

**Response to Inquiries No. 1
Request for Proposals for Marsh Habitat Monitoring**

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

This Response to Inquiries No. 1 is for clarification purposes only and in no way amends the RFP. In the event of any conflict between the RFP and this Response to Inquiries No. 1, the RFP, as amended by any applicable amendments, shall govern. All defined terms in this Response to Inquiries No. 1 not herein defined shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the RFP.

Q1. *The second paragraph on page 2 states, "Additionally, post-implementation data will be compared to reference sites to track trajectories of restoration success of the above mentioned data components, to understand and predict success or to determine the need for corrective actions on the respective marsh construction projects."*

Is this comparative activity to be part of this project or will the comparison be done under another award?

A1. Comparative data analysis will be required to be included in a final report summarizing data collection results for each site.

Q2. *Can you please verify that the Allen firm and our team members would be conflicted out of this opportunity.*

A2. Yes, the Allen firm and its team members on the engineering and design portion of the Utilization of Dredge Material for Marsh Restoration in Coastal Mississippi Project are not eligible to participate in the post-construction monitoring portion of the Project. The RFQ for Engineering and Design Services for the Utilization of Dredge Material for Marsh Restoration in Coastal Mississippi Project stated that the firm selected would not be eligible for the monitoring services.

Q3. *Would Brown, Mitchell & Alexander, the contractor selected for Planning Services for the Utilization of Dredge Material for Marsh Restoration in Coastal Mississippi Project, be excluded from submitting a proposal to this RFP?*

A3. No, the RFQ for Planning Services for the referenced Project only excluded the selected contractor from engineering and design services.

Q4. *How many restoration sites will there be? Only 3? Four (Round Island plus one in each county)? Or potentially more?*

A4. It is unknown at this point how many restoration sites there will be. We have an estimated number of acres that will be monitored, and likely there will be four areas

in which restoration will take place – St. Louis Bay, Back Bay Biloxi, Escaptawpa / Pascagoula confluence, and Round Island.

Q5. *Regarding Section II Task (D): Does the task require 50 plots/restoration-site, 50 plots/reference-site, both, or 50 plots per primary area (see first sentence in Section II -- 3 primary areas)? We assume 50 plots/site, but want to make sure.*

The answers to those 2 questions could have a significant effect on plans and pricing.

A5. There will be a maximum of 50 vegetation plots per restoration site and per reference site. It is anticipated that most sites will have significantly less than 50 plots. Distance between transects will be 50m, with no less than 2 transects per site.

Q6. *Regarding Section II Task (D) again: The statement is made, "Equivalent transects can be mapped and plots derived from satellite/aerial imagery." Does this mean the transects and plots can be established from aerial imagery and monitored via aerial imagery? In fact, how can you establish transects and plots BEFORE construction? Is the establishment based on a construction plan from someone else?*

A6. Vegetation can be monitored several different ways, one of which is aerial imagery. If aerial imagery is utilized, adequate resolution of imagery and associated ground truthing will be required to validate monitoring.

Transects and plots will be established prior to construction and will be based on the engineering and design plans provided by the engineering and design contractor hired on this Project.

Q7. *In Section II Task (D), a sampling distance is provided for the vegetation monitoring plots and a maximum number of plots is specified. However, in Section II Task (B), the phrase "regularly spaced intervals" is used. Is there a numerical regular spacing interval or number of samples which MDEQ desires or is that up to the proponent to specify in their response?*

A7. Distance between vegetation transects is 50m. Regular spacing for collecting elevation data will be up to the proponent to specify based on the accuracy and precision prediction of their methodology.

Q8. *Will a subcontractor on the Allen Engineering and Science (AllenES) Team that won the solicitation for Engineering and Design Services for the Utilization of Dredge Material for Marsh Restoration Project with MDEQ be eligible for participation in this Marsh Habitat Monitoring RFQ?*

- A8. The prime contractor as well as all subcontractors for the engineering and design services on the Project will not be eligible to win the Marsh Habitat Monitoring contract.
- Q9. *Page 3, scope of work: Sites are defined as one each in respective counties and Round Island in Pascagoula. Will MDEQ provide pre-submission access to any sites?***
- A9. Monitoring of marsh creation/restoration will occur in three restoration areas: St. Louis Bay, Back Bay Biloxi, and the Pascagoula/Escatawpa system. In addition to these sites, Round Island will also be monitored in the Mississippi Sound. Marsh reference sites will be located in each of the coastal counties. Potential offerors are welcome to access Round Island at their own discretion and liability, but at this stage there are no other sites.
- Q10. *Page 8, paragraph (5) relevant to price references V(H) but I am a bit confused about the last two sentences of V(H). Should offerors submit an estimate of overall cost in addition to hourly rates and percentages assigned to each position?***
- A10. An estimate of overall costs is not required. Offerors should provide the hourly rate for each position on its team, including subcontractors, that it intends to utilize to complete the scope of work. A percentage of the total amount of work should be assigned to each listed position, and the total percentages should equal 100%.
- Q11. *The RFQ refers to QA/QC measures – is there a minimum requirement and level of effort for QA/QC?***
- A11. QA/QC will be developed per Section II.(A) of the RFP.
- Q12. *Will all the restoration projects and associated monitoring be ongoing or staggered and how does that play into the four (4) year period of performance?***
- A12. The restoration projects and associated monitoring will be staggered. See Section II.(D) of the RFP.
- Q13. *Is there a conflict between the requirement under Section V.(E) for a project manager to be located in the State of Mississippi and the requirement under Section V.(K) for a non-resident contractor to provide of copy of its state preference law?***
- A13. No. A non-resident contractor should provide a copy of the preference law for its state and plan to have a project manager located in Mississippi for the duration of the contract, if awarded to the non-resident contractor.
- Q14. *How long will the monitoring period be?***

A14. The monitoring period under a contract awarded pursuant to this RFP will be for a four (4) year initial term with the option, at MDEQ's discretion, to extend the contract for one (1) year.

Q15. *Will construction contractors for the restoration sites be separate?*

A15. It is anticipated that there will be multiple construction contracts for the restoration site.

Q16. *Will the monitoring team have to work with the firms performing the work for the Planning and E&D phases?*

A16. MDEQ will coordinate among its various contractors as necessary to assist the offeror selected for the monitoring services.

Q17. *Can equipment cost be included in the cost of the proposal?*

A17. Yes, but it should be built in the rate schedule(s) per Section V.(H) of the RFP.

Q18. *Would the elevation parameters required by the specifications for the protective sand berm (Round Island) be considered the post-implementation monitoring?*

A18. The contractor performing the monitoring services will need to validate the final elevations resulting from the construction.

Q19. *When does the monitoring for this Project start?*

A19. The monitoring start date will be determined based on when reference sites are selected for the Round Island restoration site.

Q20. *Sometimes low tide sampling does not occur in daylight hours. Will that impact monitoring?*

A20. The contractor will only be required to work in daylight hours and professional judgment regarding the timing of sampling(s) should be used.

Q21. *Can you describe the dimension/height for the containment structure for Round Island?*

A21. The Mississippi Sound Sand Berm Project (Round Island containment structure) involves the placement of approximately 14,100 linear feet sand berm with a constricted height of +8 ft. MLLW and a final height of +4 -+7 ft. MLLW. Width of the berm will be 300 ft. at the base with a variation in top width depending on water depth.

Q22. *Will the project/site benchmarks for the Mississippi Sound Sand Berm Project be made available for monitoring and will that serve as the control throughout monitoring?*

A22. Yes. It is anticipated that these benchmarks will be available for use, however, changes to the site during construction may render those benchmarks useless. All data pertaining to survey work will be available to the contractor.

Q23. *If the benchmarks are destroyed, will they be replaced?*

A23. The contractor selected for these monitoring services will be responsible for replacing benchmarks as needed to perform the monitoring requirements.

Q24. *Will this Project use the Mississippi State Plane Coordinate System as the horizontal reference for dimension measurements?*

A24. Yes.

Q25. *For Round Island, is there a specific reference site?*

A25. Round Island will be compared to each reference site in each of the counties along with the rest of the restoration sites for this Project.

Q26. *Will MDEQ provide the reference sites for this contract?*

A26. Yes.

Q27. *How can you have consistent monitoring if the monitoring begins upon the completion of construction at each site, which causes it to be staggered?*

A27. A monitoring protocol will be developed to maintain consistency across sites and through time. Pursuant to state law, the term under an initial contract for monitoring services may not exceed five (5) years.

Q28. *What is the budget for this contract?*

A28. This information is not being disclosed.

Q29. *Can you provide guidance for the budget to respond to this proposal if the dollar amount is unavailable?*

A29. The hourly rate schedules requested in the RFP will be used to evaluate the price component of the proposals.

Q30. *Will state funded data acquisition projects be available to be utilized for this project?*

A30. Yes.

Q31. *When is the planning study associated with this Project due to be complete?*

A31. The planning study is anticipated to be completed from July – August 2016.

Q32. *Will the cost proposal/rate sheet be subject to the 30 page limit?*

A32. Yes.

Q33. *Will the sign-in sheets and slides from the pre-submittal meeting be available?*

A33. Yes. Please see Attachment A for the sign-in sheets and Attachment B for the presentation slides.

Q34. *What are the goals for MBE/WBE participation?*

A34. No goals have been established. However, MDEQ highly encourages participation of MBEs/WBEs per Section XXII of the RFP.

Q35. *Will reference sites be established even if construction has not begun?*

A35. Yes.

Q36. *Will the reference sites only be monitored if they are associated with restoration?*

A36. Yes.

Q37. *Will the proposal deadline be extended?*

A37. An extension of the deadline to submit proposals is not anticipated.

Q38. *For reimbursable travel costs, can we include indirect expenses (G&A expense)?*

A38. Mileage will be reimbursed at the federal rate. Work-related meals shall be reimbursed based on the state per diem. All of other expenses, including general and administrative, should be built into the hourly rate schedules. See Section V.(H) of the RFP.

Q39. *As a university faculty member, I am commonly participating in more than one proposal submission with different roles and duties for each proposal in response to a grant RFP. Is this allowed under the current MDEQ RFP?*

A39. Yes.

Q40. *The contractor will estimate percent cover of species or non-species (e.g. bare soil; water) to the closest 5% at each plot and identify every species present and record the average height of the dominant three species. It is not clear as to what "every species" means. It is implied that "every species" is a higher plant species and does not include animal, lower plant (e.g. algae, bacteria, fungi, etc.) species. Is this correct?*

A40. Correct, species to be collected are rooted, vascular plant species such as *Juncus roemerianus* and *Spartina alterniflora*.

Q41. *It is hard to establish vegetation monitoring plots before the marshes are created. We will need the proposed construction plans for this. It is possible to establish the monitoring plots in the reference sites. For cost analysis we will need to know the number and length of transects for the proposed and reference sites. I assume we will have these.*

A41. Monitoring plots and transects for restoration sites will be derived from the Engineering and Design plans for each site. These plans will be provided to the contractor when complete.

The number of transects will be dependent on the size of the restoration site, which is unknown at this time with the exception of Round Island which equals 200 acres. Transect lengths will be 100 meters as stated in Section II (D) of the RFP, with 50m spacings between transects, with a minimum of two transects per site. Given the acreage and the maximum number of plots per site, the offeror could estimate a cost on the maximum number of plots anticipated (*i.e.*, 4 restoration sites and 3 reference sites x maximum of 50 plots per site; approximately 600 acres total).

Q42. *It appears that onsite elevation data will be collected and LiDAR is proposed. Who will be collecting the LiDAR and aerial photography and will the photography be true color, color-infrared, or multispectral?*

A42. It is incumbent upon the offeror to describe a methodology for elevation data collection. This method can include, but is not limited to LiDAR data acquisition. Other methods are briefly described in Section II (B) of the RFP. Aerial photography should primarily be used to measure areal extent of marsh habitat if this method is employed. The offeror should indicate the best data product to collect areal extent which may include a multiband data product.

Q43. *We are asked to provide hourly rates for this proposal, will that be included in the max 30 page count?*

A43. Yes.

Q44. *Concerning the criteria for the Non-resident Contractor, does this apply only to the prime or our subconsultants as well? Also is this included in the max 30 page count?*

A44. The obligation for a non-resident contractor to provide a copy of its state's preference laws only applies to the prime contractor. No, it will not be included in the 30-page maximum.

Q45. *Acknowledge of Amendments : If there are amendments and we need to acknowledge receipt, will that be included in the 30 pages?*

A45. No, acknowledging an amendment will not be included in the 30-page limit.

Q46. *Offer Affidavit – Is this only required by the prime firm or do our subs need to complete as well?*

A46. Only the prime contractor is required to submit an Offeror's Affidavit.

Q47. *If we decide to use charts or other graphics in our proposal, can the font be smaller than 12?*

A47. Yes, the font used in charts or graphics can be smaller than 12 point.

Q48. *For pre- and post-construction elevations, will DEQ require licensed surveyor if elevations can be determined without a licensed professional?*

A48. No, MDEQ will not require a licensed surveyor to collect elevation data points for this Project. There are no certification requirements associated with this RFP.

Q49. *Is there room for % increase on hourly wage over the 4-5 year period to deal with inflation? Or is the hour wage fixed for the duration of the project?*

A49. The hourly wage rates will be fixed for the duration of the Project.

Q50. *To whom will GIS and vegetation data be reported to within the 60 days of collection and in what form/format would they like vegetation data?*

A50. Data should be submitted to Robbie Kroger with Covington Civil & Environmental (rkroger@cce.ms). GIS data should be in the Mississippi State Plane horizontal coordinate system and use NAVD88 as the vertical datum. Vegetation plot data can be submitted in spreadsheet format with location coordinates included.

Q51. *How much area should the vegetation monitoring plots/quadrats encompass? 2m x 2m?*

A51. Vegetation plot data should be collected using a 1m x 1m quadrat.

Q52. *Should the vegetation and elevation points be collected at the same locations within the project area?*

A52. Elevation data collection points can be in the same locations at vegetation plots, but it is anticipated that more elevation points will need to be collected per site than the number of vegetation plots established. Offerors can use a Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) to determine the appropriate number of sites per area. Given that area is unknown for some restoration sites, offerors can use the total acreage available in the RFP (approximately 600 acres total: 200 acres for Round Island, 300 acres for the three reference sites, and 100 acres for the remainder of the restoration sites) to determine estimates.

ATTACHMENT A

MDEQ

SIGN IN SHEET

Marsh Restoration Monitoring Pre-bid Meeting

February 29, 2016

NAME	ORGANIZATION, if applicable	PHONE#	EMAIL ADDRESS
Dr. Himangshu Das	Jackson State University	(601) 979-0549	himangshu.s.das@jsums.edu
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TERRY WHITEHURST	BARRY YITTA & ASSOC, INC	(251) 633-6100	twhitehurst@bvaenviro.com
David Moore, Jr	USM	228-806-0049	David.Moore@osm.gov
DONALD BACH, P.E.	GARRETT ECI	601-291-1289	Donbac@ecol.com
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Thelma Boyd	ARK CONSULTANTS, LLC	601-954-2354	arkconsultants60@gmail.com
Brant Pettis	Balch	228-224-0080	bpettis@balch.com
Meghan Maravia	SR	571-205-4026	maravia@restoreecosystems.com
Jim Kelly	3-POINT ECO-LOGICAL	228 217 2841	JKK@HOTMAIL.COM
Reg Stowers	Anchor QEA/MHSP	228-818-9624	psstowers@anchorgea.com
Leah Bray	Anchor QEA	228-818-9624	lbray@anchorgea.com
ERIC Nedaise	FTN Associates	228 493-9500	etn@ftn-assoc.com
Moby Solangi	IMMS	228 547 0757	Moby@imms.org
Adam Goodine	Ramboll Environ	504 648 2123	agoodine@ramboll.com
Craig High	Weel-schaffer	601-543-3372	Craig.High@weel-schaffer.com

MDEQ
SIGN IN SHEET

Marsh Restoration Monitoring Pre-bid Meeting
February 29, 2016

NAME	ORGANIZATION, if applicable	PHONE#	EMAIL ADDRESS
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Melanie Dier	MDEQ		
Ken Eaton	MDEQ		
Sarah Tracy	MDEQ		
Eric Kung'appa	MDEQ		
Tabitha Baum	MDEQ		
Kim Smith	MDEQ		
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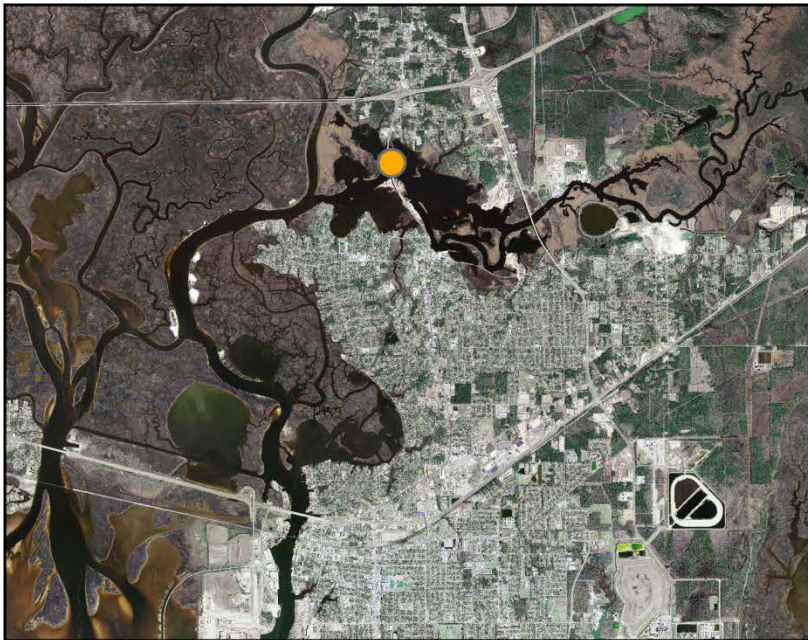
ATTACHMENT B

NFWF Marsh Restoration Project Monitoring RFP Pre-Submittal Meeting

February 29, 2016



Priority Coastal Bays and Estuaries



NFWF Marsh Restoration Project Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Create functional containment structures as appropriate for each marsh creation site

Goal 2: Restore marsh habitat in appropriate locations utilizing beneficial and dedicated dredge material

Goal 3: Construct living breakwater structures (as applicable) to protect restored and natural marsh areas as needed

NFWF Marsh Restoration Project Overview

Planning (Not Included in Contract)

- Develop criteria and guidelines for marsh creation locations, and research historic dredging activities and current permitted dredge activities
- Determine specific site locations for marsh creation
- Determine best containment options, living shoreline breakwater options, and marsh creation characteristics

February 2016

Engineering and Design (Not Included in Contract)

- Engineering and design of containment, marsh, and living shoreline breakwater as appropriate

March 2016

Construction (Not included in Contract)

- Multiple construction contracts as planning, engineering and permitting of specific sites are completed

April 2016

Monitoring

Monitoring and adaptive management

TBD



Making MS
Whole

Monitoring Project Overview

- Monitoring Components
 - Elevation and Vegetation: Dimension and vegetation characteristics
 - Pre-construction and Post-construction monitoring
 - Restoration site and Reference site monitoring
- Schedule
 - 4 year period of performance with potential 1 year renewal with MDEQ approval

Questions?