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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

STRATEGIC CONSULTATION SERVICES

Background and Statement of Work:

“Building the Southeast Landscape of the Future” is an opportunity for Tribal, federal, and state natural resource leaders and leaders in collaborative conservation initiatives to come together to define a shared vision for the Southeastern landscape of the future. This Initiative will enable participants to connect regionally to build a stronger collective voice and community, convene with peers to learn from each other, build capacity to address shared challenges, and catalyze actions that strengthen future collaboration and enhance conservation success. An initial Summit to bring together partners from across the natural resources community in the South to determine a path forward was held February 27-29, 2024, in New Orleans, LA with a follow-up Symposium held in December 2024 at the annual Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) meeting to further focus collective efforts.

The SE Landscape of the Future Initiative is a developing collaborative that includes diverse representation from across the Southeast natural resource community. This Initiative is focused on working towards a shared vision for collective action across the landscape. Reaching that shared vision will require interactive engagement between natural resource community leaders. A primary focus of the Initiative is on building relationships. Then, we aim to co-develop, with community leaders, the knowledge to determine how to take action collectively. The first meeting of this Initiative included representatives from the USFS Regional Leadership Team, the USFWS R4 Leadership Team, the State Foresters and State Wildlife Directors from the southern 15 states, the NRCS State Conservationists, Tribal Leaders, other federal and state government agencies, and the Southern Research Station Management Council.

There were three major themes at the initial Summit:

- Creating success at scale: What does “landscape of the future” mean? How do different landscape scales influence success -- from the local to the regional level? Beyond geographic and ecological factors, what else do we include in a landscape?
- Collaboration is hard. Are we ready?: Collaborations stall or fail when involved partners don’t pause to assess their readiness. Attending this meeting does not assume that you will participate in the future. Before anyone opts in or opts out, we will explore what collaboration means within “building the SE landscape of the future” and what issues can most benefit from collaboration. Finally, what kind of leadership is needed to continue the conversation, where are they, and what do they need to make the commitment?

- Inviting people to the table: Conservation cannot succeed without collaboration. It’s an invisible hand that guides the work that we do. We recognize that there are gaps in who we are collaborating with and how we are engaging them. But –to– date, we haven’t found a framework that helps us invite new collaborators in. There are two regional initiatives in place that will help us identify the strengths and weaknesses in our networks. We can use and contribute to these initiatives to help broaden our stakeholder group in a meaningful way.

The landscape of the Southeastern U.S. will not be determined by the natural resources community alone. Other sectors of society will influence our landscape including transportation, energy, development, etc. The SE Summit began to identify those from the natural resources community who will champion conservation and restoration during additional engagements in subsequent years. In FY25 another summit will be held which broadens the table to those additional sectors and, again in FY26, a final Summit will be held to identify the most critical focus areas for continued collaborative efforts.

The hoped-for end result is that a cross-sector team identified through these three Summits will develop a long-term, cross-boundary, cross-jurisdictional, cross-sector strategic plan that identifies the most critical strategic investments the South can make to ensure human communities are healthy and resilient. Additionally, this plan would include a spatial analysis and map that identifies the areas of highest leverage across the landscape and across sectors both now and in the future.

This effort will not look like anything that is being done because it hasn’t been done before! Successfully developing a long-term, multi-sector strategic plan and prioritized spatial product will require several experts outside of the natural resources community to guide the efforts and manage the many collaborative projects that result from the discussions and work groups from the series of summits.

I. Project Overview

Scope of Work - Strategic Consultation for Southeast Landscape of the Future Initiative 2025

We are looking for an experienced professional(s) to provide Strategic Consultation, working with a planning team of regional natural resource leaders, to plan a cross-organization, cross-boundary Summit focused on collaborative solutions to systems-level natural resource management challenges. Expected Summit outcomes include engaging leadership to define the landscape of the future and envision collaborative processes to achieve that vision. Specific duties and responsibilities include:

Meeting Planning/Preparation

- Provide consultation to the SE Summit Planning Team on best practices and approaches for collaborative group process management.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025
- Provide consultation, design assistance, and review of any prework or meeting materials necessary to develop and meet the objectives of the FY25 SE Landscape of the Future meeting.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025
- Coordinate all planning team activities and facilitate decision-making for various engagements and partner meetings.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025

- Design agenda and facilitate periodic extended planning team strategy development sessions.
Estimated delivery – once per quarter through December 2025

Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Symposium Follow-up

- Provide consultation and recommendations to the Planning Team for a follow-up strategy based on outcomes from the December 2024 Symposium.
Estimated delivery – February 2025
- Follow up with Symposium participants to clarify input captured during break-out conversations and discuss emergent ideas presented in response to discussion questions.
Estimated delivery – February 2025
- Develop report highlighting outcomes from the Symposium for distribution to the Southeast Landscape of the Future Initiative (SELF) planning team.
Estimated delivery – February 2025

SELF Social Network Analysis

- Provide oversight for contractors performing Southern regional social network analysis. This will involve periodic progress updates, answering questions for scientists analyzing network data, reviewing products for relevancy and accuracy, and facilitating discussions with the SELF planning team and network scientists
Estimated delivery – March 2025
- Using results from the network analysis, develop a natural resource community relationship management strategy in addition to recruiting additional representatives for the backbone organization and planning team as well as the strategic advisory council.
Estimated delivery – March 2025

Relationship Building and Partnership Development

- Leverage existing relationships with the Tribal, State, and Federal natural resources leadership community in the Southern 15 states and 2 territories to maximize awareness of the Southeast Landscape of the Future effort and encourage buy-in to a collective impact strategy.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025
- Answer inquiries surrounding opportunities for collaboration with existing partnerships in the Southern Region of the U.S., including with Tribal, State, and Federal organizations, issue-specific conservation and restoration partnerships, and national partnerships with a presence in the Southern U.S.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025
- Coordinate communication with natural resources leaders in Tribal, State, and Federal government organizations across the Southern 13 states.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025
- Develop expertise and understanding related to existing relationships within the natural resources community in the South using Social Network Analysis. Provide recommendations for strategies to further develop important relationships across the community, with other important communities that will impact the landscape over time, and take the lead in building those relationships and fostering connections among organizations.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through the end of December 2025

- Facilitate the development of an 18-month plan of work for the SELFI initiative.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through end of December 2025

Additional Duties

- Attend conferences and meetings to provide professional presentations related to the SELFI initiative and to create, maintain, and grow the SELFI network within the natural resources community and in other communities that will impact the landscape of the future in the Southern U.S.
Estimated delivery – as needed and ongoing through the end of December 2025
- Begin planning, coordination, and agenda development for the SE Landscape of the Future Summits in 2025 and 2026.
Estimated delivery – ongoing through December 2025

Schedule

The experienced Strategic Consultant will need to work quickly to achieve deliverables on time as needed. The period of performance is January 8 through December 30, 2025. The schedule of the outlined services will depend upon the availability of the SE Landscape of the Future initiative planning and advisory committees.

Information Requested

If interested in submitting a bid for this project, please submit a proposal for the above statement of work by providing:

- Company Information
- Portfolio
- Methodology
- Scope
- Timeline
- Cost
- Capacity for this project
- Experience in similar projects

Specific requirements are detailed below.

II. Required Components

Company Information

Please provide the company name and contact information, organizational history, lead consultant profiles, and a CV or resume for each team member.

Portfolio

Please provide a brief explanation of previous experience with similar projects (with supporting documentation) and at least three client references.

Methodology

Please provide a detailed statement on the intended approach to completing the project.

Scope

Please provide an initial scope of work intended to complete the project.

Contractor Qualifications

- I. Past Experience – Please briefly explain previous work experience with land management agencies.
- II. References – Please provide three professional references that can speak to past performance.

Timeline

Please provide a detailed timeline for completing the project pursuant to the project overview in this proposal request.

Budget

Please provide a detailed project budget estimate. The budget estimate must include all anticipated charges, including time, travel, lodging, and per diem. The budget should represent the total sum to be billed. Invoices shall be issued monthly for services rendered NET 60 once approved by the National Tribal Geographic Information Support Center (NTGISC) and the USDA Forest Service.

III. SUBMISSION, EVALUATION, AND CONTACTS

Contractor Selection Process

This is a request for proposals only, and the bids furnished are not offers from the SE Summit Initiative Planning Committee. This request does not commit the SE Summit Initiative Committee, NTGISC, or the USDA Forest Service to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of the proposal or to contract for supplies or services.

NTGISC will use the Evaluation Factors below to review each submitted bid. Based on the outcomes of that selection process, NTGISC will notify unsuccessful bidders and select a consultant by January 6, 2025. NTGISC will prepare a separate contract document to detail the agreement with the selected consultant.

Evaluation Factors and Relative Importance

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of submitted proposals.

- Price/cost
- Timing of when the contractor can begin and/or finish the project
- Past performance, references
- Methodology/approach
- Technical proposal / proposed approach to project

Point of Contact

Please submit any questions about the project in writing via email to the Point of Contact.

Ed Smith, Project Manager

National Tribal Geographic Information Support Center

esmith@tribalgis.com

Bid Submission

Submit bids via email to esmith@tribalgis.com by 4:00 PM Central on January 3, 2025.