

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST WITHIN THE
COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT
INTEREST #N62473-19-0003
PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2019**

Project Title: San Nicolas Island Special Status Species and Data Management Naval Base Ventura County San Nichols Island, CA

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the Department of the Navy (DoN), which provides professional and technical support for its Endangered Species Biology Programs in order to facilitate successful implementation of the installation's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) and compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The U.S. Navy is seeking statement of interests that increases our knowledge of special status species and improves data management for Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) San Nicolas (SNI). Approximately \$203,000.00 is expected to be available to support this project beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019.

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

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

Eligible Applicants: Any Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Californian 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: NBVC SNI's INRMP addresses terrestrial and adjacent waters of the nearshore environment with which the Navy interfaces. Submerged lands and resources, including Begg Rock, within the 300-foot (91-m) isobaths or 1.0 nautical mile distance from shore, whichever is greater, are considered under this INRMP. In 2014, the INRMP was updated to incorporate data and changes in resources, U. S. Department of Defense and Navy INRMP guidelines, and resource goals and objectives. In addition, the SNI INRMP incorporated changes in federal regulations and associated habitat conservation provisions, such as the de-listing of the island night lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*) under the Endangered Species Act and the establishment of the Southern Sea Otter Military Readiness Areas (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 Sec. 312 § 7235).

The Cooperative Agreement meets the requirements of the Sikes Act through implementation of the INRMP. This Cooperative Agreement supports the following INRMP objectives:

- **Special Status Species:** Minimize the potential for adverse effects on special status species and their associated ecosystems while protecting the operational functionality of the installation mission by using an ecosystem-based management approach.

- **Data Integration, Access, and Reporting:** Ensure the technically sound, practical and appropriate use of library and computer technology to organize, analyze, and communicate natural resource information in support of management decisions.

Brief Description of the Anticipated Work: The U.S. Navy is seeking statement of interests that increases our knowledge of special status species and improves data management for NBVC on SNI. This newly procured proposed project includes voucher specimen cataloguing to meet the Data Integration, Access, and Reporting requirements detailed in the INRMP to support the Navy's obligation for the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources at NBVC SNI. Botanists will conduct two types of genetic barcoding surveys to support the cataloging of special status species. The first survey will be to collect a botanical specimen for every vascular plant that occurs on the island, and a corresponding fresh tissue collection that can be used for high quality genomic extractions for molecular work. Herbarium specimens will be identified, databased, and deposited at Santa Barbara Botanical Garden (SBBG); corresponding tissues will be deposited into the SBBG tissue bank. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) barcode markers are short, easily amplified regions of DNA, standardized for specific taxonomic groups of organisms. They are invaluable for understanding species boundaries, community ecology, functional trait evolution, trophic interactions, and the conservation and management of biodiversity through studies such as diet analysis.

The second effort will be to conduct metabarcoding. The previous studies have used morphological assessment of scat to determine diet of the Island foxes (*Urocyon littoralis*). However, these methods are not as sensitive in detecting soft-bodied organisms such as terrestrial arthropods at varied life stages, fungi, lichens, and green plants as metabarcoding methods. All of these taxonomic groups might be important food sources in an omnivore diet, and metabarcoding is likely to yield a genus or species level identification. As with the tissue bank study, DNA metabarcoding multiplexing and next-generation sequencing to uncover different taxonomic groups of organisms, including soft bodied organisms, all organisms within the reference library and of organisms whose proper genome areas have been sequenced and made available (e.g.: Xantusia, Micrarionata, Vertigo, Xerionata, resident avian species, and others), from complex diet samples for Island foxes for 60 samples. While metabarcoding is increasingly used to understand diet in vertebrate animals, it has not been widely used in invertebrate animals, especially omnivores.

The requested deliverables will be a work plan, health and safety plan/accident prevention plan, monthly progress reports, and final reports.

Please see enclosure 1 for full scope of work and enclosure 2 for applicable terms and conditions.

Period of Performance: The proposed period of performance for the Cooperative Agreement consists of an 18-month base period and two option items. Each option item has a period of performance of 12 months. The end date is the anticipated date that the final report is accepted by the Government. 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 item is subject to the availability of funds.

A fifteen (15) day period, starting on date of award, will be used for the Recipient to provide preliminary documents to the CAA and CATR. Documents include, but are not limited to, Insurance

documents/certificates, Accident Prevention Plans/Site Health and Safety Plans (as applicable), etc. Recipient may not begin performance until preliminary documents are submitted and accepted/approved as appropriate.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Reagan Pablo (reagan.s.pablo@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 and Related Budget Form (Enclosure 5)
- 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."
- 5) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 7). The Federal Government has a continuing commitment to monitor the operation of its review and award processes to identify and address any inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of its proposed PDs/PIs and co-PDs/PIs. To gather information needed for this important task, the applicant should submit the requested information for each identified PD/PI and co-PDs/PIs with each proposal. Submission of the requested information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. However, information not submitted will seriously undermine the statistical validity, and therefore the usefulness, of information received from others. Any individual not wishing to submit some or all the information should check the box provided for this purpose. Upon receipt of the application, this form will be separated from the application. This form will not be duplicated, and it will not be a part of the review process. This data will be kept confidential.

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. Information provided must be recent (within last seven (7) years) and relevant. Offerors will be assessed on their ability to adhere to the

listed requirements, 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: The Recipient shall designate a person(s) as responsible for ensuring that provisions are in place, project and personnel supervision, quality control and meeting of reporting requirements are met on a daily basis. ***The requirements for this key position may be split between two individuals.*** This person(s) shall have, at the minimum:

- i. A PhD in Botany or related science.
- ii. Experience and knowledge of plant ecology or conservation biology, as demonstrated by at least 10 years of previous work or research experience.
- iii. Specific knowledge of Channel Islands conservation and management, as demonstrated by at least 10 years of previous work or research experience.

B. Research Associates: The person(s) shall have, or have immediate access to personnel that have, at the minimum:

- i. A minimum of a Bachelor's of Science degree in Botany or related science disciplines and a minimum of 5 years' experience in a responsible position providing oversight of, support to or directly involved in Channel Islands conservation and management.

With the Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form, the Applicant shall provide type written resumes, not to exceed 3 pages, single spaced with 12pt font for the full-time biologist and field investigators that are assigned to the project. Resumes must state qualifications, experience with this type of project, professional registration and certificates.

Factor 2 – Scientific Approach

Not to exceed 3 pages, the Offeror shall develop an outline for their approach to addressing the anticipated work stated above and in the scope of work. The Offeror may propose additional geographic and environmental variables to consider, not mentioned in the RSOI, but must pertinent to the study issues. The Offeror shall be evaluated as to the soundness of the overall approach and use of any innovative techniques to accomplish project objectives.

Factor 3 - Reasonableness of Cost

After technical evaluation of the proposal, the Offers shall be analyzed to determine whether they are materially/mathematically balanced with respect to prices or separately priced items, and for fair and reasonable pricing. 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 optional periods as listed within the statement of work.

Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, "Research and Related Budget" form*(Enclosure 5). Please submit one budget form for the base year of work and separate budget form for each of the option items specified in the Statement of Work.

***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 within the Statement of Work (enclosure 1). 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 K.
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify in Field K (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 K.
- 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 K.
- 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 K.

Budget Justification (Field K 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 04 February 2019 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 04 February 2019 2:00 PM Pacific standard time is considered “late” and may not be considered. Please submit requests for information/questions no later than 30 January 2019 2:00 Pacific standard time.

Please send electronic responses and questions to:

Mr. Reagan Pablo, Contract Specialist Environmental Acquisition Core
Reagan.s.pablo@navy.mil

Point of Contact Information:

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