

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST  
WITHIN THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT  
NUMBER N62473-21-2-0001  
PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2021**

**Project Title: ANIMAL CARE, MANAGEMENT, AND RESEARCH FOR HEADSTARTING  
AGASSIZ'S DESERT TORTOISE (GOPHERUS AGASSIZII) AT MCAGCC, THE MARINE  
CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA**

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will be used to address captive rearing and associated research of desert tortoises at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, California. The statement of interest will be for on-site actions at MCAGCC's Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site (TRACRS) and adjacent training ranges. Activities associated with the proposed project include maintaining the integrity of the headstart portion of the Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site (TRACRS), monitoring the health, condition, and survival of head start mothers and offspring, evaluating the success of released juveniles, calculating the efficacy of the facility and methods in optimizing health of raised individuals and their recruitment to local populations, and, as weather allows, generating new juveniles at TRACRS. This work is in support of the endangered species program at the installation and is critically important to mission sustainability and recovery of the desert tortoise.

The approximate amounts expected to be available to support the base requirements of this project are:

<b>Periods</b>	<b>Estimated Available Funding</b>
Base Period	\$221,137.00 to \$245,707.78
Option Period 1	\$225,449.17 to \$250,499.08
Option Period 2	\$229,845.43 to \$255,383.81
Option Period 3	\$234,327.42 to \$260,363.80

*\*\*Subject to the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 U.S.C. § 1341), additional funding may be available for follow on work in subsequent fiscal years to the successful Recipient.*

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

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

Eligible Applicants: Any Californian and Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) 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 Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, is the Marine Corps' largest combined-arms, live-fire training facility, encompassing 1,102 square miles of mostly public lands in the Mojave Desert, California. The Combat Center is divided into 27 range training area management units, each of which may contain training areas, landing fields, targetry, main supply routes, fixed ranges, support areas, expeditionary areas, and safety buffer zones. Armed forces use the Combat Center to train troops and test equipment. MCAGCC annually provides training to one-third of the Fleet Marine Force and Reserves Units.

Significant natural resources and wildlife exist on MCAGCC. Such wildlife often inhabit areas on MCAGCC property that are near military training and facilities maintenance activities. Of particular note is the Agassiz's desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), which is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and is declining across the installation.

To help recover the desert tortoise and mitigate for military actions on MCAGCC, the installation implements conservation measures as specified in Biological Opinions USFWS 1-8-99F-41 and 8-8-10-F-65R and MCAGCC's 2018 Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan. One of these conservation measures is to implement a headstart program to rear juvenile tortoises and release them to the landscape. MCAGCC's headstart program has made significant advances in captive rearing of hatchling desert tortoises and is positioned to enhance these efforts further.

**Brief Description of Anticipated Work:**

This project will continue captive rearing of hatchlings and juveniles until they grow large enough to be released to wild populations. This project also involves maintaining the TRACRS facility and its operations (e.g., irrigation) and tracking released juveniles in the Sand Hill Training area to document survival and integration into the wild population. There will also be the opportunity to complete related headstart research. The specific objectives and general requirements for conducting work on MCAGCC can be found in the attached SOW.

Please see enclosure 1 for full Scope of Work and enclosure 2 for applicable terms and conditions.

**Period of Performance:**

The Base Period of performance extends from award through March 2023 (Table 1). The proposed options are three, consecutive annual (12-month) periods of performance beyond the base period. The total duration of this agreement, including any option period, shall not exceed 60 months. The end date is the anticipated date that the Final Report is accepted by the Government. The award of any option period is subject to the availability of funds subject to the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 U.S.C. § 1341) and may be unilaterally awarded by the Government.

Table 1. Periods of performance for base and option awards.

Option Item	Period of Performance
Base Period	Date of Award – March 2023
Option Period 1	March 2023 – March 2024
Option Period 2	March 2024 – March 2025
Option Period 3	March 2025 – March 2026

A fifteen (15) day period, starting on date of award, will be used for the cooperator to provide preliminary documents to the Cooperative Agreement Administrator (CAA). Documents include, but are not limited to, insurance documents/certificates, Accident Prevention Plans/Site Health and Safety Plans (as applicable), and Draft Work Plans. Cooperator may not begin performance until preliminary documents are submitted and accepted or approved as appropriate.

**Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:**

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to the CAA: Kevin Magennis ([kevin.magennis@navy.mil](mailto:kevin.magennis@navy.mil)).

- 1) SF 424 (Enclosure 3)
- 2) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 4). Please see Factor 1 for additional submittal requirements.

- 3) Research & Related Budget Form (Enclosure 5). Please see Factor 3 for additional submittal requirements.
- 4) SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Enclosure 6). 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 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 one-sided pages.

### **Factor 1 - Credentials of Key Personnel**

A. Principal Investigator (PI): The Cooperator shall designate one person as responsible for ensuring that provisions are in place for project and personnel supervision, quality control and meeting of reporting requirements. This position shall be responsible for liaison between Cooperator and the Grants Officer or CATR and shall serve as the main point of contact for all required results and/or progress reports on the study. This person shall have, at the minimum:

- 1) A PhD degree in animal biology, ecology, or a related science;
- 2) A US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 10(a)(1)(A) permit to headstart, handle and research desert tortoises and provide technical specialists with the necessary permit authorizations, qualifications and field experience to fulfill the required tasks (i.e., at least knowledge of Agassiz's Desert Tortoises, their food, water and resource requirements, radiotelemetry, X-ray radiography, reproductive biology, health assessments and sterile techniques for handling *G. agassizii*);
- 3) A publication record demonstrating expert knowledge of Agassiz's Desert Tortoises, their food, water, physiologic and resource requirements, radiotelemetry, x-ray radiography, reproductive biology, growth, survival, health assessments and sterile techniques for handling adult and juvenile desert tortoises, and tortoise eggs, burrows and nests, and securing and maintaining headstart enclosures (fencing, netting, irrigation systems, soil, native vegetation, and native forage plants) and related support;

- 4) Demonstrated use of GIS units and maps for tracking and monitoring wild tortoises, and an ability to mark and measure the body size, condition and growth of individual desert tortoises
- 5) A minimum of five years of experience in a responsible position providing oversight of, support to or directly involved in desert tortoise conservation and management on military lands.

B. Project Manager: The Project Manager (PM) shall have, at the minimum:

- 1) A Master's degree in animal biology, ecology, or a related science or 3 full years of project management experience managing ecological field investigations and/or conducting field animal care;
- 2) An ability to handle, mark, measure and provide food, water and other care for hundreds of juvenile desert tortoises in a remote, fenced headstart facility on a live-fire military installation with extreme desert weather;
- 3) An ability to help maintain the basic physical structure, security and operations of a headstart facility, to include fencing, netting, irrigation systems, anti-predator controls and related facility operations;
- 4) An ability to use GIS units, maps, binoculars and radiotelemetry to track and monitor wild tortoises.

C. Technical Staff shall possess, at a minimum:

- 1) A Bachelor's degree in animal biology, ecology or a related science and disciplines;
- 2) Be an Authorized Individual on a USFWS 10(a)(1)(A) permit to handle and research desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) or work only under direct supervision of an Authorized Individual (e.g., PI and PM above);
- 3) Demonstrated field experience with Agassiz's Desert Tortoises, their food, water, movements, behaviors and resource requirements, radiotelemetry, health assessments and sterile techniques for handling desert tortoises;
- 4) Demonstrated experience marking and assessing the condition of juvenile and adult desert tortoises.

### **Factor 2 – Scientific Approach**

Not to exceed 3 pages, the Offeror shall develop an outline for their approach to address the anticipated work stated above. The Offeror shall be evaluated as to the soundness of the overall approach and use of any innovative techniques that can be adopted for efficiency of management and species recovery.

### **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 materially/mathematically balanced, and 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 agreement as well as to assess the validity of the Offeror's approach.

Please be sure to provide a proposal for the Option Periods as listed within the SOW.

Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, "Research and Related Budget" form\*(Enclosure 4). Please submit one budget form for the base year of work and separate budget form for each of the options specified in the SOW.

**\*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 SOW. 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 in 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. Proposer 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:**

We request that Statements of Interest be submitted by August 10, 2021 2:00 PM local standard time. This Request for Statements of Interest will remain open until an investigator team is selected. Statements of Interest received after August 10, 2021 2:00 PM local standard time are considered “late” and may not be considered. Please submit requests for information/questions no later than August 6, 2021 2:00 Pacific Standard Time.

**Please send electronic responses and questions to:**

Mr. Kevin Magennis, Contract Specialist Environmental Acquisition Core  
[kevin.magennis@navy.mil](mailto:kevin.magennis@navy.mil)

Point of Contact Information:

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