



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

May 17, 2024

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST
W9126G-24-2-SOI-2890**

*Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Regions: **Great Rivers / Great Plains CESU Regions***

Project Title: Bat Surveys at Belle Fountain and 15-Mile Bayou for USACE-Memphis District

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 **\$70,000 to \$140,000** is expected to be available to support this project for the **base period**.

Period of Performance. The base period of the agreement will extend 6 months from date of award.

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 2:00 P.M., Central Time, on **17 June 2024**.
2. Submit your Statement of Interest via e-mail attachments or direct questions to:

Nicholas Aprea
Grants Specialist
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: Nicholas.A.Aprea@usace.army.mil
Office: 817-886-1925

Brian Hesford
Project Manager
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: brian.d.hesford@usace.army.mil
Office: 402-200-8268

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: RSOL's are required to be posted on www.Grants.gov for 30 days prior to the Government 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
Threatened And Endangered Species (Bats) Surveys Prior To Channel Cleanout Project At
St. Francis Basin, Belle Fountain Area, Ditches 1 And 2, Pemiscot, Missouri And Fifteen
Mile Bayou, Edmonson, Arkansas
for
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Mississippi Valley, Memphis District, Environmental
Compliance

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Mississippi Valley Memphis District (USACE-MVM) environmental program, part of the Regional Planning and Environment Division, South (RPEDS), ensures U.S. Army civil works activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- 1.2 The purpose of this project is to determine the presence or likely absence of the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), proposed endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, at the two project areas. If other threatened or endangered (TE) bat species (i.e., Indiana Bat [*Myotis sodalis*] and northern long-eared bat [*Myotis septentrionalis*]) are detected during capture efforts, however, they will be subject to the appropriate similar guidance and deliverables as is outlined in in Sections 3.3 and 9.3 of this Statement of Objectives (SOO).
- 1.3 This work requires an onsite support person located at USACE-MVM. The work at the project areas shall be conducted by a Cooperator and will involve strategies to determine if tricolored bats (TCB) are present or likely absent, and whether roost trees are likely to be impacted due to planned tree clearing activities. This work includes mist net surveys, and if TCB or other TE bats are captured, the Cooperator will affix a radio transmitter on up to 3 of each species per survey site. The Cooperator will then conduct the radio-tracking surveys to locate likely roost trees within the project areas. Sampling methodologies will be in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Range-wide Indiana Bat & Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines (2023), using northern long-eared bat level of effort, and the requirements set forth in the Description of Objectives. The Cooperator shall begin the survey on or as soon as possible after May 15, 2024, and end no later than August 15, 2024 (weather delays may require a modification of this timeframe). Cooperators will reside at lodging located near to the project areas and commute daily to the survey sites.

2.0 AUTHORITY

This study is being conducted to fulfill regulatory requirements stipulated under the provisions of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 and associated regulations. Sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the ESA requires Federal agencies to ensure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of endangered or threatened species. In addition, the ESA of 1973 establishes as Federal policy that “all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered species and threatened species.”

2.1 This cooperative agreement will be awarded using the following authority:

- **33 USC § 2339(a) Conservation and recreation management.** Delegation of Authority under Section 213a of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, dated 10 March 2015.

In agreement with the above stated goals, the recipient agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement activities to support the USACE’s commitment toward environmental stewardship to manage natural and cultural resources in a responsible way that has the least impact on civil works and is beneficial to the region. In addition, the activities performed by the recipient must be completed in a manner conducive to guidelines outlined in the ESA (16 USC 1531 et seq.).

USACE-MVM agrees to provide substantial involvement to include, but not limited to, the following:

- USACE-MVM is involved in development of the Performance Work Statement/Scope of Work, and/or reviewing products provided by the Cooperator.
- USACE-MVM actively participates and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, and coordinates accordingly with the appropriate U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) office.
- USACE-MVM 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 per diem for Cooperators
 - Providing staff time to work on the project.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

3.1 Task 1: Field Work Coordination

The Cooperator will contact USACE MVM point of contact, Jennifer Hiltonsmith (901-579-7473) as soon as the Cooperator has selected the sampling days but no later than 2 weeks prior to any field work. This coordination will help in assessing field conditions, water levels, and site access.

3.1.1 Additional Personnel

The Cooperator should anticipate 1-2 USFWS and/or USACE-MVM employees

to participate in the field work as observers. The Cooperator should not expect the observers to handle any live bats or be asked to carry out any duties outlined in this Statement of Objectives. Observers may place acoustic equipment to assist in building data sets. The Cooperator will not be responsible for set up or retrieval of Government equipment at any time.

3.2 Task 2: Habitat Assessment (Day 1)

Suitable summer bat habitat has been determined to be present at several sites within each proposed project area. Survey sites have been designated by USACE-MVM biologists based on habitat, accessibility, and USFWS survey guidelines (Exhibits 1 & 2). The Cooperator shall visually survey the preselected survey sites to confirm they are appropriate for mist netting. The Belle Fountain area project totals approximately 9 linear kilometers of potential habitat. The 15-Mile Bayou project totals approximately 6.3 linear kilometers of potential habitat.

Suitable TCB summer habitat consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded areas where they roost, forage, and travel and may include some adjacent and interspersed non-forested areas such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, old fields, and pastures. This includes forests and woodlots containing trees with potential roost substrate (i.e., live, and dead leaf clusters of live and recently dead deciduous trees, Spanish moss [*Tillandsia usneoides*], and beard lichen [*Usnea trichodea*]), as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. TCB will roost in a variety of tree species, especially oaks (*Quercus spp.*), and often select roosts in tall, large diameter trees, but will roost in smaller diameter trees (e.g., 4-inch [10-centimeter] diameter at breast height [DBH]) when potential roost substrate is present. TCB commonly roost in the mid- to upper canopy of trees although males will occasionally roost in dead leaves at lower heights (e.g., <16 feet [5 meters] from the ground) and females will occasionally roost in Spanish moss of understory trees. TCB seem to prefer foraging along forested edges of larger forest openings, along edges of riparian areas, and over water and avoid foraging in dense, unbroken forests, and narrow road cuts through forests. TCB may roost and forage in forested areas near anthropogenic structures and buildings (e.g., suburban neighborhoods, parks, etc.) (USFWS 2023).

Information gained in the habitat assessments shall assist the Cooperator to determine sites for mist netting surveys (Section 3.3). The Cooperator shall include a description of the areas and their potential TCB habitat in the final reports. The Cooperator shall use professional judgment to determine if an area has suitable habitat for mist netting sites.

3.3 Task 3: Mist netting for presence/absence determination

Immediately following each habitat assessment, the Cooperator shall confirm survey sites for netting locations or contact the Technical Manager (Jennifer Hiltonsmith) to discuss altering net placement. The Cooperator will follow the northern long-eared bat recovery unit-based protocols for the amount of time (i.e.,

netting nights) deemed appropriate from habitat surveys for TCB. Mist net surveys should be conducted in the best suitable habitat possible in each kilometer.

3.3.1 Equipment - Mist nets to be used for TCB surveys should be the finest, lowest visibility mesh commercially available. Currently, the finest net on the market is 75 denier, 2 ply, denoted 75/2 (Arndt and Schaez 2009); however, the 50 denier nets are still acceptable for use. The finest mesh size available is approximately 38 millimeter (~1 1/2 inch). Nets should be cleaned and disinfected following approved protocols (<http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>) and any additional federal or state requirements to minimize disease transmission (USFWS 2023).

3.3.2 Minimum Effort – An effective mist-netting effort should be used at locations best suited for capturing TCB. A minimum of 4 net nights per kilometer of suitable habitat is required by USFWS. Therefore, it is recommended that sites are placed approximately 1 kilometer apart, but selection of the best mist-net habitat is the priority.

Once the Cooperator determines the appropriate sample site locations, each sample site shall be photographed (during daylight hours) and recorded using a global positioning system (GPS) unit. The Cooperator shall record all GPS data in Universal Transverse Mercator, North American Datum - 1983, Zone 16N. Recorded GPS and color photographs shall be included in the report.

3.3.3 Net Placement – Potential travel corridors (e.g., streams) typically are the most effective places to net (although other sites may also be productive; see Carroll et al. 2002). Place nets approximately perpendicular across the corridor. Nets should fill the corridor from side to side and from stream (or ground) level up to the overhanging canopy. Nets of varying widths and heights may be used as the situation dictates. If netting over water, ensure there is enough space between the net and the water so that the bat will not get wet upon capture. Mist netting shall begin at sunset and end 6 hours after the nets are in place. See Kunz and Kurta (1988) for additional discussion of net placement.

3.3.4 Checking Nets – Each net should be checked approximately every 10 minutes, never exceeding 15 minutes between checks. Capture and handling are stressful for bats. Emphasis should be on minimizing handling and holding bats for as short a time as possible to achieve research objectives. TCB, or any other TE bat should be they captured, should not be held for more than 30 minutes after capture. Federal and state permits usually specify maximum holding times (e.g., Recovery Permits issued by Regions 3 and 4 of the USFWS specify a maximum holding time of 30 minutes for most projects).

- 3.3.5 Weather and Light Conditions - Severe weather adversely affects capture of bats. Negative results combined with any of the following weather conditions throughout all or most of a sampling period is likely to need additional netting effort: (a) temperatures that fall below 10°C (50°F); (b) precipitation, including rain and/or fog, that exceeds 30 minutes or continues intermittently during the survey period; and (c) sustained wind speeds greater than 4 meters/second (9 miles/hour). It is typically best to set nets under the canopy where they are out of moonlight, particularly when the moon is ½-full or greater.
- 3.3.6 If, at the conclusion of each mist netting, no TCB or any other TE bats, have been captured, fieldwork is complete and that particular survey is finished.

At each project area (Belle Fountain and 15 Mile Bayou), if one or more TCB or other TE bats are captured (up to 3 TCB, northern long-eared bat, or Indiana bat per site), Phase II radio-tracking surveys will be conducted by the Cooperator. The emergence survey protocol should not be used for radio-tracked TCB given the variability in roosting locations typically used by the species (e.g., roosting in dead leaf clusters in the canopy of live trees) and difficulty observing bats emerging. An emergence count may be attempted on the rare occasion that the surveyor is able to discover the exact roosting location of a transmitted TCB and believes he/she can observe the bat(s) emerging.

Transmitter Attachment - A qualified and permitted biologist who is experienced in handling TCB and other TE bats and attaching radio transmitters must perform transmitter attachments. Attachment guidelines and protocols are outlined in the 2024 USFWS Range-wide Indiana Bat & Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines.

For each captured TCB (or other threatened or endangered bats should they be captured), the Cooperator shall attach radio transmitters to all female, juvenile, and adult male TCB or others captured at each site. Surveyors should be prepared to place transmitters on bats when they are captured to minimize holding times.

The radio transmitter, adhesive, and any other markings ideally should weigh less than 5% of the bat's pre-attachment body weight but must not weigh more than 10% of its total body weight (Kurta and Murray 2002). In all cases, the lightest transmitters capable of the required task should be used, particularly with pregnant females and volant juveniles.

Bats carrying transmitters must be monitored daily for at least seven days, or until the transmitter falls off, whichever occurs first.

The purpose of radio tracking TCB and other TE bats is to determine their roosting locations. If radio tracking determines specific summer roosting or maternal colony sites (trees or other structures), the Cooperator shall use a GPS unit to record the specific locations. The Cooperator shall describe the sites and nearby surroundings in each survey report.

3.3.7 Radio Telemetry Equipment - Proposed radio telemetry equipment (e.g., receivers, antennas, and transmitters) and frequencies should be coordinated with the appropriate state natural resource agency and the USFWS – Missouri Ecological Services Field Office, Columbia, MO (Kris Budd, 573-507-8924 when conducting surveys in Missouri), or Arkansas Ecological Services Field Office, Conway, AR (Pedro Ardapple-Kindberg, 501-513-4470 when conducting surveys in Arkansas) after any night a bat is fitted with a transmitter.

3.4 Task 4: Post-Fieldwork Coordination with USACE-MVM
The cooperator shall call the Technical Manager of this project (Jennifer Hiltonsmith, 901-579-7473) within 24 hours of the conclusion of field work conducted at each project location (Belle Fountain and 15 Mile Bayou) with all netting and transmitter information. Each project area will have its own draft report. Each draft report will document all capture results, photographs, maps, etc. performed at each location; and each draft report will be provided to the Technical Manager no later than one month after field work has been concluded at that specific area. More information about report submittals are provided in Section 9.2.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

4.1 The Cooperator shall possess a current USFWS threatened or endangered species recovery permit and both a State of Missouri collector's permit and a State of Arkansas collector's permit prior to starting the field work at each specific site. The Principal Investigator (PI) conducting the surveys should have a thorough understanding of the USFWS Range-Wide Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines, should be familiar with the 2024 updates and the inclusion of Tricolored bat efforts. The Cooperator should have at least 3 years' experience with mist-netting, handling, and identifying bat species including threatened and endangered species. Survey experience, academic background, and examples of prior reports should be submitted with your proposal.

4.2 The Cooperator shall perform all work in accordance with safety requirements set forth in the USACE safety manual EM 385-1-1¹.

¹ The new EM 385-1-1 (dated 30 Nov 2014) safety manual is available online at:
http://www.publications.usace.army.mil/Portals/76/Publications/EngineerManuals/EM_385-1-1.pdf

5.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY
N/A

6.0 BASE PERIOD
There will be a 6-month base Period of Performance that will commence from the date of cooperative agreement award.

7.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

7.1 Follow-On Periods – N/A

7.2 Optional Tasks – N/A

8.0 COORDINATION

- Brian Hesford is the USACE Fort Worth District Grants Officer Representative/Project Manager (GOR/PM) and may be reached at (402) 200-8268, brian.d.hesford@usace.army.mil.
- Jennifer Hiltonsmith is the Technical Manager for this work and may be reached by phone at (901) 579-7473 or by email at Jennifer.Hiltonsmith@usace.army.mil. The Technical Manager shall be notified of the date(s) field work is to begin and end, all dates of work, and information as stated above. The Cooperator will contact Ms. Hiltonsmith no later than 2 days prior to any field work. This coordination will help in assessing field conditions, water levels, and site access.

9.0 POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS and DOCUMENTATION

9.1 Invoicing and Progress Reports - Submit Payment Request and additional required documents to: swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil. Carbon Copy the assigned USACE Project Manager as well as your organization's POCs for the additional required documents as well as the delinquent accounts POC.

9.1.1 Frequency: Quarterly plus 30-day grace period. If the coverage dates are not quarterly or preapproved by the PM (or the first/last submittal), the payment request will be **rejected**.

9.1.2 Payment Requests must be submitted on form SF270 with the accompanying SF-PPR progress report. SF270s will be **rejected** if the SF-PPR progress report has not been received.

Please ensure to include the following on the SF-PPR progress report:

- Separate details by CLIN
- Achievements

- Percent Completion
- Project Status
- Problems encountered and impact of activities and personnel on schedule
- Anticipated work in next reporting period

If the SF-PPR is incomplete, it will be **rejected** causing the SF270 to also be **rejected**. SF-PPR Forms with above fields may be requested at: swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil

The SF270 may have multiple pages. May request Excel version @ swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil **Must be submitted in PDF or it will be rejected**. SF270 Block 11 (a), (b), (c) are for the description of funds. Preferred description is: CLIN/POP Type, POP start and end dates, amount awarded. At minimum include the CLIN.

Example:

***CLIN 0001/ Base
22SEP23 – 21SEP24
\$100,000.00***

Funding must be separated as specified on the Award document. For Sub-CLINs that specify “*for funding only*”, may be rolled into the primary CLIN unless otherwise instructed. All others require PM approval. If the description is missing; payment request will be **rejected**.

9.1.3 The **FINAL** invoice package must include the following documents. The entire Final invoice package is due no later than 90 days from the period of performance (POP) end date:

- Final SF270
- SF-PPR
- Final SF425
- DD882
- SF428 plus attachment B (C&S if applicable)
- SF298
- Final Report

Missing any of the above required documents, the Payment Request will be **rejected**.

Forms may be requested from the district office or found at: www.grants.gov

9.2 DRAFT and FINAL REPORTS

9.2.1 *General Format* – Each report will include a brief Introduction, Site Descriptions, Methods, Results, Conclusion, References, and a minimum of the following... Appendices: all GPS coordinates labeled by a unique sample site ID, and photographs of each species identified and each site surveyed.

9.2.2 *Review of Draft and Final Reports* – Reports and submittals shall be reviewed by USACE and any other individuals and/or entities as selected by

USACE. Review time will not exceed 14 days. Any feedback or corrections will be provided to the Cooperator within that time frame.

9.2.3 *Draft or Final Report or Other Submittal Rejection* – Upon the rejection of any report or submittal, or previously corrected report or submittal, the Cooperator shall prepare (adhering to the comments forwarded by the Technical Manager, Jennifer Hiltonsmith) and submit the required number of copies of any corrected draft/final report or submittal within 14 calendar days from the date of the letter rejecting the report or submittal.

9.2.4 *Report Copies* – Each draft report may be a digital Microsoft Word document and should be emailed to the Technical Manager and GOR/PM for review. Each final report will be in an Adobe (.pdf) format on CD or DVD. The Cooperator will send these reports to the Technical Manager. USACE does not accept, and the Cooperator shall not post, digital files on File Transfer Protocol (FTP) web sites.

9.3 Other Submittals

9.3.1 Hard copies or emailed copies of the required state and federal permits obtained for capturing, handling, and/or collecting data from any threatened or endangered species.

9.3.2 Hard copies or emailed copies of all field notes and data sheets shall be submitted to the Technical Manager before the first payment submittal. This will indicate the Cooperator has completed all field work.

9.3.3 Digital photos of each species of bat, as well as photos of each individual TCB and other TE bats captured, following photo documentation protocols in the 2023 USFWS Range-wide Indiana Bat & Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines.

9.3.4 Digital photos of each sampling location, including photo orientation and net setup is included in photo.

9.3.5 All GPS data from netting sites and roost trees (if tracking indicated a roost site). Data shall be provided in tabular form within the reports and in a separate Microsoft Office Excel electronic file.

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.

11.0 LIST OF EXHIBITS

1. Belle Fountain – Ditches 1 & 2 Map
2. 15-Mile Bayou Map

12.0 REFERENCES

- Arndt, R. J. and B. A. Schaetz. 2009. A tale of two deniers: nylon versus polyester mist nets. *Bat Research News* 50(3):57.
- Carroll, S.K., T.C. Carter, and G.A. Feldhamer. 2002. Placement of nets for bats: effects on perceived fauna. *Southeastern Naturalist* 1:193-198.
- Kunz, T.H., and A. Kurta. 1988. Capture methods and holding devices. Pp. 1-30, *In* T. H. Kunz (Ed.). *Ecological and Behavioral Methods for the Study of Bats*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC. 533 pp.
- Kurta, A., and S. Murray. 2002. Philopatry and migration of banded Indiana Bats (*Myotis sodalis*) and effects of radio transmitters. *Journal of Mammalogy* 83:585-589.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). 2021. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Levee Safety Program. Engineer Circular 1165-2-218. Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. 114 pp.
- USACE. 2014. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Health Requirements Manual. EM 385-1-1. Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. 930 pp.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2023. Range-Wide Indiana Bat & Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3, Bloomington, MN. 76 pp.



Exhibit 1. Right-of-way and proposed survey locations for tricolored bats for Belle Fountain (ditches 1 and 2) channel cleanout project, Pemiscot County, Missouri.



Exhibit 2: 15 Mile Bayou Bat Survey Locations