



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 17300  
FORT WORTH, TX 76102-0300

December 7, 2023

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST  
W9126G-24-2-SOI-0886**

*Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Regions:*  
Californian/Desert Southwest

**Project Title:** *Natural Resources Support – Least Tern / Snowy Plover Monitoring, Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB)*

A cooperative agreement is being offered ONLY to members of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Program Region(s) identified above. Award will be made upon mutual agreement and acceptance of the terms and conditions contained in the request for proposal and the of the recipient's CESU Master Agreement. Note the established CESU Program indirect rate is 17.5%.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential organizations for this project. Approximately **\$415,000.00** is expected to be available to support this project for the **base period**. Additional funding may be available to the successful recipient for optional tasks and/or follow on work in subsequent years.

**NOTE:** This project will be awarded under the authority of 16 USC 670c-1, **Sikes Act**: For projects for the implementation and enforcement of integrated natural resources management plans, priority shall be given to award to Federal and State agencies having responsibility for the conservation or management of fish or wildlife.

**Period of Performance.** The base period of agreement will extend 15 months from date of award. There may be up to six 12-month follow-on periods based on availability of funding.

**Description of Anticipated Work:** See attached Statement of Objectives

**NOTE:** At this time we are only requesting that you demonstrate available qualifications and capability for performing similar or same type of work by submitting a Statement of Interest. A full proposal and budget are NOT requested at this time.

**Preparation of your Statement of Interest:** Provide the following (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced, 12 pt. font):

1. Name, Organization, Cage Code, Unique Entity ID, and Contact Information (Email)
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
  - a. Biographical sketch of the Principal Investigator, to include specific experience and capabilities in areas related to this project's requirements
  - b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects
  - c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise

d. Brief description of other capabilities to successfully complete the project: (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.)

**Submission of Your Statement of Interest**

1. Statements of Interest are due by 5:00 P.M., Central Time, on **6 January 2024**.
2. Submit your Statement of Interest via e-mail attachments or direct questions to:  
Maria Lopez  
Grants Specialist  
USACE, Fort Worth District  
Email: **Maria.E.Lopez@usace.army.mil**  
Office: 817-886-1881  
David Leptien  
Project Manager  
USACE, Fort Worth District  
Email: **David.B.Leptien@usace.army.mil**  
Office: 402-889-5570

**Review of Statements Received:** All statements of interest received from a member of the CESU Region(s) identified above will be evaluated by a board comprised of one or more people at the receiving installation or activity, who will determine which statement(s) best meet the program objectives: offer the most highly qualified Principal Investigator, have the most relevant experience and the highest capability to successfully meet the program objectives. Submitters whose statements are determined to best meet the program objectives will be invited to submit a full proposal.

**Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest:** RSOI's are required to be posted on [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) for 30 days prior to the Government making a decision and requesting full proposals.

Thank you for your interest in our Cooperative Agreements Program.

*Paige E. Poorman*  
Paige E. Poorman  
Grants Officer

Attachment: Statement of Objectives

**STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**  
for  
**LEAST TERN/SNOWY PLOVER MONITORING AND SEABIRD SURVEYS**  
for  
**NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM,**  
**VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE (VSFB), CALIFORNIA**

**NOVEMBER 20, 2023**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 The Vandenberg SFB (VSFB) environmental program ensures military mission activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and policies with cooperation and assistance from the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's (AFCEC) Installation Support Section (ISS). Article I B of the master agreement states the objectives of the CESU are to: provide research, technical assistance and education to federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their potential partners; develop a program of research, technical assistance and education that involves the biological, physical, social sciences needed to address resource issues and interdisciplinary problem-solving at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context at the local, regional, and national level; and place special emphasis on the working collaboration among federal agencies and universities and their related partner institutions.

1.2 This work may require full-time onsite support person(s) located at Vandenberg SFB. This work also requires off-site support for less than full-time projects that are seasonal in nature and require limited field work at VSFB. The work will involve natural resource management activities, field surveys, reporting, coordination, and travel to and from VSFB for off-site personnel, attendance at meetings, project management, and GIS data management.

**2.0 AUTHORITY**

Authority to enter into a Cooperative Agreements (CA) for the work: Section 670c-1, Title 16 United States Code, Sikes Act.

2.1. In agreement with the above stated goals, the NFE agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, in part, the VSFB responsibilities pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 et seq.), the Sikes Act Improvement Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 1361 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and applicable implementing regulations, such as Air Force Manual 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*; Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), all CESU projects must carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation, instead of acquiring goods or services for the exclusive direct benefit of the United States Government. Examples of carrying out a public purpose may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Project results are made available to a wide audience (including nonfederal entities)
- Project results/outputs add to the scientific literature/knowledge base, with applicability and utility beyond the scope of the project footprint/study area
- Academic and other nonfederal partner institutions (and their personnel) gain professional experience, increase knowledge, and develop skills and abilities
- Students benefit from direct interaction with federal scientists, program and technical staff, and field unit managers

2.2. In accordance with section 6305 – Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), substantial involvement is expected between the Department of Defense and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The DoD agrees to participate at a national level in support of the CESU program as accepted in the Master MOU for the establishment and continuation of the CESU program Article II 1-4 and Article VI 1-7.

The installation further (hence DoD) agrees to provide substantial involvement as directed under the appropriate master agreement to include, but not limited to, the following:

- VSFB and AFCEC ISS are involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing.
- VSFB and AFCEC ISS are active participates and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, helps train or select project staff or trainees.
- VSFB and AFCEC ISS incurs in-kind or direct expenditures in carrying out the activities specified in the project agreement. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Providing staff time to work on the project

### 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

Conduct tasks in accordance with this Statement of Objectives, as prioritized by AFCEC ISS PM and Base NRM. Only work aligned with the original AF ACES programming and approved by the USACE GOTR should be completed as part of this support.

Travel, Coordination, and Project Management for all tasks is as follows:

**Travel:** Provide transportation and fuel for all NFE staff to get to and from all field sites. Retain current proof of insurance, current registration, and REAL ID-compliant driver’s licenses for all modes of transportation.

**Coordination:** Coordinate concurrently with the Base NRM, AFCEC ISS, and USACE PM. All work shall be approved by the AFCEC and be consistent with the Project Schedule & Work Plan (Deliverable 9.3) approved by the Base NRM. Schedule changes can be made; trade-off decisions will be jointly made by the USACE-PM, Base NRM and AFCEC ISS and align with the Sikes Act compliant INRMP and original budget programming. Any changes in scope or

cost must be approved by the USACE Grants Officer. All coordination with state and federal regulators will be by the Base NRM or AFCEC ISS only.

### **3.1 TASK 1: LEAST TERN / SNOWY PLOVER MONITORING**

The NFE will conduct species monitoring activities at VSFB. Conduct population and breeding surveys for federally threatened western snowy plover and endangered California least tern. Field work shall be conducted through the nesting season (March 1 through September 30). The snowy plover population on base shall be estimated from four base wide window surveys to be conducted bi-weekly between May and June. Areas where snowy plover breeding activity is observed or breeding is suspected shall be monitored a minimum of three times weekly.

- Maintain the cell phone application-based system for data collection and sharing with team members, and that can also share data with other Government and cooperator personnel responsible for or performing plover and tern management.
- Accomplish the required breeding season monitoring tasks in Biological Opinion 8-8-12-F-11 R (Attachment 1) using established methods and procedures outlined within the Western Snowy Plover Monitoring Protocol (Attachment 2) approved by USFWS to monitor adult population, nest fate, nest hatch success, causes of nest failure, and fledging estimates by banding with approved USFWS Migratory Bird Office color- band combinations.
- Report violations (in writing) of beach rules to 30 SFS/SFOW and 30 CES/CEIEA and provide assistance for follow-up law enforcement investigations if needed. A complete list of prohibited beach activities is provided in the biological opinion (Attachment 1). Please refer to the biological opinion for reporting terms.
- Erect symbolic exclosures to protect snowy plover nests located within areas open to recreational use in consultation with 30 CES/CEIEA. Symbolic exclosures shall consist of nylon rope and t-posts.
- Conduct snowy plover winter population survey in coordination with the statewide winter window survey. Specific survey dates are coordinated with the "Western snowy plover Range-wide coordinator" and are only available a few weeks before surveys actually occur. However, they generally occur in the December to January timeframe.
- Accomplish California least tern breeding season monitoring. Surveys will be conducted at the Purisima Point colony five days a week starting 15 April and continue until the last least tern fledges and disperses; three days will be spent surveying from a location off-colony and two days will be spent on the colony itself to minimize overall disturbance to nesting. Surveys will collect data on the estimated number of breeding pairs, adults depredated and cause, total nests, clutch size, total nests depredated, nests abandoned before hatch date, nests incubated past hatch date, nests hatched but had at least one non-viable egg, nest hatched all eggs, total eggs, confirmed hatch, assumed hatch, non-viable eggs, depredated eggs, total chicks, hatching success, depredated chicks and cause, total fledglings, fledgling success, depredated fledglings and cause, % total eggs fledged, fledglings per adult pair, total adult colony attendance, and evidence of avian and mammalian predators.
- Sites historically used by California least terns, including San Antonio Creek North, San Antonio Creek South, Beach 2, Purisima Point South, and the Santa Ynez River Estuary

should be visited once per week from 25 April (earliest arrival date) to 30 June (latest egg laying date). Communication is required with western snowy plover monitors to avoid impacts to nesting western snowy plovers; escorts may be necessary to avoid snowy plover impacts. Escorts are persons possessing USFWS 10(a)(1)(A) research permits that allow them to escort non-permitted personnel into plover nesting areas. Tern monitors are expected to independently coordinate with plover monitors without VSFb POC involvement. If least tern presence and breeding behavior is observed at locations other than the fenced Purisima Point colony, observations should be immediately reported to the Vandenberg SFB POC.

- Conduct Pre-season maintenance on least tern chick shelters (between 30 and 50), prior to the arrival of least terns to VSFb. If shelters are in disrepair, they should be replaced. Shelter model/design should be approved by the Vandenberg SFB POC in advance. This task will require very minimal personnel time, shelters consist of wooden A-frames.
- Escort predator management personnel into nesting areas when required by predator threats.
- Check predator traps during surveys, as needed.
- Complete data analysis and reporting for the nesting season, including comparison of population and nest success with prior years.

### **3.1.2: TASK SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS**

The NFE shall provide Western snowy plover field biologists that hold USFWS 10(a)(1)(A) permits to monitor Western snowy plovers, float eggs to determine hatch date, and band chicks. The NFE shall provide California least tern field biologists that hold USFWS 10(a)(1)(A) permits to monitor California least terns. Besides possessing the necessary permit(s) monitors must be capable of being approved by the USFWS.

### **3.1.3: TASK SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES**

- Bi-Monthly Reports: Attend bi-monthly meetings at VSFb to review progress on current population and breeding status, predator management accomplishments, and beach violations between March 1 and September 30.
- Submit a draft report on monitoring activities within 45 days of end of field season (approximately 15 November), and final nesting season report NLT 15 January following receipt of, comments from VSFb POC.
- All raw data and Geographic Information System (GIS) files shall be submitted to Vandenberg as raw electronic data. GPS and GIS data must conform to the current version of the 30th Space Wing GeoBase Spatial Data Submittal Standards (most recent is dated 1 April 2021).

## **3.2 TASK 2: SEABIRD SURVEYS**

The NFE will Monitor the population dynamics, breeding biology, and foraging ecology of seabirds along the coastal margins of VSFB during the critical period for seabird activity and breeding. Seabird species typically encountered include: Pigeon Guillemots, Pelagic Cormorants, Brandt's Cormorants, Black Oystercatchers, and various gull species. Surveys of south base shall include Point Michelle/North Honda, South Honda, Point Pedernales, North Arguello Rocks, Point Arguello, and North and South Rocky Points (North Vantage Cove to the Boathouse Dock). Surveys of north base shall include Point Sal, Lion's Head, and Purisima Area (Purisima Point, Purisima Point South, Pockets Cove and Lompoc Landing).

- Conduct day and night roosting surveys of brown pelicans during the winter. Use of data collection methods consistent with historical methods will be useful in order to make comparisons across years.
- Identify new nesting sites for seabird species, especially the Western Gull, focusing on areas occupied by ESA-listed species.
- Collect and analyze the diet of Western Gulls nesting at the Purisima Point Colony and at or near Western Snowy Plover nesting beaches.

### **3.2.1: TASK SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Primary field technician should have at least two (2) years' experience conducting avian nest monitoring surveys, preferably with seabirds, and should have accurate bird identification, data recording, and visual mapping skills as some breeding sites contain large multi-species colonies.

### **3.2.3: TASK SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES**

- Meeting Notes. Submit meeting notes via email within 7 days for any meetings with Government officials regarding performance of work under this task.
- Draft and Final Annual Seabird Report. The report shall include a complete synopsis of the population dynamics and reproductive performance of all seabirds recorded on VSFB, a comparison of all data with previous years (2001 to present), and the causes of changes if known, with a focus on military activity impacts. Prior year reports will be provided upon request. The cooperator shall provide management recommendations at the end of the report. The cooperator shall provide updated master data files for all data to include GIS coordinates and a data dictionary.
- Draft and Final GIS Files: should follow VSFB GIO standards, include metadata, update existing files, and properly document all project activities with relevant GIS information.

## **4.0 QUALIFICATIONS**

Project Managers and Field Managers require advanced experience in appropriate survey protocols.

## **5.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY**

- The government will provide maps, INRMP, master plans and previous reports relevant to this support.
- Government furnished materials or property is governed by 2 C.F.R. Part 200.312 which states that a) Title to federally-owned property remains vested in the Federal government. The non-Federal entity must submit annually an inventory listing of federally-owned property in its custody to the Federal awarding agency. Upon completion of the Federal award or when the property is no longer needed, the non-Federal entity must return the property to the Federal awarding agency for further Federal agency utilization.

## **6.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE (PoP)**

Base Period: 15-months from date of award, 12-months technical support and 3-months administrative for onboarding/preparation.

## **7.0 OPTIONS**

Option Periods: 6 optional periods of 12 months each are anticipated based on funding availability.

## **8.0 COORDINATION**

USACE POC  
David Leptien, PM, 402-889-5570  
[david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil](mailto:david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil)

AFCEC POC  
Daniel Garcia, Natural Resources, AFCEC/CZOW, 805-606-9834  
[daniel.garcia.23@us.af.mil](mailto:daniel.garcia.23@us.af.mil)

## **9.0 DELIVERABLES**

**9.1 Progress Reports** - One (1) typed letter report describing progress on the project throughout the period of performance. The report shall be due as of the last day of the third month (quarterly) and shall be transmitted via electronic mail no later than the 10th calendar day following the end of the reporting period. Invoices for partial payment shall be submitted to coincide with receipt of the quarterly progress reports. No partial payment will be approved unless the government has received all progress reports which are due.

**9.2 Monthly Progress Agenda, Reports & Meeting Minutes** - One (1) typed report describing progress on the project. The report shall be due two days before the scheduled monthly meeting and shall be transmitted via electronic mail. Meeting minutes are due within 2 days following the monthly meeting to include a summary of action items.

**9.3 Project Schedule and Work Plan** – Within 30-days of award, provide an electronic copy of a work plan and project schedule in table format. Must be concise yet



communicate what will be performed and when. The schedule should break down the work into sections with associated timetables. Document shall be reviewed at the monthly meetings to ensure we are on schedule.

- 9.4 Annual Inventory Federally Owned – Federally Owned Property** - an annual inventory listing Federal property (to include description of the property, a serial number or other identification number) that is in the custody of the recipient and available at the request of the government.
- 9.5 Annual Inventory Acquired** – Acquired Property purchased with funding from award - property records must be maintained that includes description of the property, serial number or other identification number, source of funding, who holds title, acquisition date, cost of property, percentage of Federal participation in project costs, location, use and condition of property, and ultimate disposition including date of disposal and sale price. A physical inventory must be taken and results reconciled. Copies of the inventory to be sent annually following each year of support to USACE – SWF and AFCEC ISS.
- 9.6 Draft Final Project Reports**– See each task for task specific reports. Electronic copies of draft final reports should be submitted no later than one month before end of the project. All draft deliverables shall be reviewed by an experienced editor to fix any editorial issues. At a minimum, the reports shall contain an executive summary, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and recommendations section. Each report shall summarize work accomplished for the Task. VSFB and AFCEC Natural Resource staff will review and provide comments within 21 calendar days after receipt.
- 9.7 Final Project Reports** – See each task for task specific reports. All final deliverables shall be reviewed by an experienced editor to fix any editorial issues. Electronic copies of the final report, incorporating VSFB and AFCEC comments on the draft shall be submitted no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the VSFB and AFCEC comments.
- 9.8 GIS Deliverables** – All tasks shall have at least one and likely several GIS deliverables that include all data layers used to create any and all maps within submitted deliverables. GIS deliverables shall include all new data collected throughout the course of the project. Draft GIS deliverables shall be submitted with draft reports that include their data, with final reports and GIS info submitted together. GIS deliverables must follow Air Force geospatial data standards, an adaptation of the SDSFIE 3.1x data model, as described in the data layer specifications (DLS)). Deliverables must comply with the latest version which are updated annually. All metadata associated with data layers must meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM) revised in June 1998. Metadata must also include all content stated in the metadata section of each layer's DLS, which includes layer specific verbiage for attribute fields and definitions.
- 9.9 Avian Knowledge Network Deliverables** - The NFE will enter relevant data resulting from work under this agreement directly into the AKN following procedures provided in DoD AKN Guidance: AKN Data Access, Entry, and Analysis.

**10.0** This cooperative agreement may be administered through a CESU only upon mutual agreement and official authorization by both parties of the acceptance of the application of the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%).

Any resulting cooperative agreement will be subject to and recipient/cooperator shall comply with 2 CFR 200.313 "Equipment", 200.314 "Supplies", and 200.315 "Intangible Property" which includes use of research data.