



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

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST Number W9126G-22-2-SOI-3641

*Applicants must be a member in one of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU):
Gulf Coast / Piedmont-South Atlantic CESU Regions*

Project Title: Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit Monitoring & Wildlife Habitat Management

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for this project. Approximately **\$241,696** is expected to be available to support this project for the **base year**. Additional funding may be available for additional tasks and/or follow on work in subsequent fiscal years to the successful Recipient/Awardee.

Background:

This work requires an experienced onsite support person located at Naval Air Station Key West (NAS KW). The work will involve: monitoring of Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit (LKMR) populations at NAS KW and to conduct habitat management (e.g., Invasive Exotic Vegetation Control) projects at NAS KW. This will be accomplished through the implementation of three specific tasks; LKMR Population Monitoring; Habitat Management; Invasive Vegetation Control.

Type of Award:

In accordance with the *Sikes Act* (Sec. 103A [16 USC 670c-1]) "the Secretary of a military department may enter into cooperative agreements with States, local governments, Indian Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals" This project is in support of the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, as directed in the *Sikes Act*, and as a result, it is anticipated that a cooperative agreement through the CESU program will be awarded. Such awards 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%).

NOTE: Must be a non-federal partner in the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Program to be qualified to be considered. *In accordance with the 10 USC 670c-1, Sikes Act, projects for the implementation and enforcement of integrated natural resources management plans, priority shall be given to Federal and State agencies having responsibility for the conservation or management of fish or wildlife.*

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

Cooperator will be providing technical natural resource support to assist Naval Air Station Key West with monitoring for successful population trends, forest habitat enhancements, and invasive exotic vegetation control. This includes applying habitat management practices to support

to add (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.).

Note: A full study proposal and proposed budget are NOT requested at this time.

Review of Statements Received: All statements of interest received 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. Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to prepare a full study proposal. Statements will be evaluated based on the investigator's specific experience and capabilities in areas related to the study requirements.

Please send responses or direct questions to:

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Grants Specialist
USACE, Fort Worth District
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Kathy Mitchell
Environmental Agreements PM/Biologist
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Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest: RSOI's required to be posted on www.Grants.gov for 30 days, prior to the Government making a decision and requesting full proposals. Responses are due by End of Day., Central Time, on **18 JUL 2022**.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES
for
LOWER KEYS MARSH RABBIT MONITORING &
WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT
for
NAVAL AIR STATION KEY WEST

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The NAS Key West environmental program ensures military mission activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and policies. Article I B of the master agreement states the objectives of the Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (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 requires an experienced onsite support person located at Naval Air Station Key West (NASKW). The work shall involve: monitoring of Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit (LKMR) populations at NASKW and to conduct habitat management (e.g., Invasive Exotic Vegetation Control) projects at NASKW. This will be accomplished through the implementation of three specific tasks; LKMR Population Monitoring; Habitat Management; Invasive Vegetation Control.

2.0 AUTHORITY

2.1 This cooperative agreement will be awarded under the authority associated with 16 U.S.C. § 670(c) (1) – (SIKES ACT).

In agreement with the above stated goals, the recipient agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, activities to support the installation's commitment toward environmental stewardship to manage natural and cultural resources in a responsible way that has the least impact on military missions and is beneficial to the region. In addition, the activities performed by the recipient must be completed in a manner conducive to guidelines outlined in the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 et seq.), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 1361 et seq.), National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.), Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et

seq.), applicable implementing regulations, Army Regulations 200-1, and any other applicable regulatory guidelines.

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.), 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

2.3 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 are not limited to, the following:

- INSTALLATION is involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing
- INSTALLATION actively participates and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, helps train or select project staff or trainees
- INSTALLATION 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 computing services
 - Providing staff time to work on the project

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

3.1 Task 1: Invasive Exotic Vegetation Control

Provide habitat management services involving the removal and control of invasive exotic vegetation as defined by the Florida Invasive Exotic Pest plant Council (FLWEPPC) and may include Australian pine, Brazilian peppertree, Lead tree, Seaside mahoe and Asiatic Colubrina. Control methods shall involve primarily full removal of exotic vegetation and post-removal treatment with herbicide. Areas for invasive exotic plant control and revegetation plans shall be developed in coordination with the NASKW Installation Environmental Program Manager (EPM) and Installation Natural Resource Manager (NRM). Prior to initiating work on this task, the Cooperator shall develop a detailed work plan that identifies specific restoration and management tasks in collaboration with Natural Resource Manager and Environmental Director at NASKW. The work plan shall identify the specific location of proposed work, the type of management actions, and other details of the proposed project. Work shall not commence until a final work plan is approved by the installation environmental management staff.

3.2 Task 2: Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit Habitat Management

Conduct habitat management in selected areas of LKMR habitat on NASKW. The goal of this task will be to reduce and maintain overstory vegetation in LKMR habitat optimally between 0%-20% cover. LKMR habitat patches with an excess of 20% cover of overstory hardwood vegetation should be considered suboptimal and shall be targeted for management action.

Develop a detailed work plan that identifies the specific restoration and management tasks in collaboration with Natural Resource Manager and Environmental Director at NASKW. The work plan will include methods, work timelines, and a list of subcontractor staff to conduct the vegetation removal work (with qualifications of field personnel) to be approved by the Navy Technical Representative (NTR) and Installation Natural Resource Manager (NRM) prior to commencement of field activities. The work plan will identify the specific location of proposed work, management actions, and other details of the proposed project. Work shall only commence once a final work plan is approved by the Installation. The following approach will be used to implement habitat management in areas identified by the Navy as high-quality LKMR segments with significant hardwood encroachment.

The Vegetation Removal Work Plan shall describe the specific amount of hardwood vegetation to be removed from each segment as a proportion of total hardwood vegetation present and include specific methods for removal and disposal.

The density of hardwood vegetation within the habitat area (e.g., buttonwood, mangrove, other species) shall be documented using scientific estimation methods as pre-work documentation of site conditions. All hardwood vegetation shall be cut flush with the ground, with no stumps extending beyond 6 inches. All cut stumps shall be treated immediately with a cut-stump treatment of Garlon 4-A or equivalent. Herbicide

application shall occur immediately following cutting, e.g., within one minute, to ensure effective treatment. All hardwood vegetation shall be removed from Navy property and disposed of in a lawful manner. Following hardwood removal, the Cooperator shall document post-vegetation removal conditions using the vegetation density assessment techniques used pre-work, and also take photos at the fixed photo points. The Cooperator shall prepare a project report documenting pre- and post-work conditions within each treatment area. The report shall include the density of vegetation before and after work was completed, the approximate amount of vegetation removed, the number of man-hours required for the removal effort, pre-and post-work site photos, significant findings, and recommendations for future management.

3.3 Task 3: Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit Population Monitoring

Conduct annual LKMR population monitoring on NASKW properties in accordance with established LKMR Management Plan and consistent with the established monitoring program and data collection and analysis protocols. The Cooperator will conduct annual LKMR fecal pellet surveys to identify population abundance and spatial distribution on NASKW properties. Post data collection, the Cooperator will prepare a comprehensive annual report that summarizes the findings of annual population abundance and spatial distribution of LKMR populations on NASKW.

Health and Safety: The Cooperator must submit a detailed risk assessment and safety plan conforming to OSHA standards.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

4.1 The Cooperator will have an onsite team led by a PhD level Biologist and must reside within the Lower Keys during the entirety of the project. Technical team members require no less than 5 years of relevant experience with LKMR monitoring or similar small mammal monitoring experience in the Florida Keys. Additionally, the technical team members require no less than five (5) years of experience leading habitat management/exotic vegetation removal crews in native Lower Keys habitat or similar tropical hardwood hammock. All members of any vegetation treatment crew must have current Florida State herbicide/pesticide licenses and experience treating tropical hardwood hammock.

5.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY

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 non-Federal entity 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 non-Federal entity must return the property to the Federal awarding agency for further Federal agency utilization.

6.0 BASE PERIOD and OPTIONS - This project will have a base period of 18 months and 4 option periods beyond the base period.

7.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

7.1 Base Effort - Work will begin from the date of award and extend 18 months in total. Fieldwork will occur for a minimum of the first 12 months of the period of performance, with up to six months of annual and cumulative analyses and reporting occurring within the 18-month period of performance. These elements are non-severable.

7.2 Option Periods - Option period awards will occur 12 months after the base effort is awarded and annually thereafter for each option period. This allows for continuous fieldwork (each 12 months) with overlapping periods of performance for analyses and reporting. Thus, as shown below, option period fieldwork shall begin from the date of award and extend at least 12 months with an additional 6 months for reporting, totaling an 18-month period of performance for each Option Period (with 6 months of overlap with prior period). Exercise of option periods is contingent on project conditions, project need, and available funding.

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|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Months 1,2,3 | Months 4,5,6 | Months 7,8,9 | Months 10,11,12 | Months 13,14,15 | Months 16,17,18 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Base 18 Months | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Months 1,2,3 | Months 4,5,6 | Months 7,8,9 | Months 10,11,12 | Months 13,14,15 | Months 16,17,18 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Option Period 1 - 18 months | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Months 1,2,3 | Months 4,5,6 | Months 7,8,9 | Months 10,11,12 | Months 13,14,15 | Months 16,17,18 | | | | | | | | |
| Option Period 2 - 18 months | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | Months 1,2,3 | Months 4,5,6 | Months 7,8,9 | Months 10,11,12 | Months 13,14,15 | Months 16,17,18 | | | | |
| Option Period 3 - 18 months | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Months 1,2,3 | Months 4,5,6 | Months 7,8,9 | Months 10,11,12 | Months 13,14,15 | Months 16,17,18 |
| Option Period 4 - 18 months | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

8.0 COORDINATION

- USACE Fort Worth District POC
Kathy Mitchell
817 886-1709
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- NAS Key West Natural Resource Manager
Wendy Wheatley-Techmer
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- Installation Environmental Program Director
Edward Barham
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edward.barham@navy.mil

9.0 DELIVERABLES

9.1 Progress Reports - The cooperator shall submit one (1) typed letter report describing progress on the project. The report shall be due as of the last day of the third month (**quarterly**) and shall be transmitted via electronic mail, facsimile, or regular 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 monthly progress reports. No partial payment shall be approved unless the government has received all progress reports which are due. Per the terms and conditions with this agreement all progress reports and invoices shall be submitted to the USACE invoice/post award email inbox (swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil).

9.2 Annual Inventory – Required under 2CFR for Grants and Cooperative Agreements – Acquired Property purchased with funding from award – The Cooperator shall maintain property records that include 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. The cooperator must take a physical inventory and reconcile results every two years. The cooperator shall send copies of the inventory annually to USACE – SWF and the NAVFAC Region SE Representatives.

9.3 Annual Report per 2CFR. One (1) paper copy of an annual report should be submitted no later than one month before end of each year. At a minimum, the report shall contain an introduction section, and one section for each Task identified in your proposal. For each Task, the report shall summarize work accomplished for the Task. NAS Key West Environmental staff shall review and provide comments, if any, within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt.

9.4 Draft Final Project Report. One (1) paper copy of a draft final report should be submitted no later than one month before end of the project. At a minimum, the report shall contain an introduction section, and one section for each Task identified in your proposal. For each Task, the report shall summarize work accomplished for the Task. NAS Key West Environmental staff shall review and provide comments, if any, within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt. Must provide an electronic copy to the USACE POC at the time this document is submitted to the Installation POC.

9.5 Final Project Report. One (1) paper copy of the final report, incorporating NAS Key West Environmental review comments on the draft, if any, shall be submitted no later than fifteen (15) days after receipt of the NAS Key West Environmental comments. Additionally, one (1) copy of the final report shall be submitted in a MSWord file(s), on digital media. Must provide an electronic copy to the USACE POC at the time this document is submitted to the Installation POC.

- 10.0 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 IDC rate (17.5%).

Any resulting cooperative agreement shall 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]