

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WITHIN
THREE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS**

INTEREST #N62473-20-2-0009

PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2020

Project Title: Canid Tortoise-Predation Study at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center
Twentynine Palms, Twentynine Palms, Arizona

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will support the Tortoise Relocation Program at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, California.

The authority for this Cooperative Agreement is 16 USC §670c-1. The total funding limit for base contract execution (not including options) is \$139,195.

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

Authority: Cooperative Agreement under 16 USC §670c-1

Eligible Applicants: Any Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Californian, Colorado Plateau, Desert Southwest, and Great Plains cooperative partner who qualifies under the DoDGARS Part 34 or 2 Code of Federal Regulations 200 is eligible to apply.

Cost Sharing: Not required

Background:

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC or Combat Center) is responsible for managing the natural resources of more than 1,100 square miles (see map, Enclosure 1). Among these natural resources is one federally-listed species, Agassiz's desert tortoise, listed Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Conservation measures for the desert tortoise, including those recently translocated, require explicit evaluations of the impact of predators on tortoise populations on the Combat Center and adjacent lands. Although tortoises at some recipient sites experience elevated mortality, depredation by canids at all sites contribute significantly to overall species mortality. Additionally, coyotes are subsidized by humans aboard MCAGCC, and elevate human-wildlife conflict as supported by reports of biting Marines, attacking pets, and threatening children and others in base-housing areas. Here we intend to quantify the tortoise population threats imposed by coyotes and potentially other canid and non-canid predators aboard MCAGCC (e.g., the Sand Hill Range Training Area (RTA)). We request proposals to study select areas associated with the tortoise translocation project, known predation issues, and some areas with human-wildlife conflict.

Study areas are confined by the ecological interactions that the installation wishes to sample. This includes coyote populations near human activity and available subsidies, and coyote populations concentrating near occupied tortoise habitat (and often targeted locations where predation is well documented). Despite those restrictions, boundaries are difficult to define. The full sizes of the

study areas are as follows, though these are an overestimate of population range/true study area:

Rodman-Sunshine Peak North (RSPN) - 25,551 acres

Mainside - 5,260 acres

Lucerne-Ord - 40,155 acres

Cleghorn Lake restricted area - 2,934 acres

Sand Hill Ranges and Training Area (RTA) - 11,904 acres

Siberia - 9,785 acres.

Brief Description of the Anticipated Work:

This Cooperative Agreement includes 7 base tasks and 3 optional tasks for MCAGCC. Multiple tasks and options shall have mirrored work and methods but in different locations.

Task 1: Primers

This task involves gathering sampling primers for use in any genetic work. Primers may be obtained through any means including but not limited to published work, specimen sampling, or collaboration, but the base cannot supply genetic material or be expected to allow the capture and use of any organisms on base for this purpose.

Task 2: Analysis Labor

General analysis on the dataset as a whole for the purpose of drawing community, population, and landscape level information falls into this task where distribution of effort may not be estimated or forecast in other individual tasks.

Task 3: Coyote Population Estimation, All Areas.

Quantify coyote population size at all key sites. Methods shall be left up to the Technical team. Methods must be noninvasive due to the sensitivity of the organisms, potential conflict with other studies, and disruption of ecological and military processes with wider ramifications. This task includes gathering field samples or other specimens for common use between all tasks.

Methods must be aware of, sensitive to, and avoid conflict with ongoing predator abundance surveys in the project areas. Cooperators may be able to seek collective and collaborative sampling methods with the predator monitoring team, so long as there are no substantive changes to the predator monitoring team's contract or those changes are acceptable to that contract's contracting officer.

Task 4: Population Genetics.

Determine gene flow rates and genetic connections among the sampled coyote populations and regions. Build analyses to determine population health, isolation, and residency. Methods shall be left up to the contracting team, but should provide as much population level detail as possible while being efficient. All samples shall derive from a collection effort listed in Task 3.

Tasks 5, 6, and Option 1: Tortoise Prey Detection.

Determine detectability, occurrence, and significance of desert tortoise in predator diet at the applicable site to each task/option. Methods shall be left up to the technical team but should be noninvasive and should be reproducible at other sites/installations. Assume the same method of analysis for Tasks 5, 6, and Option 1. All samples shall derive from a collection effort listed in Task 3.

Task 7, Options 2 and 3: Human Subsidies Analysis.

Determine the occurrence and significance of human subsidies in coyote and other canid diet at the sites for each task/option. Methods shall be left up to the technical team but will be the same for Task 7, Option 2, and Option 3. All samples shall derive from a collection effort listed in Task 3.

Human subsidies are feared to attract, concentrate, and educate coyote and other canid populations that facilitates predation on desert tortoises and causes human-wildlife conflict. This can affect the canid population directly, influencing other tasks in this Cooperative Agreement. Through this task, the Marine Corps hopes to gain understanding of the means of subsidy, sources, and levels occurring by location. This will hopefully influence management strategies and an eventual management plan.

Reporting and Meetings

Reports and meetings are meant to satisfy all Tasks and Options exercised. All reports and minutes are generated as draft by the contractor, proceed through review by the Government (base and NAVFAC), before finalizing with incorporated comments.

Large and Complex Work Plan,

The Contractor shall prepare a proposed Work Plan detailing how the Contractor proposes to accomplish all Tasks and Options. The Work Plan shall include, but not be limited to, methodologies for executing each element of the project (both field and analytical treatments), data measurements and requirements, accuracy assessment plans (methodologies and acceptable range of results), project implementation (including site access, reports and their structures, quality control procedures, and preliminary work schedule), personnel and agency roles and qualifications, laboratory services and qualifications (if distinct from personnel and agency), permits and specimen repositories, references, and the accident prevention plan. Modifications to the work plan may be made at any point in the project so long as they are approved by the Cooperative Agreement Technical Representative (CATR), Base Technical Representative (BTR), and the Contractor before applying those changes.

The final work plan will be distributed to the CATR and BTR electronically.

Accident Prevention Plan (APP).

The Recipient shall submit an Accident Prevention Plan/Health and Safety Plan concurrently with

the Work Plan, but it shall be printed under a separate cover/separate file from the Work Plan. The APP will detail any anticipated hazards or threats to safety and detail any measures that can or should be taken to avoid or mitigate them. This plan should include Activity Hazard Assessments (AHAs) and any medical or safety certifications held by the project staff such as OSHA training, first aid, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Final APP will be distributed to the CATR and BTR electronically.

Quarterly Progress Reports (Medium Complexity).

The Contractor shall prepare Progress Report(s) detailing incremental accomplishment of all Performance Objectives under task orders. Reports shall be due quarterly by the 10th of the first month of the Federal quarter. Progress reports shall be prepared on a quarterly basis on a timeline that matches the timing of the submission of invoices. If no progress has been made or the project is on standby, a brief email will suffice to document that the quarterly report had no significant findings.

Each report shall reference the Project, Document number, and Contract number. The report shall include the dates of the reporting period, a detailed account of work accomplished, a figure/map displaying locations of polygons surveyed, an estimate of percentage of work completed, and an estimate of costs to date [written by email separately from the written report and at the same time]. The report shall include any past or future potential issues. Progress report structure and information required shall be amended as requested by the CATR.

Progress reports will be distributed to the CATR and BTR electronically.

Large Draft and Final Reports and Publications.

The Contractor shall prepare a Draft (for Government review) and Final (incorporating Government comments) Report detailing the accomplishment of all Performance Objectives under task orders during the project. The Draft Final Report is due within 45 days of completion of work (to include field collection, laboratory work, and analysis) and within 60 days of the end of the Period of Performance. The Final Report is due within 30 days of Government comments or by the end of the Period of Performance, whichever is sooner.

The Final Report will be a comprehensive report compiling, summarizing, and describing the information gathered in all years of the task order, satisfying the primary objectives.

The Draft Report shall include line numbering for ease of comment reference. For purposes of the Draft Report all raw data, data sheets and electronic databases (including GIS data) shall be included with the electronic copy.

The BTR and CATR will review the Draft Report and provide comments and/or modifications to the Contractor for incorporation into the report. If the Contractor takes exception to any of the requests for modification made, a meeting or telephone conference will be held to resolve the issue. If there are unresolved differences, the Contractor will address these in a separate letter submitted to the BTR and the CATR.

Electronic, legible copies of all raw field data collected and any raw laboratory results are to be submitted with the draft report. All electronic photographs are to be labeled with the project name, location of the photo, and date of the photo.

Animal specimens are not a requirement, but they may be collected during the course of the study. If applicable, the data will include a list of all specimens put into a repository to include the name, address, and contact information for the repository, specimen identification numbers and locations of the holdings, collection manager at the time of deposit, and the species, date, time, method, and location where/when the specimen was acquired.

Final Report Specifics

1) Photographs/images taken as part of the task orders shall remain Government property and are to be provided electronically on disc(s) with submission of the Final Report. Contractors may use the photos internally, and for publication with prior approval by BTR and only with appropriate citation.

2) The Final Report will be submitted with all of the information contained in the Draft Report as modified by Government comment.

3) GIS Data - The Contractor shall submit any new GIS data generated during the field surveys following the guidelines of the installation and the US Marine Corps GEOFidelis. GIS data will be reviewed by the BTR and shall not be considered final until all comments have been incorporated and data accepted by the BTR.

The Final Report will be distributed to the CATR and BTR electronically as well as in hard copy. The Contractor shall provide one complete set of hard and electronic copies of the Final Report for each Task Order (including all photographs, appendices, copies of all data sheets completed in support of the project, all databases and other supporting information) to the NAVFAC SW regional NCR Records Management. The transmittal cover sheet and mailing instructions can be found in Environmental Work Instruction EVR.4 revised 11 December 2019 (Enclosure 2). The hard copy sent to NCR Records Management shall be either bound with a removable comb binding or unbound and 3-hole punched without a binder. The digital copy provided should be on the minimum number of DVD's or CD's necessary to hold the required information. Two additional hard copies along with an electronic version and any electronic data on CD-ROM or DVD-ROM will be sent to the BTR.

On-Site Full-Day Kick-off Meeting.

Kick-off and Site Visit Meeting: The purpose of the kick-off meeting is to discuss any questions the Contractor may have regarding the contract, explain Base access and security requirements/restrictions, clarify schedules and discuss other pertinent information on the work to be performed. This meeting will also serve to introduce the Contractor to the site and any unique characteristics or specifics for application of the work plan.

Unless otherwise specified in the task order, the Contractor personnel managing the task order are

expected to be present in person at all meetings.

The Contractor shall provide meeting minutes to the CATR via e-mail within 15 days after the meeting. Content of meeting minutes shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, a list of attendees with contact information, topics/issues discussed, problems and solutions identified, the “Task List” generated at the meeting with designation of responsible person for each task listed and due dates. The Contractor shall incorporate any Government comments received on the meeting minutes. Revised meeting minutes shall be submitted via e-mail within five (5) days of receipt of Government comments.

On-Site Half-Day Meeting (Small).

End of Study: There shall be one more in-person meeting at the end of the project to discuss final results including analysis, write-up, and any resulting publications the Contractor may wish to prepare and submit.

Unless otherwise specified in the task order, the Contractor personnel managing the task order are expected to be present in person at all meetings.

The Contractor shall provide meeting minutes to the CATR via e-mail within 15 days after the meeting. Content of meeting minutes shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, a list of attendees with contact information, topics/issues discussed, problems and solutions identified, the “Task List” generated at the meeting with designation of responsible person for each task listed and due dates. The Contractor shall incorporate any Government comments received on the meeting minutes. Revised meeting minutes shall be submitted via e-mail within five (5) days of receipt of Government comments. Please see enclosure 3 (statement of work) and enclosure 4 (terms and conditions) for additional information.

Period of Performance:

The base period of performance covered by this Cooperative Agreement is **24 months upon award**. The award of any option period may be awarded unilaterally with the initial award or within the first 12 months of the 24-month period of performance. The end date is the anticipated date that the Government accepts the Final Report. However, the parties may extend the term of the Cooperative Agreement by written modification. Total duration of this Cooperative Agreement, including any option periods shall not exceed 60 months. The exercise of any option is subject to the availability of funds.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Kellie Wilson (kellie.wilson@navy.mil).

- a. SF 424 (Enclosure 5) and Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 6).
Please see Factor 1 for additional submittal requirements.
- b. Research & Related Budget Forms (Enclosure 7).
- c. Please see Factor 3 for additional submittal requirements. SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Enclosure 8). If applicable, complete SF- LLL. Applicability: If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an

officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the Grant/Cooperative Agreement, you must complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying."

Reimbursement of pre-award costs will not be allowed.

Please note, that some of the forms functionality may be lost. Please visit

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/r-r-family.html#sortby=1> to retrieve the forms directly from the Grants.gov website.

Review of Statements Received:

Proposals will be evaluated as best value tradeoffs based on the following three factors: 1) Credentials of Key Personnel, 2) Scientific Approach, and 3) Reasonableness of Cost.

NOTE: All requirements listed are minimum requirements. Offerors will be assessed on their ability to adhere to the listed requirements, completeness of responses, follow directions, comply with restrictions and provide quality control on their submittals. All page limits refer to 12 point font and single spaced pages. Submissions that exceed the page limitation specified within its corresponding factor may have additional pages removed from consideration.

Factor 1 - Credentials of Key Personnel

a. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: The Recipient shall designate one person as responsible for ensuring that provisions are in place, project and personnel supervision are sufficient, quality control and meeting of reporting requirements are on met a daily basis. This person shall have, at the minimum:

1. Minimum five (5) years of professional experience with advanced quantitative biological field experiments
2. Minimum five (5) years of professional experience providing multivariate statistical analysis including methods commonly used in population census, dietary analysis, and/or population ecology
3. Minimum five (5) years of professional experience in experimental design and methodology selection
4. A Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences, Natural Resource Management, Ecology, Genetics, or a similar discipline

b. FIELD TECHNICIAN(S): The person shall have, at the minimum:

1. A Bachelor of Science degree in botany, biology, ecology, wildlife management, botany, landscape architecture or horticulture or other related field from an accredited college or university.
2. General knowledge of field data collection techniques in the method(s) specified in the proposal and ability to perform the tasks specified in the proposal.
3. Ability to keep clear, legible and accurate notes.

4. A thorough understanding of regulations regarding wild canids, Aggasiz desert tortoises, and endangered species, threatened or rare species issues.

With the Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form, the Applicant shall provide type written resumes, not to exceed 5 pages for each individual, single spaced with 12pt font for the project manager and field technician(s) that are assigned to the project. Resumes must state qualifications, experience with this type of project, professional registration and certificates. In addition to the standard resume, please list applicable projects or research with reference points of contact demonstrating each professional experience bullet above to cover both the technical requirement and the time requirement. Indicate which requirement each project/research fulfills.

Factor 2 – Scientific Approach

Not to exceed 4 pages, the Offeror shall develop a description of their approach and methods to addressing the anticipated work stated above. The Offeror shall be evaluated as to the soundness of the overall approach and use of any innovative techniques to accomplish project objectives.

Factors for evaluation include:

- a. Method of canid population estimation to include sampling technique.
- b. Method of diet estimation to include detection and quantitative analysis.
- c. Noninvasive sampling techniques (preferred).
- d. Timelines likely to stay within fiscal deadlines.
- e. Complexity and adaptability to environmental factors.
- f. Innovation and efficiency of approach and the transferability to other Navy and Marine Corps projects including scalability of protocols.

Factor 3 - Reasonableness of Cost

After technical evaluation of the proposal, the offers will be analyzed for fair and reasonable pricing. The proposal will be analyzed to determine whether its pricing is fair and reasonable. The Offeror shall use OMB Circular A-21 “Cost Principles for Institutions of Higher Education,” 48 CFR part 31 “Contract Cost Principles and Procedures,” or 2 CFR 200 Subpart F “Audit Requirements” as applicable. Evaluations will include an analysis to determine the Offeror’s comprehension of the requirements of the solicitation as well as to assess the validity of the Offeror’s approach. A clear cost breakdown of work elements to be accomplished detailing quantities for the various work items, unit, unit prices and extended prices will be required and will be evaluated. Evaluation will include an analysis to determine the Offeror’s comprehension of the requirements of the proposed Cooperative Agreement as well as to assess the validity of the Offeror’s methodology. Please be sure to provide a proposal for the option elements as listed within the statement of work. Please submit separate budget forms for each base task of work and each of the option elements specified in the Statement of Work (up to 10 total budget forms). Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, “Research and Related Budget” form (Enclosure 7). ***Form: RESEARCH AND RELATED BUDGET**

Complete the Research and Related Budget form in accordance with the instructions on the form. You must provide a detailed cost breakdown of all costs, by cost category, by the funding periods described below, and by task/sub-task corresponding to the task number in the proposed Statement of Work. You may request funds under any of the categories listed as long as the item and amount are necessary to perform the proposed work and meet all the criteria for allowability

under the applicable Federal cost principles. The budget should adhere to the following guidelines:

The budget should be driven by program requirements. Elements of the budget shall include:

- Direct Labor - Individual labor category or person, with associated labor hours and unburdened direct labor rates.
- Indirect Costs - Fringe benefits, overhead, G&A, COM, etc. (must show base amount and rate). Justify in Field L.
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify in Field L (on the form).
- Subcontract - A cost proposal as detailed as the applicant's cost proposal will be required to be submitted by the subcontractor. If applicable, include a Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment Form.
- Consultant - Provide consultant agreement or other document that verifies the proposed loaded daily/hourly rate. Include a description of the nature of and the need for any consultant's participation. Strong justification must be provided, and consultants are to be used only under exceptional circumstances where no equivalent expertise can be found at a participating university. Provide budget justification in Field L.
- Materials - Specifically itemized with costs or estimated costs. An explanation of any estimating factors, including their derivation and application, shall be provided. Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify in Field L.
- Other Directs Costs - Particularly any proposed items of equipment or facilities. Equipment and facilities generally must be furnished by the cooperator/recipient (justifications must be provided when Government funding for such items is sought). Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify in Field L.
- Budget Justification (Field L on the form): Provide the required supporting information for the cost elements as shown above (see Research & Related Budget instructions) and listed as follows: indirect cost, travel, consultant, materials, and other direct costs.

Provide any other information you wish to submit to justify your budget request.

NOTE: Every deviation from the scope of work requirement must be identified. Offeror must identify the paragraph in the scope of work that is applicable and provide sufficient information to justify why the deviation is in the best interest of the Government.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FACTORS – Factor 1, 2, and 3 are of equal importance.

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest:

Statements of Interest must be submitted by July 27, 2020 2:00 PM Pacific standard time. This Request for Statements of Interest will remain open until an investigator team is selected. Statements of Interest received after July 27, 2020 2:00 PM Pacific standard time are considered “late” and may not be considered. Please submit requests for information/questions no later than July 21, 2020 2:00 Pacific standard time.

Please send electronic responses and questions only to:

Ms. Kellie Wilson, Contract Specialist Environmental Acquisition Core

kellie.wilson@navy.mil

Point of Contact Information:

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