



NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District

invites and will receive competitive proposals for the provision of
Federal and State Environmental Compliance for:

Vegetation Management Projects in support of a Strategic Control Network In the Cloverdale Fire Protection District

NOSOCO Project #: DR4482-PJ0587

The Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District (the District), acting as a partner with the Cloverdale Fire Protection District under a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), known as "Northern Sonoma County Fire" is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to provide the following professional services:

- Preparation of a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption (NOE)
- Research, Data Gathering and Preparation of supporting documents to be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Substantial coverage of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance as part of NEPA information.

Services shall be provided by a Consultant with demonstrated experience in CEQA and NEPA environmental compliance surveys, studies, reports, and associated submission of reports and documents. The Consultant shall possess applicable qualifications and certifications or include sub-consultants that possess same. The District is requesting that qualified firms provide both a statement of qualification (SOQ) and a proposal for professional services (PPS) as well as meet other requirements defined in this Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ / P).

This proposal is for professional services related to environmental compliance only and does not include the management/supervision of, or the implementation of, vegetation management projects.

Project Description

A FEMA grant for the implementation of vegetation management treatments has been obtained by the JPA. The treatments are primarily located along roads on private property and associated public rights of way within the Cloverdale Fire Protection District (also referred to as the Cloverdale Planning Unit or the Planning Unit).

CEQA and NEPA compliance is required before vegetation management treatments can be implemented. The District will be the lead agency for CEQA compliance. FEMA will be the lead agency for NEPA compliance and will prepare all final NEPA documents. The selected Consultant will provide supporting documents / materials to FEMA for NEPA compliance.

The JPA has contracted with a Program / Project Management firm (DTA) to design and manage the program and projects and coordinate all supporting work. DTA has performed preliminary planning to identify likely work zones and treatment scope. DTA in consultation with the selected Consultant and in response to the CEQA / NEPA compliance effort, will finalize

work zones and project scope. DTA will provide primary landowner coordination and will obtain necessary permissions for study and implementation.

The District believes the work qualifies as Categorical Exempt under CEQA and recommends seeking a NOE. FEMA has determined that the work is not exempt under NEPA but believes the work is consistent with actions defined in the 2014 FEMA Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) covering Recurring Actions in Arizona, California and New Mexico.

The District has collaborated with FEMA to generally determine the documents/supporting research required for FEMA to complete NEPA compliance.

The maximum available grant funding for CEQA and NEPA environmental compliance is \$60,000.

Project Goals

The project is derived from the Cloverdale Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan and includes the goals of “improving access and egress on key roadways/maintaining fire roads and fuel breaks”.

The Work of the project will consist of vegetation treatments resulting in shaded fuel breaks along selected roads. These treatments will function as Strategic Control Lines that will eventually form a Strategic Control Network throughout the Planning Unit.

The Work shall seek to maintain aesthetic and ecological values such that goals for wildland fire protection can be achieved without compromising visual, cultural and biological resources.

Project Methods

Treatment methods include the following elements:

- Maintain and increase shaded areas by retaining larger healthy, generally native, trees in densely forested areas and various trees sizes in open areas
- Limbing up selected trees so no limb is lower than 6 feet from the ground
- Removing understory vegetation, seedlings, and saplings that are created a continuum of vegetation between the surface vegetation and tree canopy
- Utilization of a combination of mechanical treatment (mastication), working from existing road surfaces, and hand crews using chainsaws and chippers
- Cut vegetation is masticated, chipped, burned (broadcast and pile), or left onsite (lop and scatter)
- No treatments are planned near or in watercourses, and / or have the potential to damage any archeological sites,
- No treatments are planned to affect the habit of, or the presence of, threatened, rare, or endangered species

Project Quantities

- Estimated area of treatment: 800 – 1,100 acres (generally linear and not all contiguous)
- Typical width: 100 – 200 ft. centered on roadways with selected wider areas at key, strategic, locations

Scope of Consultant Work

This RFQ / P is for the provision of professional services for CEQA and NEPA environmental compliance and associated consultation to support final determination of the extent and character of the Work. The District expects the selected Consultant to advise the District and DTA on the best strategies for environmental compliance. As such, this RFQ/P is not fully defined, and the firm will be expected to advise the District with a high standard of ethics and fully without conflict. The selected Consultant shall provide services as required to address the following primary tasks:

Project Design Support

Review current and proposed Work zones and advise on final scope as it may be affected by environmental compliance.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption (NOE)

- Complete all necessary studies, research, and site visits
- Prepare documentation for NOE
- Complete California Office of Planning and Research NOE Form (<https://opr.ca.gov/docs/NOE.pdf>)

The District will file the NOE with the County of Sonoma.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Supporting Documents

- Prepare general “Technical Study” to be provided to FEMA to support their preparation of NEPA compliance documents. Technical Study shall address selected items in the 2014 PEA with emphasis on NHPA and ESA compliance.
- NHPA: Prepare draft Section 106 review for use by FEMA including associated field review and consultation
- ESA: FEMA will perform “desktop” analysis based on supporting data to be provided by Consultant. Review limited to federally listed species only.

The District will submit all documents to the FEMA and provide all direct coordination with FEMA staff.

Schedule

Environmental compliance shall be completed by September 9, 2024 and is defined as delivering the following to the District:

- Completed NOE form ready for District signature
- Documentation of all studies, research, and site visits supporting a NOE
- NEPA supporting documents

Minimum Qualifications

Any Consultant responding to the RFQ / P shall meet the following minimum qualifications. These include demonstrated experience and competence in the following specific areas:

- Vegetation Management
 - Experience in modern vegetation management methods relevant to wildland fire in California
- CEQA Environmental Compliance
 - Experience completing NOE and/or CalVTP Project Specific Analysis

- NEPA Environmental Compliance
 - Experience competing Archeological Resource Management Report(s)
 - Experience completing Endangered Species Act Review
 - Secretary of the Interior Qualified Archeologist (<https://www.nps.gov/articles/sec-standards-prof-quals.htm>)
- Experience with Local Environmental Conditions
 - Experience completing environmental compliance in northeastern Sonoma County or southeastern Mendocino County

Minimum Submittal Requirements

Please provide written and, when appropriate, graphic information demonstrating capabilities, experience and recommendations regarding the project as defined herein. Submittal shall reflect the specific requirements of this RFQ / P. Provide the following in letter format, maximum 12 pages that includes lists or narratives addressing the following:

- Consultant Information
 - Consultant name, address and contact information
 - Ownership (sole, corp. etc.)
 - Leadership structure, primary contact, primary liaison for duration of work
 - Anticipated consultants, if any
- History
 - Brief Consultant history (1/2 page)
 - Outline primary environmental compliance project types/trends
 - Consultant history notes relevant to CEQA and NEPA regulatory compliance
 - General service area of company, proximity to project location
- Statement of Qualification
 - Minimum Qualifications: Provide in outline form a list of representative professional experience that satisfies the list of minimum qualifications outlined above
 - Example Projects: Provide a brief narrative of at least two completed (or near complete) projects that exhibit most or all of the elements of the present project. Include examples from several projects if necessary.
- Proposal for Professional Services
 - Brief narrative, in outline form, of the likely steps envisioned to perform environmental compliance. Include recommendations as a means to demonstrate competence.
 - Brief outline/sequence of likely tasks, methods or approaches, etc.
- Costs
 - Provide a spread sheet (or similar document) showing estimated costs / rates for tasks as outlined in scope of work above.

Questions

Questions regarding this RFQ / P shall be directed to:

Martin Dreiling
DTA Wildland Fire Planning and Management
(707) 431 – 1305

Questions must be received via email to DTA on or before the time indicated in the RFQ / P Submittal Schedule (below). Consultants with questions or comments about this RFQ / P, the

contract, or the project should not contact the District, District board members, consultants, or employees unless directed to do so by DTA. All questions with responses / clarification will be shared with all firms who have asked questions. Any consultant who has not asked questions can request, via an email to DTA, the responses/clarification that have been asked by other consultants.

RFQ / P Addenda

If the District issues addenda to this RFQ / P, the consultant is solely responsible for, and must acknowledge receipt of, addenda in the consultant's response. Failure to acknowledge and respond to any addenda issued by the District may, in the District's sole discretion, render the consultant's response to be deemed "non-responsive" and may be rejected.

Selection

Selection will be based on FEMA procurement standards for non-state entities (Title 2 CFR 200.318(a)). Where standards conflict the most restrictive will be used. The District will make its selection of a consultant based primarily on qualifications and demonstrated ability to serve District and project needs. The following evaluation factors will be utilized from highest to lowest relative importance.

- Independent Contractor
 - The consultant shall be an independent entity and may not include employees of either the Cloverdale Fire Protection District or Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District (FEMA compliant)

- Responsive Proposals
 - The District will seek the most responsive proposal, one which addresses all apparent concerns and provides additional advice regarding delivery of the work
 - The District will review each proposal on a stand-alone basis and determine which proposal is most responsive, best meets the District's needs, indicates ability to provide advice and leadership and demonstrates competence for all aspects of the work

- Cost
 - The District will consider estimated costs but is not obligated to select a professional consultant based on lowest cost (FEMA compliant)

This RFQ / P does not imply or require that the District will accept any of the proposals submitted. The District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to amend this RFQ / P, as necessary. All materials submitted to the District in response to this RFQ / P shall remain property of the District.

RFQ / P Submittal and Review Schedule

Interested consultants are invited to submit a response via email, hand delivery, or mail to:

Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District
Post Office Box 217
Geyserville, CA 95441
md@dtbarch.com

The District shall follow this schedule for the review and selection process. The District reserves the right to modify this schedule.

- **Questions Submitted to DTA via email:** 5:00 PM on Monday, July 29, 2024
- **Proposal Submittal Due Date:** 12 PM / Noon on Wednesday, August 7, 2024
- **Proposals Opened:** 12 PM / Noon on Wednesday, August 7, 2024

No proposals will be accepted after 12 PM / Noon on August 7, 2024.

Hand deliveries will ONLY be accepted between 9:30 AM and 12:00 PM / Noon on Wednesday, August 7, 2024 at the reception desk of the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District's Geyserville Fire Station located at 20975 Geyserville Avenue, Geyserville, CA 95441.

The District will review all responses and make a determination regarding the selection of any particular proposal within 3 business days of the submittal date. The selected consultant, if a selection is made, will be notified in writing.

Thank you for your interest in working with the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District.