



**Bureau of Indian Affairs
Office of Trust Services
Division of Environmental Services and Cultural Resources Management
Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience**

REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST (RSOI)

CFDA #: 15.156, Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

PROJECT TITLE: Plant Ecologist – Tribal Coastal Restoration

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Thursday, October 10th, 2024, 7:59 pm Alaska Daylight Time / 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time

ELIGIBILITY: All CESU members. Preference may be given to federally recognized tribes, tribal colleges and universities, or institutions exhibiting experience working with coastal tribal communities if the applicant meets all stated requirements and demonstrates the ability to conduct the project to the fullest extent.

SUMMARY: Responses to this RSOI solicitation announcement will be used to identify potential investigators for a project funded by the BIA to assess the botanical/native seed and plant materials needs and provide technical support for Tribes who are relocating, retreating, expanding, or utilizing protect-in-place measures to address climate-induced erosion and similar impacts. The 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 Relocation, Managed Retreat, and Protect-in-Place (RMP) 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.

BACKGROUND: The BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience will support funding for this position, which will be hosted at a Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Units (CESU) member tribe, college, or university. The mission of the BIA [Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience \(TCR\)](#) is to support climate preparedness and resilience for all Federally recognized Tribal Nations and Alaska Native villages through technical and financial assistance, access to scientific resources and educational opportunities. In November 2022 the Biden-Harris Administration announced the launch of the [Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation \(CDR\) Program](#), consisting of Tribally-led demonstration projects. The CDR Program is being implemented by TCR and other DOI programs to assist Tribal communities severely impacted by climate-related environmental threats. In addition, TCR provides financial support through a non-competitive RMP Coordinator Set Aside funding opportunity dedicated to prioritizing Tribes at the highest risk to climate change impacts.

Through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) [Ecosystem Restoration Program](#), the BIA will partner with a CESU member through a cooperative agreement to hire a coastal plant ecologist position (further, "ecologist") in efforts to implement a national revegetation effort. The ecologist will focus on providing technical assistance to Tribes and Alaska Native villages that are working on community driven relocation, managed retreat, site expansion, protect-in-place, and similar efforts.

The [Plant Conservation Alliance \(PCA\)](#) is a public-private collaboration among 17 federal agency members and more than 400 non-federal cooperators that share the same goal: to protect native plants by ensuring that native plant populations and their communities are maintained, enhanced, and restored. The BIA partners with the PCA through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to identify, recommend, and coordinate implementation of priority native plant conservation needs. This project will implement PCA-developed [National Seed Strategy \(NSS\)](#) goals through ecoregional collaboration to connect Tribes with seed collection, storage, production and supply training, and other resources.

PUBLIC PURPOSE AND BENEFIT: This project will focus support on benefitting communities in the CDR Program and receiving RMP Coordinator support through TCR, though may expand to communities with similar impacts, as appropriate. The project also supports the [White House Justice40 Initiative](#) and environmental justice efforts, as tribal experiences with climate change can make Indigenous peoples particularly vulnerable to cascading disproportionate impacts (STACCCWG, 2021).

DESCRIPTION OF ESSENTIAL PROJECT ELEMENTS:

- A. This is intended as a fully funded position reporting directly to the CESU for at least one year and supports the National Seed Strategy (NSS).



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- B. 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, as described in paragraph D.), below.
 - C. 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.
 - 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. Develop and provide a report of project activities, including:
 - a. An assessment as a component of the final 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.
 - b. All communication and outreach materials related to this effort.
 - c. Maps and/or aerial photos of project activities.
 - d. Recommendations based on findings to inform future program planning and implementation.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES: Statements of Interest must be no more than four pages (12 pt, single spaces) and include the following:

- A. Principal investigator(s) (PI) with full contact information, including: name, title, organization, address, email, phone, and CESU affiliation.
- B. Brief Statement of Qualifications, including:
 - a. Biographical Sketch for PI(s) and other key personnel if any (e.g. faculty, staff, students, partners) to be involved with the project, including areas of expertise. (NOTE: Full curriculum vitae for project personnel may be included in addition to the Statement of Interest and Qualifications.)
 - b. List of relevant past projects and clients, with brief descriptions of these projects related to the essential activities of the project.
 - c. Brief summary description of capabilities and related actions envisioned necessary to successfully complete the project as described above, including an estimated one-year project timeline, as well as a proposed budget table and narrative.



PROJECT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR REQUIREMENTS: PI(s) will be expected to submit both project performance narrative reports and federal financial (SF-425) reports on a semi-annual basis via the GrantSolutions (GS) portal. The CESU will need to create a GS account with the BIA (as an account is required for each agency) if one does not already exist.

REVIEW OF STATEMENTS RECEIVED AND TIMELINE: Statements of Interest and Qualifications will be evaluated based on the specific experience and capabilities related to the essential project elements as described above. Based on a review of submissions received, a PI will be selected and contacted to jointly prepare a full study proposal and formal agreement with BIA.

FUNDS AVAILABLE: \$200,000.00

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Position Description – Plant Ecologist
- 2) Statement of Work – Plant Ecologist

SUBMISSION: The SOI and any related inquiries may be submitted by email attachment by the submission deadline listed above to both contacts:

John Mosley, Branch Chief
Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience, Division of
Environmental Services and Cultural Resources,
Office of Trust Services, BIA
John.Mosley@bia.gov

Angela Waupochnik, Regional Coordinator
Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience, Division of
Environmental Services and Cultural Resources,
Office of Trust Services, BIA
Alyssa.Morris@bia.gov

REFERENCES:

Status of Tribes and Climate Change Working Group (STACCCWG). (2021). Status of Tribes and Climate Change Report, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ. [Marks-Marino, D.(ed.)] <http://www.nau.edu/stacc2021>



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.



Position Description

Last Update 08/09/2024

Position Title: Plant Ecologist

Posting Date: 09/26/2024

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 NSS, 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 (e.g. site expansion, climigration, and/or managed retreat) or protect-in-place options. The position will target erosion mitigation 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.

Essential Tasks and Responsibilities:

- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
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Position Description

Last Update 08/09/2024

- Develop a Final Report including data collection and site characterization and similar assessments, and final recommendations for review by appropriate Tribal, State, and/or Federal agencies.
- Supporting and guiding sampling methods, data collection, and reporting with tribal supervision and collaboration.
- Prepare site characterization, site assessment and release investigation reports, as appropriate.
- Prepare relevant assessments, post-treatment plans and reports.
- Discuss the extent of disclosure of specific IK information: any information shared should be of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) with any potential partners to ensure ethical research sharing throughout the project.
 - Information on FPIC and protections: <https://climatetkw.wordpress.com/>
 - November 2022 Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQIK-Guidance.pdf>
- Utilize ArcGIS, mapping applications and aerial photos to map project activities, and support project goals and deliverables. Ensure that species location data is obscured. For example, don't make exact plant population locations publicly available.
- Build and maintain connections with Tribes, Tribal partners, and funders. Work with the following partners, on an as-needed basis to build relationships and connections and better support tribal landowners and trustees: 1) BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience, in addition to other BIA programs as appropriate, 2) the Plant Conservation Alliance and relevant Seed Strategy implementation working groups, 3) State or Federal regulatory agencies, 4) Other relevant native seed and plant networks, as appropriate.
- Become familiar with ecological and/or habitat restoration activities on Tribal Trust, Treaty, and co-managed lands, public, and private land conservation sites.
- Assist Tribes in managing restoration planning and implementation.
- Other tasks as deemed necessary and relevant.

Required Education, Experience, and Attributes (minimum requirements):

- Completion of a four-year undergraduate or a graduate degree from a nationally or internationally accredited postsecondary institution in plant ecology, botany, or ecological restoration; and
- Skilled in project design, research methodology and planning documents, including restoration, planting, maintenance, and management plans.
- Demonstrated proficiency with Microsoft Office applications and ArcGIS & Navigational and mapping skills using a variety of tools, including aerial photos, compass, and GPS and mapping applications such as ArcGIS.
- Knowledge of the National Seed Strategy (NSS) or its goals.
- Educational background in ecological and/or integrated ecosystem management (OPM Ecology Series 0408), or botanical – preferred.
- Proven track record in biological and botanical, physical science, and mathematical expertise needed to understand and appropriately consult with Tribal managers on actionable decision making.



Position Description

Last Update 08/09/2024

Travel: 25% or as needed, for site visits.

Location: Remote.

Application Information

Please send a current resume or CV, one writing sample, and a cover letter describing your interest in and qualifications for the job.