



Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Amendment Three Pre-Proposal Conference Minutes Questions and Answers NERR Invasive Vegetation Treatment RFx 3120001960 Smart No. 1450-20-R-RFPR-00001

Contact: Rick Kinnard, Procurement Director procurement@dmr.ms.gov

***THIS IS AMENDMENT THREE TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. YOU MUST
ACKNOWLEDGE THIS AND ALL FUTURE AMENDMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL COVER
FORM (ATTACHMENT A) OR, IF YOUR PROPOSAL HAS ALREADY BEEN
SUBMITTED, BY LETTER. YOUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ALL AMENDMENTS MUST
BE RECEIVED BY THE MDMR BY THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF YOUR
PROPOSAL.***

We are going to begin the Pre-Proposal meeting for the NERR Invasive Vegetation Treatment. This meeting will be recorded. Once I start the recording, I will do a roll call of all DMR staff, then offerors. If you would, state your name and phone number.

My is Michelle Williams. I am contract analyst for the DMR.

Rick Kinnard, Procurement Director

Jonathan Pitchford, Stewardship Coordinator

Jennifer Wittman, Coastal Preserves Bureau Director

Mike Pursley, Invasive Species Program Manager

Ayesha Gray, Director of GBNERR

Jay McIlwain

Brandon Pike with Eco Restore. My phone number is 228-575-7747.

Aaron Shook with Taylor Made Lawn. My phone number is 228-327-7785.

Michelle Williams – Ayesha, would you like to start us off?

Ayesha Gray – I will do an overview of the project. We are working with the DEQ, MSTIG, Department of Interior and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The program is a habitat restoration project at GBNERR which included chemical treatment of invasives. The project itself will be funded by the National Resources Damages Assessment which is part of the oil spill settlement. The total project will go for 10 years. Although this offering is for one year. Michelle can confirm that. I will let Jonathan go over the project with you.

Jonathan Pitchford – The treatment areas are north of Coastal Resources Center off of Bayou Heron Road. There are really three separate areas on state lands that are the treatment area. The total acreage is around 220 acres. We did some invasive species mapping in those areas. I believe it is around 150 acres treatment areas. The major species we are looking at are: Chinese Tallow, Cogongrass, camphor tree, Previt, Japanese climbing fern. There are several other species we would like to eradicate, but those mentioned are the heaviest concentration. Access is pretty easy. Most of the areas can be accessed off of Pecan Road or Bayou Heron Road. They are not far off of the road. Most of the infestation is right along the road. We have in the request for proposal, there was a pretty good map of the areas we want to treat. I will be happy to answer any other questions. Jay McIlwain is on the phone too. He has a pretty good knowledge of these areas. He can answer any kind of questions you have.

Ayesha Gray – Jonathan, can you add kind of the details on the techniques we want to use?

Jonathan Pitchford – We want everything to be done with hand spraying and pack-in-squirt. We ask there is no broadcast spraying or aerial spraying. It is something we have written into the grant that we do apply herbicide in that manner at the NERR. We want to honor that in this contract as well.

Aaron Shook - Are y'all opening up for questions right now?

Michelle Williams – Yes.

Aaron Shook - This is Aaron Shook. I have a question about native species that are taking over sensitive areas, Wax Myrtles, duckweed and bogs and certain ponds in agricultural areas. Is that part of this focus as well since this is trying to bring back some areas to more natural conditions or is this just invasive species?

Jonathan Pitchford - I think we are pretty much focused on invasive species. Can you ask the question again? I didn't quite understand what you were asking.

Aaron Shook – I know in certain areas in Alabama where they have bogs. It is mainly up north. The Wax Myrtles are taking over in these shrinking bog areas due to clear cutting. The Wax Myrtles are taking over. There are some areas around farms where the fertilizer run off is increasing duckweed, killing off fish and taking out other aquatic plants. I didn't know if the focus was this as well or if this has been looked at and managed?

Jonathan Pitchford – We want to focus on the invasive species. We are managing a lot of those other species. We are doing mulching. Most of the long-term maintenance with Wax Myrtles will be done with prescribed burns. The areas we mapped out are extreme areas of infestation. I feel like if we can get those under control we will be in good shape in a lot of these areas. The focus will be invasive species only.

Aaron Shook – Thank you.

Jonathan Pitchford – Your Welcome.

Jonathan Pitchford – Okay and the total treatment area is 152 acres.

Aaron Shook – In here you have the use of ATVs. Do those need to be inspected or have some sort of inspection before they are used on these properties?

Jonathan Pitchford – I don't know that I have answer for you. I don't believe so. Rick do you know anything about or Jennifer?

Rick Kinnard – As far as inspection, what do you mean? Are they clean before they go in and clean when they come out so there is no spread of the invasive?

Aaron Shook - Well, I know that was covered in there. I didn't know if there was some kind of certification we needed. Of course, we would check it for oil leaks. ATV safety courses or anything like that. Department of Interior, national money sometimes have some restrictions.

Rick Kinnard – I don't think anything was included in the solicitation, just as far as making sure they are clean.

Rick Kinnard – Do we have any or questions?

Jonathan Pitchford – We are hoping to see what you guys come up with in terms of the plan. We have an idea in our head of how this can be treated, but you guys are the experts. We are interested in seeing what your plans are. I don't know when we will be back there. What are your guys' rules on these guys being able to come out and take a look ahead of time?

Rick Kinnard - As far as I know as long more than 10 people and stay 6 feet apart, they can go out there and look.

Michelle Williams - I don't believe it was written out in the proposal specifications, so we can't allow them to go out and look at the property without doing an amendment to make changes.

Ayesha Gray – There is also the shelter in place until April 27. I don't know how that is affecting y'all's work. I don't think it has been determined as essential. Do y'all need to look at the property to develop your proposal?

Brandon Pike – I don't think it's an absolute necessity for my guys. We have been at the NERR before. I think based on prior experience and experience with other places, the mapping they can see from areal photography and resources like that, I am not sure it is absolutely necessary to visit. If the opportunity came about, we would like to know so I can offer it to my guys to check it out. If you said we can't allow it, I don't think it would preclude us.

Aaron Shook - The same over here. We have some decent areal photography from Google Earth. I am from around that area. I have an okay idea. We can develop a proposal, a good proposal. It would be nice to go and look at it at some time just to be certain on a few things. If that is not a possible, we can still develop something.

Ayesha Gray - What's the deadline for the proposal, Michelle?

Michelle Williams - I believe it is May 12.

Ayesha Gray - I think from our original RFP our thoughts and intentions, of course that was written before the pandemic, our thought with the map and the readily available information like Google Earth, a proposal could be developed. I was asking that question thinking about Michelle's comment if we need to make a revision to include a site visit. It sounds like at the time though you are not asking for that?

Brandon Pike - No, it is not a necessity.

Ayesha Gray – I know the department as a whole is working really hard and Michelle and Rick are working really hard. We are trying to make sure any of the offerors for contracts we can get moving as fast as possible to get people on the ground working as soon as the shelter in place is lifted. This is one of the reasons we are holding this meeting now. We know from our project standpoint we would like the work to begin in June sometime and also from the standpoint of Mississippi's economy. I think that is all. Rick or Michelle do we need to talk about it?

Michelle Williams - I don't have anything to add?

Rick Kinnard - I believe so. As long as Brandon and Arron don't have anything to add.

Brandon Pike – I'm good.

Aaron Shook – Here too.

Ayesha Gray – Thank y'all so much.

Michelle Williams - Thank you for your time.

Questions and Answers

Q1. I have a question about native species that are taking over sensitive areas, Wax Myrtles, duckweed and bogs and certain ponds in agricultural areas. Is that part of this focus as well since this is trying to bring back some areas to more natural conditions or is this just invasive species?

A1. I think we are pretty much focused on invasive species.

Q2. I know in certain areas in Alabama where they have bogs. It is mainly up north. The Wax Myrtles are taking over in these shrinking bog areas due to clear cutting. The Wax Myrtles are taking over. There are some areas around farms where the fertilizer run off is increasing duckweed, killing off fish and taking out other aquatic plants. I didn't know if the focus was this as well or if this has been looked at and managed?

A2. We want to focus on the invasive species. We are managing a lot of those other species. We are doing mulching. Most of the long-term maintenance with Wax Myrtles will be done with prescribed burns. The areas we mapped out are extreme areas of infestation. I feel like if we can get those under control we will be in good shape in a lot of these areas. The focus will be invasive species only.

Q3. In here you have the use of ATVs. Do those need to be inspected or have some sort of inspection before they are used on these properties?

A3. I don't think anything was included in the solicitation, just as far as making sure they are clean.

The following can be found in the Request for Proposals, Section – Scope of Work and Deliverables:

5. All equipment including, but not limited to, vehicles, trailers, ATV's, and chippers must be cleaned with a pressure washer to reduce the spread of exotic vegetation prior to initiating work activities on public lands. Decontamination protocols

include spraying down all equipment surfaces, including the undercarriage and tires, to ensure that mud, sand, dirt, muck and vegetative debris and any other debris are not transported from the previous treatment site. All hand-held equipment such as chain saws, loppers, etc. used for treatment activities must be wiped down and cleaned so that they are free of debris.

6. All equipment used shall be in good repair and operating condition at all times and be in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations. All equipment shall meet all safety standards as established for that piece of equipment. All equipment

shall be operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. All equipment shall be equipped with all appropriate safety guards, as specified by the manufacturer. The MDMR reserves the right to request replacement of equipment or personnel if deemed to be unsafe or operating in an unsafe manner.

Q4. What is the deadline for the proposal?

A4. May 12, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.