

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WITHIN
THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT
INTEREST #N62473-22-2-0012**

PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2022

Project Title: Sierra Nevada Red Fox Status Update for the Mono Lake Population at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Mono County, California

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will support the monitoring and management of the Sierra Nevada red fox subspecies at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC) Bridgeport, California. The authority for this Cooperative Agreement is 16 USC §670c-1. The total funding limit for base project execution is \$94,000.00

Item	Estimated Funding
Base Period	\$94,000.00

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

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

Eligible Applicants: Any Californian, Great Plains, or Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) 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 purpose of this project is to provide Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport (MCMWTC) with updated status and range of a small population of Sierra Nevada red fox, *Vulpes vulpes nescator* (SNRF). The SNRF is Federally listed as an Endangered distinct population segment under the Endangered Species Act.

This population was rediscovered after trail camera detections in 2019 along Mono Lake. Initial estimates placed the Southern Sierra population at just 3 adults. Detections were made in the portions of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest under Special Use Agreement (SUA) with MCMWTC as recently as March 2022. Due to small population size and remote habitat, this population has been difficult to study and estimate but has potential direct impacts to the military mission on MCMWTC including Limited Operating Period (LOP) standards. A better understanding of range, occupation, and habitat use on MCMWTC will serve to limit potential effects to the species and direct proactive and beneficial management actions.

Brief Description of the Anticipated Work:

This project will provide MCMWTC with an understanding (by means of research, surveys, labs, GIS, and reports) of SNRF population dynamics including diet, population size, genetics, human influences, genetic transfer, and any notable signs of individual health, along with creative methods to monitor and manage the SNRF population.

The primary objectives of the study are to analyze the SNRF population to determine appropriate management efforts, the primary locations of management actions, and the expected effects to the population. To do that, MCMWTC seeks collaboration to deploy robust analyses of canid scat and populations to:

1. Quantify SNRF population size and habitat occupation within the local region (Southern Sierra Nevada, Mono Creek subpopulation).

The Cooperator shall gather samples non-intrusively such as but not limited to: scat collection and analysis, detection dogs, wildlife cameras, scent stations, fur samples, or similar. Methods and scheme will be up to the Cooperator team and proposal as set for the record within the work plan.

2. Describe the gene flow characteristics among this population.

The methods in the proposal shall be enacted to identify individual animals and determine their genetic health. Results shall include a population viability analysis (PVA). If specimens can be obtained from Northern Sierra populations or other subpopulations in the Southern Sierras, comparison and analysis shall be made.

3. Describe the effects of human subsidies in SNRF diets and its influence on the population and behavior.

Using physical diet, fecal content, and food items/sources found in the population's occupied proximity, describe how human subsidies influence the SNRF population. This may include direct influence, i.e. dietary inputs, or indirect, i.e. drawing in predators and competition that pressure the population. Methods shall be left up to the technical team but should be noninvasive and should be reproducible at other sites.

4. Describe other predatory/competitor canid communities and how they interact with SNRF to determine range occupation and use.

Human subsidies are feared to attract, concentrate, and educate coyote and other canid populations. Speculation surrounding SNRF selection of remote habitats often at altitude suggests that canid competitors may be a causal factor. As collection of non-fox fecal material is likely considering the difficulty in determining canid species source in the field, mapping and analyzing non-SNRF fecal contributions can lend some evidence as to the contribution of canid-interactions in SNRF ecology. The Cooperator shall provide analysis and conclusions drawn by the field work in the deliverables from this project.

5. (Optional objective) If possible, describe potential military influence on diet separately from recreational user influence.

USMC-generated waste often has distinct markers in the field such as uniform MRE bags, communication wire, and concentrated use and refuse. Though required to remove all trash and sign with them as they depart training, evidence can at times be found around the periphery of training locations. The National Forest of which MCMWTC is an operational part also attracts tourism including day and longer-term camping, climbers, hikers, and drive-by visitors. If the Cooperator has confidently proposed to meet the optional objective for task 5 in their proposal, then they shall confirm sources and preferences for the human subsidies found in SNRF and competitor diets drawn between these two main human influence groups.

6. (Optional objective) If possible, determine individual health from fecal analysis, camera footage, or other techniques.

If, during the course of genetic and dietary analysis, evidence of individual health to include nutrition, disease, and parasite loads shall be noted in progress and final reports. The Cooperator shall be held to the participation described in the proposal.

To accomplish the task, the cooperator will need to have a firm background in species knowledge, experimental design, writing technical publications and running analyses in a clear and relatable manner, field work in isolated and rugged terrain, and laboratory procedures.

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 Cooperator, proceed through review by the Government (base and NAVFAC), before finalizing with incorporated comments.

Large and Complex Work Plan,

The Cooperator shall prepare a proposed Work Plan detailing how the Cooperator proposes to accomplish all Performance. 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, project implementation (including site access, reports and their structures, quality control procedures, and preliminary work schedule), personnel and agency roles and qualifications, technical services and qualifications (if distinct from personnel and agency), 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 Cooperator 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 40-hour EM 385 1-1 and OSHA training, first aid, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (all examples given are mandatory).

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

Quarterly (3-month) Progress Reports.

The Cooperator 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 Cooperator shall prepare a Draft (for Government review) and Final (incorporating Government comments) Report detailing the accomplishment of all Performance Objectives under task order during the project. 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 Draft Final Report is due within 90 days of completion of field work 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 BTR and CATR will review the Draft Report and provide comments and/or modifications to the Cooperator for incorporation into the report. If the Cooperator 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 Cooperator 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.

Final Report Specifics

- 1) Photographs/images taken as part of the task order shall remain Government property and are to be provided electronically on disc(s) or via DoDSAFE with submission of the final report. Cooperators 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 Cooperator 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. Any elements that do not have a usable correlation to the GEOFidelis model can be delivered in a separate geodatabase agreed upon by the Cooperator and the BTR.

The final report will be distributed electronically to the CATR and electronically and in bound hard copy to the BTR. The Cooperator shall provide one complete set of unbound hard and electronic copies of the final report (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 EWI 4, Revision 6 revised 30 September 2021 (available on request to the CATR). The hard copy sent to NCR Records Management shall be 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 bound hard copies along with an electronic version and any electronic data on CD-ROM or DVD-ROM will be sent to the BTR. All electronic deliverables will also be delivered via DoDSAFE or similar mechanism with a drop-off request initiated by the CATR or BTR upon Cooperator's request.

Half-Day Kick-off Meeting.

A kickoff meeting shall be held at the beginning of the Agreement. The purpose of the kick-off meeting is to discuss any questions the Cooperator 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 Cooperator to the site and any unique characteristics or specifics for application of the work plan. This meeting can take place before Field Technicians are hired, but the Project Manager must be present.

The BTR may invite additional agency personnel from USFWS, USFS, associated research institutions, and others that may need to coordinate on field procedures, standardize protocols, or discuss other implementation issues specific to the project.

The Cooperator 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 Cooperator 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 1 (statement of work) and Enclosure 2 (terms and conditions) for additional information

On-Site Full-Day Site Visit.

Unless otherwise specified in the task order, the Cooperator personnel managing the task order are expected to be present in person at on-site meetings. The purpose of this meeting is to visit field collection sites, prepare field personnel with safety briefings and access and radio procedures, and introduce Base and Cooperator personnel. MCMWTC requires roughly a half-day of field briefings for all personnel entering the field. This meeting can be scheduled at convenience, but must take place before or during the start of the field work (prior to gaining field access).

The Cooperator 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 Cooperator 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.

Annual Progress Meeting

An annual meeting to discuss progress and needs amongst multiple agency personnel (MCMWTC, the Cooperator, USFS, and USFWS as necessary) can be scheduled by the BTR in contact with the CATR and with the agreement of the Cooperator. This meeting can be held in person or virtually at the beginning or the end of the field season. In this meeting, preliminary results and data, wants and needs, and protocols may be shared to benefit multiple approaches to the management and monitoring of the SNRF.

Period of Performance:

The base period of performance covered by this agreement is **36 months upon award**, based on standard academic two (2) year sampling replication and one (1) year for reporting and publications. 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.

Period	Period of Performance	Anticipated Award Date
Base Period	Date of Award – 36 Months	Fall 2022

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Kevin Magennis (kevin.e.magennis.civ@us.navy.mil).

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

- b. Research & Related Budget Forms (Enclosure 5).
- c. Please see Factor 3 for additional submittal requirements. 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 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. PROJECT MANAGER(s): The Recipient 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 are met on a daily basis. This person is expected to be onsite for all field operations, unless exempted by the Installation representative (i.e. for equipment retrieval). This person shall have, at the minimum:
 - 1. Bachelor of Science or higher degree in zoology, biology, ecology, wildlife management or a related field experience from an accredited college or university
 - 2. Five (5) years of experience with canid studies. Preference will be given for proposed project managers with experience in California, on military or National Forest lands, with the SNRF subspecies, in genetic analysis from non-intrusive methods, or any combination of these subfactors.
 - 3. Three (3) years of experience in leading field projects in remote settings. Preference given for project experience in remote montane forests and high altitudes.
 - 4. Five (5) years of previous inventory, monitoring, or research experience that must include research design.
- b. FIELD TECHNICIAN(s): The person shall have, at the minimum:

1. Bachelor of Science or higher degree in zoology, biology, ecology, wildlife management, or a related field from an accredited college or university.
2. Specific knowledge of canid ecology, appropriate fox monitoring techniques, and demonstrated ability to competently survey for small or cryptic populations.
3. Direct experience in the sampling and analysis method proposed.
4. One (1) year experience in field mapping and field data collection with ability to keep clear, legible, and accurate notes.
5. One (1) year demonstrated experience of work and current ability to work in isolation and at altitude in rugged montane terrains.

The person(s) and agencies must be appropriately certified to execute their duties or seek to become so before the commencement of field activities. Any certification required must be presented with the carrying person and will not count towards page counts. These certifications may include state and federal handling or capture permits, sampling permits, IACUC authorizations, or other required paperwork depending on method and locations proposed. If the personnel are not yet hired, the group needs additional time from award to obtain agency permits, or there are other understandable delays, then the permits may be provided as attachments to the work plan and APP. The proposal must also state that the permit will be obtained and state a reason for the delay.

With the Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form, the Applicant shall provide type written résumés, not to exceed 5 pages, single spaced with 12pt font for the project manager and field technicians that are assigned to the project. Résumés must state qualifications, experience with this type of project, professional registration and certificates.

Factor 2 – Scientific Approach

Not to exceed 5 pages, the Offeror shall develop an outline for their approach 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:

1. Method of canid population estimation to include sampling technique.
2. Method of diet estimation to include detection and quantitative analysis.
3. Noninvasive sampling techniques (preferred).
4. Timelines likely to stay within fiscal deadlines.
5. Complexity and adaptability to environmental factors.
6. 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 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. Please be sure to provide a proposal for the option periods as listed within the statement of work. Please submit a proposed budget for each of the tasks including base and option periods on a separate research and related budget forms (total of 6 budget forms).

Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, "Research and Related Budget" form (Enclosure 5). ***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 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 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 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 September 14, 2022 2:00 PM PDT. This Request for Statements of Interest will remain open until an investigator team is selected. Statements of Interest received after September 14, 2022 2:00 PM PDT is considered “late” and may not be considered. Please submit requests for information/questions no later than September 12, 2022 2:00 PDT.

Please send electronic responses and questions only to:

Kevin Magennis, Contract Specialist kevin.e.magennis.civ@us.navy.mil

Point of Contact Information:

Mr. Kevin Magennis, Contract Specialist
Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest
750 Pacific Highway, 12th Floor, San Diego, CA 92132
619.705.5566