



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **Platte River Recovery Implementation Program 2015-2018 Interior Least Tern and Piping Plover Habitat Colonization and Productivity Study RFP**

#### **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

Office of the Executive Director  
4111 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 6  
Kearney, Nebraska 68845

**January ??, 2015**

1  
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## PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM Request for Proposals

**SUBJECT:** Interior Least Tern and Piping Plover Habitat Colonization and Productivity Study

**REQUEST DATE:** Month DD, YYYY

**SITE VISIT:** Month DD, YYYY

**CLOSING DATE:** Month DD, YYYY

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Dave Baasch  
Headwaters Corporation  
Wildlife Biologist  
4111 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 6  
Kearney, Nebraska 68845  
(308) 390-0456  
[baaschd@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:baaschd@headwaterscorp.com)

### **RECITALS**

The Governance Committee (GC) of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP or Program) submits this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from contractors to study reproductive success, habitat colonization, dispersal, and renesting of interior least terns (*Sternula antillarum*) and piping plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) nesting on sandpits and river-island habitat along the central Platte River between Lexington and Chapman, Nebraska. The study will be conducted for the Governance Committee and will be supervised by the Program's Executive Director's Office (ED Office). The study must address:

**i. Reproductive Success**

*Quantify abundance, distribution, reproductive success and reproductive habitat parameters in the study area.*

**ii. Colonization**

*Quantify colonization rate of nesting habitat by local vs. immigrant adults.*

**iii. Dispersal**

*Quantify dispersal of breeding adults between units of nesting habitat.*

**iv. Renesting**

*Quantify frequency, timing and location of renesting attempts by adults with failed nests or broods of chicks.*

**This RFP describes a program of study where field work will be conducted April through September 2015-2018. The schedule below and subsequent budget discussion in this RFP detail the expected course of work from the date the RFP is issued through Program acceptance of the Final Project Report in 2019. Under the final contract, annual written Notice to Proceed from the ED Office will be required before work begins. All work will be contingent on availability of Program funding.**



In responding to this RFP, the Governance Committee requests study proposals that include:

- 1) **Scope of work** for completing this project. Prospective contractors should provide a detailed outline of the type of work to be performed (data collection methods, analyses, reporting) to address the tasks identified in the Scope of Work for Contract Services for this RFP.
- 2) **List of relevant project experience** within the past five years, including name, location, and brief description of the projects; name, address, and phone number of the contracting officer for the client; and identification of key project participants and their tasks.
- 3) **Resumes** of all primary investigators and level of full-time employees, part-time employees, and student involvement (if any). Provide a table showing the tasks, responsibilities, and the number of hours each key participant is committing to this project.
- 4) **Schedule** for completing each task in the scope. The following are critical dates for the Governance Committee's preferred schedule for the project:

**January ??, 2015** – Pre-proposal conference call / site visit to central Nebraska

**February ??, 2015** – Proposal submission deadline

**Week of February ??, 2015** – Proposal review period

**Week of February ??, 2015** – Interviews/contractor selection

**April-August, Annually** – Nesting season / field data collection

**November 1, Annually** – Draft Annual Report and study budget for subsequent year

**December 15, Annually** – Final Annual Report

**2015-2018 AMP Reporting Session** – Presentation to Program Committees at annual meetings

**February 1, 2019** – Draft of Final Project Report to ED Office

**April 1, 2019** – Final Project Report to ED Office

Prospective contractors should address their capability to comply with the above schedule. If it is deemed that the above critical dates should be revised, prospective contractors should offer alternative schedules describing the logic and reasons for the alternative date(s).

- 5) **Detailed cost not to exceed proposal** to complete the project. The proposal should identify costs and hours allocated for each task in the scope of work and the total cost for the project. Hourly rates and reimbursable expenses for the proposing firm/individual and any sub-contractors must be attached to the detailed price proposal. The contract will be awarded on a Cost Not to Exceed basis. Governance Committee approval is needed before the contractor is authorized to begin implementation.
- 6) **Equipment list** sufficient to complete study. The contractor will be required to have Microsoft InfoPath for data entry.
- 7) **Conflicts 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 A**).

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

10) **Affirmatively state** the firm and all principals of the firm **ARE NOT** on the federal suspended and disbarred list, and provide the firm's Dun & Bradstreet (D-U-N-S) number.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The selected contractor will be retained by:

Nebraska Community Foundation  
PO Box 83107  
Lincoln, NE 68501

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, Consultant understands and agrees 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.

### **MANDATORY PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE CALL**

A **mandatory pre-proposal conference call and an optional site visit** for interested parties will be held on **Tuesday, January ??, 2015** in Kearney, Nebraska. The mandatory conference call will begin at **9:00 a.m.** and parties interested in the optional site visits can meet at the Executive Director's Office conference center (4111 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 6, Kearney, NE). Following the conference call, interested parties will tour select locations along the central Platte River.

**The mandatory conference call will be an opportunity for interested parties to ask and have answered questions prior to submitting their proposal. The optional site visits will provide critical information on scope, field logistics, and other details so interested parties are encouraged to attend. To facilitate logistical arrangements, please contact Dave Baasch at [baaschd@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:baaschd@headwaterscorp.com) by **Friday, January ??, 2015** to let him know if you will be**



participating in the conference call and how many in your party will be attending the optional site visits.

**POINT OF CONTACT & RFP DUE DATE**

Questions about this RFP should be e-mailed to Dave Baasch. Questions, responses, and any additional information related to the RFP will be available to all bidders on the Program website ([www.platteriverprogram.org/Contractors/Pages/OpenRFPs.aspx](http://www.platteriverprogram.org/Contractors/Pages/OpenRFPs.aspx)). One electronic copy of your proposal in PDF format must be submitted to Dave Baasch at [baaschd@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:baaschd@headwaterscorp.com) **no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on February ??, 2015.**



## SCOPE OF WORK FOR CONTRACT SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

The Program was initiated on January 1, 2007 between Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado and the Department of the Interior to address 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 reviews, directs, and provides oversight for activities undertaken during the Program. The Governance Committee 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 Governance Committee has named Dr. Jerry Kenny to serve as the Program ED. Dave Baasch, representing the Program ED’s Office, will be the primary contact for prospective contractors responding to this RFP.

### BACKGROUND

The Program retained the U.S. Geological Survey-Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center (USGS) to implement a 2-year Foraging Habits study (banding tern and plover adults and chicks) that concluded in 2010. At the conclusion of this study, the Program amended the study plan and entered into a 4-year agreement with the USGS to continue to assist with the implementation of the Program’s tern and plover monitoring protocol as well as to band and resight tern and plover adults and chicks on the central Platte River. The Program’s tern and plover monitoring protocol has been implemented since 2001. ED Office staff, Program participants, technicians and contractors have implemented the protocol since 2007.

### OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

In coordination with ED Office staff, the primary responsibilities of the contractor will be to: 1) provide six (6) research technicians to assist the Program’s Technical Point of Contact with implementation of the Program’s tern and plover monitoring protocol (**Attachment B**); 2) band tern and plover nesting adults and chicks with unique markers; 3) resight banded adults and chicks to assess reproductive success, habitat colonization, dispersal, and renesting within the Program Associated Habitats; 4) provide weekly updates of nesting activities that occur within the Program Associated Habitats; 5) compile paper and electronic copies of tern and plover data collected each year; and 6) produce Annual Reports documenting research and monitoring activities and submit this information to the ED Office annually. ED Office staff will assist the contractor with all river surveys between Lexington and Chapman, NE, will provide an airboat and operator for these surveys and will also participate in and coordinate all field-related activities during the nesting seasons.

Activities proposed for 2015-2018 include the collection of data outlined in the Program’s tern and plover monitoring protocol, band and resight tern and plover adults and chicks to document habitat colonization, dispersal, and success of tern and plover adults and chicks including those that were banded during current or previous years, and report annual findings to the Program, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. It is important to note, however, that annual work plans, including FY2015 work plans, will be reviewed by personnel from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Program’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and may change between the time annual budgets are developed and the subsequent nesting season. Budget implications related to changes in annual work plans will be negotiated and agreed upon by the contractor and the Program prior to the respective nesting season.



Recent central Platte River surveys by the Program indicate that most terns and piping plovers nest on managed sandpits, though nesting has occurred on riverine habitat and privately-owned, unmanaged sandpits since 2007. Though most recent nesting activity has occurred on sandpits, birds are regularly observed foraging in the river and river nesting is expected to increase as additional river-island habitat becomes available. Thus, the selected contractor will be required to work with the ED Office to review past information about tern and plover nesting locations and to develop and secure written access agreements with sandpit (requires mine safety training) and river land owners before implementing the study methodologies. In addition, the selected contractor will obtain necessary permits required to monitor and band terns and plovers on the central Platte River, will enter data outlined in the Program's tern and plover monitoring protocol into the Program's online database, will maintain an organized database to record banding and resighting data, and will be responsible for reporting band related information as may be required. The selected contractor will be responsible for providing sufficient manpower, and all equipment necessary to complete the study, including four-wheel-drive vehicles to access many of the areas terns and plovers nest. Housing will be negotiated annually and should be included as an incurred expense in all proposals.

### **LINK TO PRIORITY HYPOTHESES AND BIG QUESTIONS**

The purpose of the habitat colonization study is to help determine if habitat availability limits tern and plover populations, if terns and plovers select in-channel (islands) or off-channel (sandpits) nesting habitat, and if reproductive rates (i.e., fledge ratios) are similar on in-channel and off-channel nesting habitats on the central Platte River. The study and its inferences will be linked to testing several priority hypotheses in the Program's Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) and answering the Program's Big Questions related to terns and plovers provided below:

#### **PRIORITY HYPOTHESES**

- T1:** Additional bare sand habitat will increase the number of adult least terns
- P1:** Additional bare sand habitat will increase the number of adult piping plovers
- TP1:** There is an interaction of river and sandpit habitat.
- TP2:** The central Platte River may act as a source or sink for terns and plovers.

#### **BIG QUESTIONS**

- BQ6:** Does availability of suitable nesting habitat limit tern and plover use and reproductive success on the central Platte River?
- BQ7:** Are both suitable in-channel and off-channel nesting habitats required to maintain central Platte River tern and plover populations?
- BQ10:** How do Program management actions in the central Platte River cumulatively contribute to least tern, piping plover, and whooping crane recovery?

Many covariates influence tern and plover use and productivity on the central Platte River and data collected during 2015-2018, along with banding and other data collected in the past, will be utilized to assess the Program's Big Questions and determine effects and relationships that relate back to priority hypotheses outlined in the Program's Adaptive Management Plan (AMP), the two management strategies identified in the AMP, and overall AMP implementation. Information obtained through past and future banding efforts will allow us to better assess habitat colonization, obtain better estimates of adult and chick survival and overall reproductive success of these species, and will enable us to better discern how a portion of each population interacts and responds to availability of riverine and sandpit



habitats. Proposals should address the ability of the study results to help provide inferences as to the priority hypotheses and big questions and the ability of the proposed methodologies to isolate the effects of habitat type on productivity from other influences such as predation and human disturbance.

## **METHODOLOGIES**

The interior least tern is a federally- and state-listed endangered species; the piping plover is a federally- and state-listed threatened species. All bird handling will require a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened and Endangered Species permit and a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission scientific collecting permit. Submitted proposals should include detail about any such permits currently held and any past experience conducting research or monitoring on terns and plovers that included bird handling and the acquisition of required permits. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be reviewed by a Proposal Evaluation Team on behalf of the Program, as well as by personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to ensure the proposed study methods would be allowable and covered by permit requirements. As such, proposals submitted in response to this RFP should include a detailed explanation of the proposed survey and mark-recapture methods.

The contractor will be responsible for field surveys, data entry, data summary, basic analysis, and report preparation. The contractor shall furnish all personnel, equipment, materials, transportation, housing, and services to ensure the completion of the contract. Methods and draft reports will be reviewed by the ED Office and the TAC and the Final Project Report will likely be reviewed by the Program's Independent Science Advisory Committee and/or an independent science panel to ensure scientific integrity. Development of Program-approved peer reviewed publications of collected data and results, in coordination with the ED Office, is strongly encouraged.

## **STUDY AREA AND TIMING**

The area within 3.5 miles either side of the Platte River beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 283 and Interstate 80 near Lexington, Nebraska and extending eastward to Chapman, Nebraska. When side channels of the Platte River extend beyond the 3.5 mile area, a two-mile area is included around those channels. Typically, piping plovers arrive in the area and initiate nests by mid-April and least terns arrive and initiate nests by mid-May. Both species typically leave the area by mid-August. The study duration is scheduled for 2015-2018, but will be based on data needs, contractor performance, and available funding.

## **BUDGET**

Submitted proposals should provide a detailed budget for all field data collection, analysis, and reporting activities, 2015-2018. Annual study budgets will be subject to Governance Committee approval as a part of the overall annual fiscal year Program budget approval process.

## **AVAILABLE INFORMATION**

In addition to the Program Document, the AMP, and the Integrated Monitoring and Research Plan, the 2012-2013 Tern and Plover Monitoring and Research Report and several additional sources of information are available to assist potential contractors in responding to this RFP. All of these documents can be accessed either from the Program Web site ([www.PlatteRiverProgram.org](http://www.PlatteRiverProgram.org)) or by contacting Dave Baasch ([baaschd@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:baaschd@headwaterscorp.com)).



## DELIVERABLES

The contractor will provide a weekly e-mail report during the nesting season and monthly e-mail reports during the remainder of the year regarding work progress to the ED Office. The contractor will provide a presentation at the Program's AMP Reporting Session after completion of each study season. Additional study deliverables include, but are not limited to:

- Copies of all annual state and federal filings required in accordance with necessary permits.
  - Raw data sheets, maps, and/or UTM locations documenting all bird captures, relocations, nest and brood sighting information, habitat and productivity metrics collected, etc.
  - Photographs of study implementation, birds, nests, banding activity, and habitat conditions.
  - Data entered into the Program's online database at least weekly and reported in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Program's AMP and the Program's Database Management System.
  - A Draft Annual Report in Microsoft Word format based on results from each nesting season describing field methods, collected data, and data summary/analysis will be submitted to the ED Office and TAC for review and comment by 1 November each year.
  - Final Annual Reports, in PDF format that address comments from the ED Office and the TAC, will be provided to the ED Office two (2) weeks after written and/or verbal comments are provided to the contractor. Raw data sheets, photos, and a QA/QC'd final version of the Program's online database are also required with the submission of the Final Annual Reports.
  - A draft of the Final Project Report, focused on results from the 2015-2018 nesting seasons, but incorporating all data collected by the Program since 2014, that includes field methodologies, collected data, and data analyses and summaries will be submitted to the ED Office and TAC for review and comment by **1 February, 2019**.
  - The Final Project Report, in PDF format that incorporates comments from the ED Office, TAC, and any other Program reviews, will be provided to the ED Office four (4) weeks after written and/or verbal comments are provided to the contractor.
- The Final Project Report will likely be reviewed by the Program's Independent Science Advisory Committee and/or an independent science panel to ensure scientific integrity.*
- Development of Program-approved peer reviewed publications is strongly encouraged and if conducted will be done in coordination with and approved by the ED Office.



## **Attachment A**

### **Standard Consultant Contract**

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## **Attachment B**

### **Program Interior Least Tern and Piping Plover Monitoring Protocol**