REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Whooping Crane Monitoring

PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Office of the Executive Director
4111 4th Avenue, Suite 6
Kearney, Nebraska 68845

May 27, 2011

Contents

I. OVERVIEW 3

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION & SCOPE OF WORK 5

III. PROJECT BUDGET 6

IV. FIELD AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT 6

V. CONTRACT TERMS 6

VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS 6

VII. AVAILABLE INFORMATION 9

Attachment A – PRRIP Whooping Crane Monitoring Protocol

Attachment B – PRRIP Consultant Contract

PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

SUBJECT:	Spring and Fall Whooping Crane Monitoring
REQUEST DATE:	May 31, 2011
PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING:	June 16, 2011
CLOSING DATE:	June 30, 2011
POINT OF CONTACT:	Chad Smith Headwaters Corporation (402) 261-3185 *smithc@headwaterscorp.com*

I. OVERVIEW

The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program ("Program" or "PRRIP") initiated on January 1, 2007 between Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, and the Department of the Interior to address threatened and endangered species issues in the central and lower Platte River basin. The species considered in the Program, referred to as "target species", are the whooping crane, piping plover, interior least tern, and pallid sturgeon.

A Governance Committee (GC) reviews, directs, and provides oversight for Program activities. The GC is comprised of one representative from each of the three states, three water user representatives, two representatives from environmental groups, and two members representing federal agencies. The GC has named Dr. Jerry Kenny to serve as the Program Executive Director (ED). Dr. Kenny established Headwaters Corporation as the staffing mechanism for the Program. Program staff is located in Nebraska and Colorado and are responsible for assisting in carrying out Program-related activities.

In 2007, the Program began its 13-year First Increment and implementation of an Adaptive Management Plan ("AMP") to learn more about the physical processes of the central Platte River and the response of the four target species to management actions. The AMP includes several protocols for monitoring target species, habitat, and physical processes to better understand interrelationships and provide data for evaluating species response to management actions. This RFP related to the whooping crane monitoring protocol for the Program.

Information from this protocol will be used to help evaluate the biological response of whooping cranes and habitat to the land and water management activities of the Program. Several critical scientific and technical uncertainties about Program target species, physical processes, and the response of the target species to management actions will be the focus of the application of rigorous adaptive management in the First Increment through implementation of the Program's AMP. These uncertainties are captured in statements of broad hypotheses on pages 14-17 of the AMP and, as a means of better linking science learning to Program decision-making, those uncertainties comprise a set of "Big Questions" that provide a template for linking specific hypotheses and performance measures to management objectives and overall Program goals (see PRRIP 2007-2010 Synthesis Report, 2011).

Three "Big Questions" relate directly to whooping cranes:

- **Big Question #1 –** Do whooping cranes use Program habitat complexes and/or habitat meeting Program minimum criteria in proportions greater than their availability?
- **Big Question #4 –** What is the relationship between availability of whooping crane roosting habitat meeting Program minimum criteria and whooping crane use?

- **Big Question #5** – How does whooping crane use of the central Platte River relate to overall population recovery objectives?

These uncertainties led to the development of a specific management objective for the whooping crane and indicators related to that objective, as noted in the AMP:

Management Objective	*Contribute to the survival of whooping cranes during migration*
Indicators	* Increase area of suitable roosting and foraging habitat * Increase crane use days

To assess progress toward this objective and learn about the major whooping crane uncertainties, several finer-scale priority hypotheses were developed by Program participants. In 2010, those hypotheses were sequenced to develop a smaller set of Tier 1 hypotheses to receive focused attention in the First Increment. For whooping cranes, those Tier 1 hypotheses are:

- **WC-1:** Whooping crane use will increase as a function of Program land and water management activities.
- **WC-3:** Whooping crane use is related to habitat suitability. Riverine habitat suitability for whooping cranes is a function of channel characteristics such as water depth, channel width, and unobstructed-view widths.

This monitoring protocol is intended to provide standard implementation guidance for collecting whooping crane (# of use days) and habitat (i.e., channel characteristics at roost sites and landscape level attributes at diurnal use sites) data necessary to test the Tier 1 whooping crane hypotheses, assess progress toward meeting the whooping crane management objective, and evaluate learning related to the whooping crane Big Questions. **As such, this is a validation monitoring protocol.** Use of the phrase "suitable channel habitat" relates to the Program's established minimum habitat criteria (see ILT-PP-WC Minimum Habitat Criteria, 2008). This protocol will be used by the Program to gather information on whooping crane habitat use and to provide an index of whooping crane abundance in the study area. It is understood that regardless of survey method not all whooping cranes are certain of being detected during migration and therefore full implementation of this or any other protocol will not represent complete whooping crane use of the central Platte River valley.

The GC submits this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from Consultants to implement the Program's whooping crane monitoring protocol in the central Platte River (Nebraska) valley during the annual spring and fall migrations. Monitoring results will serve as a tool for the GC to assist in determining whooping crane habitat use and provide an index of abundance in the study area. The term Consultant shall be used throughout this document to describe both the RFP Respondent providing the proposal and the Consultant (the successful Respondent) who would be performing the work upon award of the project.

This RFP describes a multi-year program of work encompassing annual whooping crane monitoring activities twice a year (during the spring and fall migration periods) from August 2011 through June 2015. Annual budgets for implementing the protocol will be developed in conjunction with the selected Consultant. A four-year program of monitoring and reporting will begin in 2011, with potential extension beyond 2015. Under the final contract, annual written Notice to Proceed from the Program Executive Director's Office (EDO) will be required before work begins. All work will be contingent on availability of Program funding.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION & SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant will rigorously implement the Program's Whooping Crane Monitoring Protocol (see Attachment A) for the purposes of collecting data on whooping crane occurrence and use in the central Platte River valley during the fall 2011, spring and fall 2012-2014, and spring 2015 migration seasons. The protocol provides extensive detail about the study area, timing, and survey/data collection methods. Consultants responding to this RFP should provide information detailing their ability to implement all aspects of the protocol in accordance with the established spring and fall migration survey periods and reporting dates.

Monitoring Tasks

In particular, potential Consultants should be aware of the following details related to implementation of the protocol:

1) Detect whooping crane stopovers in the study area (Appendix A) – systematic aerial surveys of the study area will be conducted and the data will be used to comparatively evaluate changes in the frequency and distribution of stopovers within the study area over time. The Whooping Crane Trust's (Trust) telemetry project locations and opportunistic locates will also be used to detect whooping crane stopovers in the study area; however, telemetry data will only be used by the Consultant to relocate whooping cranes using the study area that were already observed by the monitoring crew. Additional whooping crane stopover locations identified via telemetry will be reported to the Consultant after the whooping crane group leaves the study area so that habitat data can be collected at these sites as well.

2) Identify the locations of use and crane group movements in the study area – crane group movements will be documented in order to identify use-sites and to describe the patterns of movement of each crane group.

3) Qualitatively document crane group activities at use-sites – observers will qualitatively document activities displayed by the crane groups. Observed activities may help identify factors that influence how cranes use the area and aid in the interpretation of crane behavior.

4) Document the physical and/or biological characteristics of use-sites – habitat parameters will be measured and described at all whooping crane stopover sites documented (via monitoring, telemetry, or opportunistic locates) in the central Platte River valley and will be used in comparative habitat selection analyses.

5) Landscape Data Collection – Basic landscape source data of whooping crane use-sites in the study area will be collected through this protocol. This information will be used in future use/availability analyses using aerial photography, Geographic Information System (GIS) information, and appropriate landscape data collected from other protocols. Currently the Program has available a complete land use/land cover GIS analyses of 1998 (baseline) and 2005 color infrared photography. Continued regular collection of landscape data sources of the study area through other protocols such as aerial photographs, LiDAR, geomorphology monitoring, GIS data, and annual habitat suitability analyses will enable future habitat use/availability analyses.

Data Analysis

The successful Consultant will be expected to provide an analysis of collected whooping crane and associated habitat data in accordance with data needs as directed by the EDO. The Program is currently undergoing a process of specifying the data needed, preferred analysis methods, and the preferred form of

analysis presentations (graphs, charts, text, etc.). This information will be communicated to the successful Consultant prior to the start of the fall 2011 migration season and the Consultant will be expected to stay in close communication with the EDO during the reporting process for each migration season to respond to analysis needs and changes. **NOTE: Proposals submitted in response to the RFP should provide a clear indication of the ability of the Consultant to provide statistical data analysis and presentation and the experience and qualifications of team members in data analysis procedures.**

Reporting

The successful Consultant will generate a draft (Microsoft Word) and final (Microsoft Word and PDF) report at the completion of each migration season that includes methods, results, data analysis (as requested by the Program), photographs of field work, and other associated data. Reports will be delivered electronically to the EDO for review and comment by the EDO and the Program's Technical Advisory Committee. The successful Consultant will also be required to prepare for, attend, develop an Executive Summary for, and deliver a presentation at the Program's annual Adaptive Management Plan Reporting Session generally held in Denver, CO in early March of each year.

III. PROJECT BUDGET

An estimated project budget should be submitted in the proposal, on a not-to-exceed time and expense basis for the work to be completed. A final budget will be established as part of the Project Scoping and Kickoff and will depend upon the budget estimate provided in the proposal for the selected Consultant.

Proposals will be evaluated on criteria described in **Section V** below, including understanding of the objectives of the project, qualifications of the team members, and clarity/content of project schedule, scope, and budget. **The work will not be awarded based solely on a lowest cost basis.**

IV. FIELD AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Potential Consultants will own or acquire all field and office equipment and software required to implement the Whooping Crane Monitoring Protocol.

V. CONTRACT TERMS

The selected Consultant will be retained by: Nebraska Community Foundation
PO Box 83107
Lincoln, NE 68501

Proposal should indicate whether the Consultant agrees to the contract terms, as outlined in the attached Program's Consultant Contract (Attachment B), or provides a clear description of any exceptions to the terms and conditions.

The initial term of the contract will be for a period beginning in August 2011 and terminating in June 2015 with an option to renew at the sole discretion of the GC. Contracted services will be performed on a time and material not to exceed basis. Under the final contract, written Notice to Proceed from the Executive Director will be required before works begins. All work will be contingent on availability of Program funding.

VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All interested parties having experience providing the services listed in this RFP are requested to submit a proposal.

Instructions for Submitting Proposals

One electronic copy of your proposal must be submitted in PDF format to Chad Smith at *smithc@headwaterscorp.com* *no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) Central time on Thursday, June 30, 2011.* Maximum allowable proposal PDF size is 8MB, and proposals are to be limited to a total of 50 pages or less. A proposal is late if received any time after 12:00 p.m. Central time and will not be eligible for consideration.

Questions regarding the information contained in this RFP should be submitted to Chad Smith at *smithc@headwaterscorp.com*. A list of compiled Consultant questions and responses will be maintained on the Program web site (*www.PlatteRiverProgram.org*) in the same location as this RFP solicitation.

RFP Schedule

The EDO expects to complete the selection process and award the work by approximately July 31, 2011. The following table represents the RFP schedule:

Description	Date	Time (Central)
Issue RFP	May 26, 2011	NA
Pre-proposal meeting	June 16, 2011	1:00 PM
Last day for respondents to submit questions regarding the RFP	June 23, 2011	12:00 PM
Proposals due from respondents	June 30, 2011	12:00 PM
Evaluation of proposals	June 30, 2011 thru July 22, 2011	
Award of Work	On or before July 31, 2011	
Start of Work	Approximately August 1, 2011	
Completion of Work	Approximately June 30, 2016	

Pre-Proposal Meeting

A non-mandatory pre-proposal meeting of interested parties will be held on June 16, 2011 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Central Time via conference call for the purpose of familiarizing the respondents with the work scope and requirements included herein before submitting a response to this RFP. Please email Chad Smith (smithc@headwaterscorp.com) for the conference call dial-in information along with a list of people from your party expected to join in the pre-proposal conference call by 12:00 p.m. Central time on June 13, 2011.

The meeting will include a brief overview by the EDO regarding the objectives of the project, the scope of services, and the timeline. It is the Consultant's responsibility, while at the pre-proposal meeting/conference call, to ask questions necessary to understand the RFP so the respondent can submit a proposal that is complete and in accordance with RFP requirements. It is highly recommended that all prospective Consultants participate in the pre-proposal meeting/conference call as there shall be no minutes distributed by the EDO regarding the meeting.

Proposal Content

Proposals should respond to the following general topics:

1) **Executive summary** that presents a brief firm overview that condenses and highlights the contents of the proposal in such a way as to provide a broad understanding of the Consultant's qualifications and proposal.

2) **Project understanding** that demonstrates the Consultant understands project goals and objectives and identifies issues critical to project success.

3) **Project approach** that documents how the Consultant would organize and execute the scope of work detailed in this RFP and provides project team organization, resumes, and responsibilities and specifies which team members will work on each specific task.

4) **Qualifications and project experience** relevant to this project including the involvement/role of the proposed team in those projects. Be clear which team members will work on specific tasks outlined in the Project Approach and focus on those team members' qualifications specific to assigned task.

5) **Schedule** for completing the tasks identified in the project approach. Include potential constraints or challenges based on the tasks described above.

6) **Compensation** for services to complete the project – see Section III above for additional details. Assumptions used must be clearly stated and a total estimated cost must be included. Consultant must specify the estimated number of labor hours for each team member, billable rate and estimated direct expenses (e.g., travel), and total project cost to complete the each task/subtask detailed herein and Consultant's other recommended or optional tasks.

7) **Conflict of interest statement** addressing whether or not any potential conflict of interest exists between this project and other past or on-going projects, including any projects currently being conducted for the Program.

8) **Description of insurance** shall be provided with the proposal. Proof of insurance will be required before a contract is issued. Minimum insurance requirements are described in the attached Program's Consultant Contract (Attachment B).

9) **Acceptance of the terms and conditions** as outlined in the attached Program's Consultant Contract, or clear description of any exceptions to the terms and conditions.

Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

The GC will appoint a Proposal Selection Panel that will evaluate all proposals and select a Consultant based on the following principal considerations:

1. Understanding of the overall objectives of the project and approach to meeting those objectives and addressing critical project tasks and issues.

2. Qualifications and the relevant experience of the proposed project team members.

3. Clarity and content of the project schedule, scope, and budget.

Award Notice

After completing the evaluation of all proposals and, if deemed necessary, interviews, the Proposal Selection Panel will select a Consultant. That firm will negotiate with the EDO to establish a fair and equitable contract. If an agreement cannot be reached, a second firm will be invited to negotiate and so on. If the Program is unable to negotiate a mutually satisfactory contract with a Consultant, it may, at its sole discretion, cancel and reissue a new RFP.

Program Perspective

The Governance Committee of the Program has the sole discretion and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP and to cancel this solicitation if it is deemed in the best interest of the Program to do so. Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the Program to award a contract, or to pay Consultant's costs incurred either in the preparation of a response to his RFP or during negotiations, if any, of a contract for services. The Program also reserves the right to make amendments to this RFP by giving written notice to Consultants, and to request clarification, supplements, and additions to the information provided by a Consultant.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, Consultants understand and agree that any selection of a Consultant or any decision to reject any or all responses or to establish no contracts shall be at the sole discretion of the Program. To the extent authorized by law, the Consultant shall indemnify, save, and hold harmless the Nebraska Community Foundation, the states of Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska, the Department of the Interior, members of the Governance Committee, and the Executive Director's Office, their employees, employers, and agents, against any and all claims, damages, liability, and court awards including costs, expenses, and attorney fees incurred as a result of any act or omission by the Consultant or its employees, agents, sub-Consultants, or assignees pursuant to the terms of this project. Additionally, by submitting a proposal, Consultants agree that they waive any claim for the recovery of any costs or expenses incurred in preparing and submitting a proposal.

VII. AVAILABLE INFORMATION

The following pertinent Program-related documents can be accessed from the Program's website (*www.PlatteRiverProgram.org*):

- *Platte River Recovery Implementation Program: Final Program Document*. October 24, 2006.
- *Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, Attachment 3: Adaptive Management Plan*. October 24, 2006.