

CESU Request for Proposals (RFP)

REVIEW AND ENHANCE WILD PIG MANAGEMENT IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Deadline: 5:00 pm Friday, February 24, 2023

OVERVIEW

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS) IS SEEKING A PARTNER TO (1) REVIEW WILD PIG MANAGEMENT EFFORTS ACROSS THE AGENCY AND (2) HELP DEVELOP GUIDANCE AND TOOLS TO ENHANCE ONGOING EFFORTS.

NUMEROUS NPS SITES ACROSS THE COUNTRY DEAL WITH WILD PIGS. While there are some successful programs, many smaller sites are challenged by (a) limited human & financial resources; (b) complex land holdings and boundaries; (c) emerging wild pig issues that compete with other priorities; and (d) limited in-house expertise (for wildlife management or even natural resource management at all). The result is that many National Parks respond in a manner best described as disjunct, reactive “triage.” Some parks conduct culling work in-house, while others leverage partnerships (e.g., USDA), contractors, or private hunters.

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO SYSTEMATICALLY REVIEW NPS WILD PIG MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND SHARE THE RESULTS TO ENHANCE ONGOING EFFORTS. NPS staff need guidance that is specifically grounded in the agency’s realities and experiences (e.g., organization, staffing, finances, and compliance). One example of a particular challenge is the need for meaningful culling metrics that are *realistic* to collect, manage, and report. Qualitative professional judgements bely quantification, but quantitative approaches are often too intense to implement at the front-line level.

AGENCY-SPECIFIC NETWORKS, FRAMEWORKS, METRICS, MATERIALS, AND LESSONS ARE NEEDED to help diverse staff across the agency (a) consider alternatives and best practices; (b) justify program investments for supervisors and funders; (c) avoid reinventing the wheel; (d) avoid repeating mistakes; and (e) present consistent, unified messaging.

THIS PROJECT WILL ADDRESS THESE NEEDS by (a) developing a synthesis report on the status and trends in wild pig management across the agency, (b) preparing a structured decision making guide aimed at mid-level NPS staff and partners, (c) assisting with an NPS wild pig management presence, including a proposal for a data portal for crowd sourced reporting of wild pigs and wild pig impacts, and (d) at least three trainings for NPS staff about the overall project.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Internal Survey:** The partner will conduct an internal, NPS-wide survey to document the who, what, when, where, why, and how of NPS wild pig management efforts (e.g., strengths, weaknesses, operations, gaps, costs, results, challenges, trends, funding, and staffing).

2. **Case Studies:** The partner will conduct at least four “deeper dive,” case studies of existing wild pig management programs at specific parks (e.g., site visits, detailed program reviews, and staff interviews).
3. **NPS Literature Review:** The partner will compile and annotate/review a list of NPS wild pig management documents ranging from Departmental-level guidance to park-specific plans identified during the survey and case study processes.
4. **Test protocols:** The partner will—based on surveys, case studies, and academic considerations—develop at least one option for a simple, practical culling or monitoring protocol that might increase the effectiveness and uniformity of wild pig management efforts. This will be pilot tested in at least three NPS sites.
5. **Compliance portfolio:** The partner will work with NPS staff to prepare a stock compliance portfolio/template(s) through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system. This will support parks with needed documentation (e.g., Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and other permits) to streamline wild pig management efforts.
6. **Reporting portal:** The partner will research crowd sourced data flows for natural resource programs and coordinate/propose a data portal (e.g., mobile app or web page) to facilitate staff, visitor, and partner reporting of wild pigs and wild pig damage on NPS lands. The partner will (a) work with NPS staff to identify and test a platform is both viable and sustainable while minimizing additional legal requirements (e.g., Paperwork Reduction Act documentation), and (b) develop a draft data management plan.
7. **Structured decision-making guide:** The findings from the objectives will be synthesized to develop a structured decision-making guide that is (a) science-based, (b) NPS-specific, (c) written for mid-level NPS staff and partners, and (d) includes the compliance portfolio
8. **Training:** The partner will provide at least three (3) trainings for NPS staff and partners to engage with the objectives and deliverables outlined here. These may range from 1-hour virtual webinars to on-site, multi-day trainings.

DELIVERABLES

1. **Synthesis report:** The partner will summarize and synthesize the findings from objectives 1 to 4 (survey results, case studies, literature review, and test protocol work) as a benchmark / snapshot of wild pig management efforts across the NPS
2. **NPS wild pig management web presence:** The partner will work with NPS staff develop a web portal to engage digital visitors in an NPS-framed overview of wild pig management (including distilled highlights from the synthesis report) as well as including the crowd sourced data portal referenced in Objective 6.
3. **Structured decision-making guide:** The partner will prepare a structured decision-making guide per Objective 7

4. **Training:** The partner will provide at least three (3) trainings for NPS staff and partners to engage with the deliverables 1-4 above.

SCOPE

Timelines: The project was originally designed as a 3-year study with an estimated start date of July 2023. Proposals are welcome to adjust the duration and start date, although the start date must begin before Oct 1, 2023.

Budget: Funding is available in an amount not to exceed \$299,897. The budget was originally designed around one PhD student, one MS student, faculty time, travel, office supplies, and field/lab supplies for the test protocol. It is preferred that graduate students are part of the research team, but it is not required in the proposal. This project will be implemented under a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) agreement already in place with your institution, which sets the indirect cost rate at 17.5%.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested Principal Investigators are invited to submit an application package of no more than five (5) pages. The package should cover the following areas, which will be used to evaluate the applications received:

1. Research Team Experience/Qualifications: Outline your qualifications (a) as a Principal Investigator(s), (b) relevant to wildlife management (wild pig experience preferred), and (c) relevant to large land management agency operations (NPS and/or federal-level experience preferred). Please also outline your institution's capacity and benefits.
2. Methodology: Describe how you would approach the project, including staffing, methodology, and timelines. Describe your vision for the project. Are there any objectives that are particularly exciting? Are there any that feel weak, missing, or odd?
3. Logistics: Detail a thorough and reasonable budget breakdown. A sample template of the budget showing budget categories and detail necessary is attached for your reference. This template is not required. There is some flexibility within the itemized list above, but please be specific (e.g., institutional tuition and graduate student costs as well as faculty salary rates and schedules). Please also quantify potential institutional match (e.g., finances, equipment, services). Please provide a clear statement that you would be able to complete the project with the available funds.

Please submit your package to david_shelley@nps.gov by no later than COB Friday, February 24. Please use the subject line "CESU wild pig management study proposal," to ensure that the email is properly received and reviewed. The selected PI/lab/team will collaborate with NPS staff to develop a Statement of Work for the cooperative agreement process.

NPS CONTACTS

This project is being coordinated through the NPS Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center (OGBFREC) at Congaree National Park (CONG). Please direct questions, concerns, clarifications, and other follow-up to:

Dr. David C. Shelley

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