20 ORV area boundary signs.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

The NFE shall possess the ability to perform tasks described in the statement of objectives. The Principal Investigator shall have experience directing the efforts of the project team. NFE personnel shall have the technical experience, the field implementation experience, any required state and federal certifications, and any required state or federal handling or application permits likely to be used in this project.

A USFWS approved desert tortoise authorized biologist is required to implement the terms and conditions of the EAFB Biological Opinion (8-8-14-F-14).

The NFE shall ensure that project activities, project reports, and project data are professionally executed with minimal errors.

5.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY

The government will provide maps, INRMP, master plans and previous reports relevant to this project.

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 NFE 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 NFE must return the property to the Federal awarding agency for further Federal agency utilization.

6.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE (PoP)

Base Period: 15 months from date of award, 12 months technical support and 3 months administrative for onboarding/preparation.

7.0 FOLLOW-ON PERIODS

Follow On Periods: Six follow-on periods of 12 months each are anticipated based on funding availability.

8.0 COORDINATION

USACE POC

David Leptien, PM, 402-889-5570

david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil

AFCEC POC

Daniel Garcia, Natural Resources, AFCEC/CZOW, 805-606-9834

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9.0 DELIVERABLES

- 9.1 Progress Reports - One (1) typed letter report describing progress on the project throughout the period of performance. The report shall be due as of the last day of the third month (quarterly) and shall be transmitted via electronic mail no later than the 10th calendar day following the end of the reporting period. Invoices for partial payment shall be submitted to coincide with receipt of the quarterly progress reports. No partial payment will be approved unless the government has received all progress reports which are due.
- 9.2 Work Plan – The NFE shall submit a draft work plan, NFE reconciled comment matrix of government comments of draft work plan, and final work plan. The plan shall follow the Edwards AFB Work Plan Template. Methodology section shall be described in sufficient detail to allow study or work to be replicated by persons unfamiliar with the project. Methodologies shall also include planned data analyses. Raw data collection methodology shall provide sufficient data for planned analyses. The NFE shall provide a proposed comprehensive timeline for completion of the required work element activities and submittals. Updated project schedules will be provided by the NFE when the schedule changes, regardless of whom is responsible for causing the change in schedule. Updated schedules shall be submitted within seven (7) calendar days of any documented change in project schedule.
- 9.3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Desert Tortoise and Other Wildlife Management: The NFE shall review and update the most recent SOP and submit to the NRM quarterly.
- 9.4 Technical Report – Desert Tortoise: These reports include the EAFB Biological Opinion Annual Report, the annual fencing report, and the annual desert tortoise adoption program report, the annual habitat disturbance reconciliation report, and the ORV area monitoring report. The NFE shall submit a draft technical report, NFE

- reconciled comment matrix of government comments of draft technical report and GIS data, and final technical report. The report will include reconciliation of new habitat disturbance and current GIS habitat disturbance. The Base Year report will cover activities of the fiscal year from 1 October 2023 through 30 September 2024. If Follow-On Periods are funded, the report will cover the activities of the subsequent fiscal years from 1 October through 30 September.
- 9.5 Technical Report – Other Wildlife: This report includes information on wildlife calls and response, illegal trash dumps and clean-up, and natural resource education. The NFE shall submit a draft technical report, NFE reconciled comment matrix of government comments of draft technical report and GIS data, and final technical report. The report shall describe in narrative format the accomplishments of the project tasks including pertinent maps, figures, tables, photographs, and GIS data. The report format shall follow that of a scientific publication and include the following section heading: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Literature Cited, as well as original data sheets and/or copies thereof, laboratory reports, and other appendices as appropriate. The Base Year report will cover the activities of the fiscal year from 1 October 2023 through 30 September 2024. If Follow-On periods are funded, the report will cover the activities of the subsequent fiscal years from 1 October through 30 September.
 - 9.6 Weekly Status Reports: The NFE shall provide to the Edwards AFB NRM weekly status report via email when performing on base project activities. Report shall include activities accomplished, activity planned for the upcoming week, issues, and updated timelines for completion of work.
 - 9.7 Monthly Status Reports: The NFE will provide to the Edwards AFB NRM a monthly status report that describes the project activities accomplished during the month. The information provided will be used to prepare the Desert Tortoise and Other Wildlife Technical Reports.
 - 9.8 Brochure: The NFE shall prepare an interpretive tri-fold brochure (11” wide x 8.5 “high) that can be used to inform the public about a wildlife concern of this project. Write narrative to the 9th grade level, using captioned photographs, maps, and some text boxes to convey the key messages. Provide an editable electronic copy. Brochure shall be formatted for reproduction by the 412 TW/PA.
 - 9.9 Poster: The NFE shall prepare an interpretive poster that can be used to inform the public about a wildlife concern of this project. Write narrative to the 9th grade level, using captioned photographs, maps, and some text boxes to convey the key messages. Provide an editable electronic copy, formatted for reproduction by the 412 TW/PA, and two flexible matte laminated posters (Large Poster – 36” wide x 24” high).
 - 9.10 Video Script/Video: The NFE shall prepare an editable video script 5 to 10 minutes in length that can be used to inform the public about a wildlife/habitat concern of this project. Write narrative to the 9th grade level and provide photo suggestions for script narrative. Provide an editable electronic copy. A video approximately 5 minutes in length should be produced to document wildlife/habitat concern the project.
 - 9.11 Press Releases: The NFE shall prepare editable press releases for the public. The press releases shall identify the press release as a 412 CEG/CEVA Natural Resource project, what the wildlife/habitat concern is, where the wildlife/habitat concern is located on base, when the wildlife/habitat concern occurred, and how the

- wildlife/habitat concern should be addressed. The press release shall be no longer than approximately 200 words. Write the narrative to the 9th grade level. Include a relevant photograph. Provide an editable draft electronic copy to the NRM.
- 9.12 GIS Data: The NFE shall comply with all requirements in the most recent version of the Edwards Air Force Base Standards for Geographic Environmental Support Section, 412 CEG/CEVA. This document provides all details required for for successful GIS delivery. A preliminary consultation with 412 CEG/CEVA GIS staff will be accomplished after the Post Ward Kick-Off Meeting and prior to the start of all data collection for this project. When GIS Data is required for reports it will be delivered with the draft and final reports for reconciliation with the reports.
- 9.13 Annual Inventory Federally Owned – Federally Owned Property - an annual inventory listing Federal property (to include description of the property, a serial number or other identification number) that is in the custody of the recipient and available at the request of the government.
- 9.14 Annual Inventory Acquired – Acquired Property purchased with funding from award - property records must be maintained that includes description of the property, serial number or other identification number, source of funding, who holds title, acquisition date, cost of property, percentage of Federal participation in project costs, location, use and condition of property, and ultimate disposition including date of disposal and sale price. A physical inventory must be taken and results reconciled. Copies of the inventory to be sent annually following each year of support to USACE – SWF and AFCEC ISS.
- 9.15 Deliverable Schedule: Submit deliverables as listed in Table 1. Deliverables schedule must be within the period of performance of the agreement, the NFE may propose an alternate schedule but should not reduce the opportunities for and duration of Government review periods.

Table 1. Deliverables Submittal

Description	When Due	Format
Progress Reports	Quarterly - No later than the 10th calendar day following the end of the reporting period	PDF: Electronic only (e-mail attachment)
Work Plan - Draft	Notice to Proceed (NTP) + 60 days	Microsoft Word editable: Electronic only (e-mail attachment, or file transfer)
Work Plan - Final	21 days after Government approval of NFE's response to all Government comments	PDF: Electronic only (e-mail attachment or file transfer)
Standard Operating Procedures: Update	Quarterly - No later than the 10th calendar day following the end of the reporting period	Microsoft Word editable: Electronic only (e-mail attachment, or file transfer)

Description	When Due	Format
Technical Report – Desert Tortoise: Draft	31 October	Microsoft Word editable: Electronic only (e-mail attachment, or file transfer)
Technical Report – Desert Tortoise: Final	15 December	Microsoft Word editable and PDF: Electronic (e-mail attachment or file transfer).
Technical Report – Other Wildlife: Draft	15 November	Microsoft Word editable: Electronic only (e-mail attachment, or file transfer)
Technical Report – Other Wildlife: Final	15 January	Microsoft Word editable and PDF: Electronic (e-mail attachment or file Transfer).
Weekly Status Report	Monday by 8:00 am of field work week	Email
Monthly Status Reports	Quarterly - No later than the 10th calendar day following the end of the reporting period	Microsoft Word editable: Electronic only (e-mail attachment, or file transfer)
Brochure - Draft	15 October	Microsoft Word editable: (e-mail, compact disk, or file transfer)
Brochure - Final	15 December	Microsoft Word editable: (e-mail, compact disk, or file transfer)
Poster - Draft	15 October	Microsoft Word editable: (e-mail, compact disk, or file transfer)
Poster - Final	15 December	Microsoft Word editable and PDF file: (email, compact disk, or file transfer) and two flexible printed posters
Video Script - Draft	15 May	Microsoft Word editable: (e-mail, compact disk, or file transfer)
Video Script - Final	15 June	Microsoft Word editable: (e-mail, compact disk, or file transfer)
Video - Draft	15 August	Electronic (compact disc, or file transfer)
Video - Final	15 September	Electronic (compact disc, or file transfer)
Press Releases	Submit as necessary	Microsoft Word editable: Electronic only (e-mail attachment)

10.0 ADMINISTRATION

10.1 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%).

10.2 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]