

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST AND QUALIFICATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING SERVICES
FOR
THE EDWARDS AQUIFER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM'S
HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN**

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program (“EARIP”) is seeking assistance in creating a Habitat Conservation Plan (“HCP”) and associated National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) documentation for threatened and endangered species residing in the Edwards Aquifer and the San Marcos and Comal Springs. The EARIP is undertaking this work pursuant to the requirements of the 80th Texas Legislature in Article 12.5 of Senate Bill 3 (“S.B. 3”) which includes a requirement that the program document must be approved and executed by September 1, 2012. The EARIP anticipates that this work will be supported by an award of a Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“FWS”) and/or an appropriation from the Texas Legislature.

The EARIP is a collaborative, consensus-based stakeholder process to protect and contribute to the recovery of the federally listed species affected by the management of the Edwards Aquifer and other activities in the area. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“FWS”) began establishing the recovery implementation program in 2006. In 2007, the Texas Legislature mandated through Senate Bill 3 that the Edwards Aquifer Authority (“EAA”) and other state and municipal water agencies participate in the EARIP with the other stakeholders in the region. A list of the thirty-eight stakeholder groups or individuals that have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) with FWS to participate in the EARIP is attached as Attachment 1.

The Texas Legislature required the EARIP to establish a Science Subcommittee comprised of individuals who have “technical expertise regarding the Edwards Aquifer system, the threatened and endangered species that inhabit that system, springflows, or the development of withdrawal limitations.” The EARIP has appointed fifteen well-respected scientists from academia, state and federal agencies, water authorities and purveyors, and the private sector to serve as the Science Subcommittee and to make recommendations to the EARIP regarding:

- The option of designating a separate San Marcos pool;
- The necessity to maintain minimum springflows, including a specific review of the necessity to maintain a flow to protect federally threatened and endangered species;
- Whether adjustments in the trigger levels for the San Marcos Springs flow for the San Antonio pool should be made; and
- Withdrawal reduction levels and stages for critical period management to maintain target spring discharge and Aquifer levels.

To support the Science Subcommittee’s work on possible withdrawal limitations, the EARIP has retained a team of scientists to evaluate the impacts of in-stream flows and other impacts such as

recreation, flood events, and other factors on species in the Comal and San Marcos Springs systems. Each of the scientists on the team has worked extensively on the listed species in the springs. The team is led by Dr. Thomas Hardy from Utah State University. The EARIP has retained the United States Geological Survey to participate in the Hardy study process to ensure that the results will serve both the needs of the EARIP in preparing its program document and the FWS in reviewing it.

Additional information regarding the EARIP can be found at <http://irnr.tamu.edu/earip/>

2. RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS SUBMITTAL

The EARIP is issuing this Request for Statements of Interest and Qualifications (“RFQ”) to obtain the services of a qualified firm to assist in the development of the HCP and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIS”) (collectively “the program documents”) and in the preparation of these documents. The EARIP is specifically interested in identifying an individual or individuals in the firm with specific experience in developing and managing the preparation of such documents that have been approved by the FWS and with working with large stakeholder groups such as the EARIP. This individual would be expected to assist the stakeholders in developing measures and alternatives that will form the basis for the program documents.

Because the EARIP has an expert Science Subcommittee and has engaged Dr. Hardy and other scientists to evaluate the impacts on species in the Comal and San Marcos Springs, we anticipate that the primary analytical work required of the firm will be associated with the preparation of the DEIS. If the firm lacks some of the necessary expertise to prepare the documents or some parts the documents, the respondent should discuss the firm’s experience in assembling a team of with that expertise.

Five copies and an electronic pdf copy of all responses must be sent to:

Robert L. Gulley, Ph.D.
Program Manager
Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program
Texas A&M University
Institute of Renewable Natural Resources
The Courtyard at Breckinridge
2632 Broadway, Suite 301
San Antonio, Texas 78215
979 595-8084 (C)
RLGulley@ag.tamu.edu

No facsimiles will be accepted. Questions regarding this RFQ also should be sent by e-mail to Dr. Gulley. All responses must be received by 5 pm on April __, 2009. Statements received after 5 pm on April __, 2009, will be declared late and not eligible for consideration.

Responses to this RFQ will be reviewed by a work group that will evaluate the RFQ’s received and make recommendations to the Steering Committee of the EARIP. The EARIP will identify a short list of respondents. The EARIP will provide a specific scope of work and a draft of the

contractual terms and conditions to the short listed respondents, hold a pre-submittal conference with the short listed respondents and request a proposal for the work that should include a cost estimate for the work and the identity of all subcontractors that will be used.

The EARIP will base its choice on demonstrated competence, especially experience with the creation of similar program documents in similar circumstances (especially with FWS's Austin Field Office and/or FWS Region 2) and upon qualifications and evidence of superior conformance with other stated criteria.

The EARIP reserves the right to reject any and all RFQs received as a result of this Request for Qualifications or to negotiate separately with any source whatsoever in any manner necessary to serve the best interest of the EARIP. The EARIP does not intend to pay for the information solicited or obtained through any response.

3. SPECIFIC INFORMATION REQUESTED

The respondent will provide information about the firm and the individual who will be responsible for the work and for interfacing with the EARIP as discussed above and other key personal that will be committed to the project. Current resumes should be provided for the individual and other key personnel that will be committed to the project along with the hourly rate charged for those persons.

Interested firms also should submit the following information:

- A list of business that the firm has done with any of the Stakeholders shown in Attachment 1 within the last 5 years. This list should include, at a minimum, contact information, type of work done, and dates of work performed;
- A list of the NEPA documents with which the individual who will be responsible for the work and for interfacing with the EARIP and key personnel have been significantly involved within the past five years;
- A list of HCPs approved or issued incidental "take" permits) with which the individual who will be responsible for the work and for interfacing with the EARIP and key personnel have been significantly involved;
- A list of all projects involving a multi-party collaborative, consensus based process with which the individual who will be responsible for the work and for interfacing with the EARIP and key personnel have been significantly involved;
- A list of all projects involving consultations under the Endangered Species Act with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries with which the individual who will be responsible for the work and for interfacing with the EARIP and key personnel have been significantly involved.
- A list of references complete with names, addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers for the individual who will be responsible for the work and for interfacing with the EARIP. Any reference should include persons who have knowledge and of the individual's work involving an HCP and/or NEPA document.

To the extent possible, the response should be limited to 25 pages.

4. RIGHTS RESERVED

The EARIP expressly reserves the right to accept or reject any and all statements submitted; and is under no legal requirement to execute a resulting contract on the basis of this advertisement and intends that the material is to be provided only as a means of identifying the various consultant alternatives.

This request for respondent qualifications does not commit the EARIP or its contracting agent to pay any costs incurred prior to execution of a contract. Issuance of this material in no way obligates the EARIP to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response. The EARIP specifically reserves the right to vary all provisions set forth at any time prior to execution of a contract where it deems it to be in the best interest of the EARIP.

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