



Statement of Work for Plant Ecologist

Summary

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is identifying ways to support Tribes in addressing ecological restoration issues on Tribal Trust and Treaty lands, including the implementation of the National Seed Strategy (NSS) for Rehabilitation and Restoration, that seeks to increase the amount of native and locally adapted seed and plants available for building resilient landscapes. The incumbent will partner with the BIA, during their efforts to evaluate and rehabilitate coastal ecosystems following relocation and related infrastructure demolition, extreme coastal erosion, and similar activities. The role of the incumbent will focus primarily on assisting Tribes that have been awarded: 1) White House Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation (CDR) project funding, 2) The Tribal Climate Resilience's Annual Awards Program project funding, or 3) have not been awarded but that are encountering climate change impacts to the extent that the Tribe is considering site relocation (i.e. site expansion, climigration, and/or managed retreat) or protect-in-place options. The position will target erosion mitigation using native grass seed and plant materials and other similar protective measures for affected areas, including those where the community is living and/or that are moving away from, to maintain for subsistence purposes or other use as decided by each tribe. The incumbent will provide this technical assistance during and/or after families/infrastructure has been moved from the affected areas. The position may require coordination with relevant federal and state agencies, Tribal communities, and the Plant Conservation Alliance (PCA), as well as other relevant networks and working groups.

Funding for this position is provided to the Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU) member via the BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience (TCR). It is intended as a fully funded position reporting directly to the CESU for at least one year and supports implementation of the NSS goals. It will require access to ecologically relevant lands and habitats, which may be managed by Tribal Trusts, via Treaties, co-managed, as well as public and private land conservation sites. At a minimum, it will require collaborative efforts between the CESU and TCR, and may also include collaborative efforts with other tribes (Native American and Alaska Native), federal agencies, state agencies, and relevant private parties. The work performed supports tribal lands and land use, and addresses NSS goals to help guide ecological restoration in areas in particular affected by climate induced extreme erosion.

Services will include, but are not limited to:

1. The position will collaborate with BIA, the PCA, Tribal Nations, and other partners as appropriate to summarize project activities and identify information necessary for the assessment of native seed and plant needs. This will include participation in monthly coordination meetings between the incumbent and TCR, along with other potential partnerships that arise related to NSS and/or other Tribally focused Plant Ecologist networks or working groups.
2. By the first month, develop a work plan and timeline of deliverables in collaboration with the CESU member (employer) and BIA that will guide the work throughout the period of performance.



3. Stay up to date on the NSS and related research, including restoration efforts throughout the United States, and in collaboration with the PCA, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, the Society for Ecological Restoration, and other similar working groups or relevant committees.
4. The primary purpose of this project will be to provide one-on-one technical expertise and support to Tribal managers on complex ecological restoration issues with consideration to climate change as it relates to dynamic shifts in species composition and stability of ecological sites.
 - a. Provide dynamic vision, direction, and specific technical expertise to Tribes with an emphasis on adaptive restoration and plant ecology to access ecological restoration-based resources available to Tribes.
 - b. Provide technical assistance that supports ecological restoration efforts with Tribes, partners, landowners, and regulators, including native plant materials development and use, consistent with implementation of the National Seed Strategy. This may include virtual meetings and webinars, or site visits across Indian Country and Alaska Native villages toward ecological and/or habitat restoration activities on Tribal Trust, Treaty and co-managed lands.
 - c. Assist Tribes in building their capacity for developing and/or gaining access to consistent and reliable supplies of locally adapted seed and plant materials, whether commercially available or through seed collection efforts.
 - d. Provide Tribes access to training and materials available to them for best management practices (BMP) and approaches to ecological and habitat restoration, such as the Bureau of Land Management's "Seeds of Success" native seed collection program.
5. Develop and provide a Final Report (further, "Report") of project activities, including:
 - a. An assessment as a component of the Report, on Tribal native plant needs to mitigate erosion in high-risk areas and/or areas that communities are relocating away from, with potential challenges in accessing native plant materials and native seeds. Explain how the assessment methods include respect and consideration for tribal data sovereignty, including an informed consent process for collaboration with Tribal Nations. The assessment will include an evaluation of coastal sites as appropriate and will be reviewed by appropriate Tribes, State, or Federal agencies. Examples of assessments which may be deemed necessary by the incumbent:
 - i. Coastal vegetation assessments where erosion is a major issue,
 - ii. Ecological Integrity Assessments,
 - iii. Phase I Environmental Site Assessments,
 - iv. Site characterization work plans,
 - v. Sampling and data collection with tribal supervision and/or collaboration,
 - vi. Other assessments
 - b. A Communication Plan including all written and verbal communication and outreach materials related to this effort, and development of a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) form for all tribes who contribute information to any sections of the report. The Communication Plan should also discuss the extent of disclosure of specific Indigenous Knowledge (IK) information: any information



shared should be of FPIC with any potential partners to ensure ethical research sharing throughout the project.

- i. Information on FPIC and protections: <https://climatetkw.wordpress.com/>
 - ii. November 2022 Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQIK-Guidance.pdf>
 - c. Maps and/or aerial photos of project activities.
 - d. Any post-treatment plans developed for tribes, if applicable.
 - e. Recommendations based on findings to inform future program planning and implementations.
6. Provide semi-annual reporting to the BIA via the GrantSolutions (GS) web portal, and on an as-needed basis.
 7. Perform additional duties, as may be reasonably required.