



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Assessing Socio-Economic Impacts for the
Restoration at Robinson Preserve

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: October 11, 2021

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to conduct modeling and collect socio-economic data that will assess economic value generated by a major wetland restoration project at the Robinson Preserve, contributing to our understanding of local socioeconomic benefits from habitat restoration and of how communities use and value restored coastal wetlands. NFWF is interested in quantifying the direct, indirect, and induced effects of the [Robinson Preserve restoration project](#). Robinson Preserve has undergone several phases of habitat restoration, supported by multiple partners including, the RESTORE Council, NOAA, NFWF, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, and Manatee County. This project seeks to address how habitat restoration has impacted local and regional recreational opportunities, particularly recreational fishing. Gathering data on the restoration site's on-site use, value to visitors, and the economic impact of visitor spending related to recreational fishing and other activities at the site is of interest. NFWF is currently partnering to collect biological data at Robinson Preserve to assess the ecological benefits of restoration actions and have additional interest in understanding any linkages to socioeconomic outcomes. Only one award will be made. The Period of Performance is estimated to be approximately one year.

BACKGROUND

The [Robinson Preserve](#), managed by Manatee County, is located in Bradenton, Florida. Habitat restoration began at the Preserve in the mid-2000s with Phase 1 work. In 2012, Manatee County acquired an adjacent parcel of ditched coastal farmland, expanding the Preserve to its current 682-acres footprint. Recently, NFWF and partners substantially completed Phase 2 restoration for 118.2 acres of the newly expanded Preserve (Figure 1). By modifying the hydrologic connectivity of the fallow farmland, the system is now a mosaic of tidally influenced open water features, transition zones of saltmarsh and mangrove wetlands, and include isolated freshwater ponds and enhanced uplands. Through the use of excavation and placement of dredge material, coastal wetlands were created and hydrologic connections were improved in the expanded portion of the Preserve. Phase 2 restoration incorporated fisheries' specific restoration design elements in order to create nursery habitat for recreationally important species (e.g. snook, tarpon, red drum, gray snapper). For example, the restoration included the purposeful design of water features with optimal depths for thermal refuge and pinch points to exclude larger fish (potential predators) from other areas intended to act as sport fish nursery habitat. Phase 2 activities also include outreach and education activities as well as pre-



NFWF



restoration (completed) and post-restoration (ongoing) monitoring of nekton by assessing abundance, growth, movement, survival, and emigration (Figure 1).

The Preserve includes several facilities managed by Manatee County to improve public access and recreation: a multi-use trail network, fishing access, canoe/kayak launches and paddling routes, picnic areas, a visitor center with exhibits, and structures for wildlife observation. Rod and Reel fishing is allowed at piers and bridges in the Preserve, giving anglers access to the salt marsh, Tampa Bay, and Perico Bayou.

Scope of work:

NFWF seeks a qualified applicant to collect data and analyze how restored coastal natural areas are used and valued by: (a) visitors to the Robinson Preserve and (b) the general population and minority/low-income communities of Manatee, Hillsborough, and

Sarasota Counties. Tasks 1-3 below relate to Robinson Preserve visitors. Tasks 4 and 5 relate to the use of coastal natural areas by regional residents. If selected, as part of completing the five tasks below, the applicant will be expected to provide an initial research plan describing scope and methods, interim progress reports, a final report presenting the results of the tasks below, and any data gathered for the project as deliverables to NFWF. Applicants should also describe a plan to make relevant study results available to the public at the conclusion of the project.

Visitors to Robinson Preserve

These tasks are focused on the Robinson Preserve in Manatee County, Florida.

Task 1a: Count the number of visitors to Robinson Preserve.

Description: Applicants should describe a method for counting the number of visitors to Robinson Preserve over an extended period (preferably one year to capture seasonal variation). The layout of Robinson Preserve allows for automated vehicle and people counters to be placed at major parking lots and trailheads.

Task 1b: Estimate the number of visitors participating in specific activities at Robinson Preserve (e.g., paddling, fishing, birdwatching, hiking).

Description: Applicants should describe a method for estimating the number of Robinson Preserve visitors engaging in different recreational activities at Robinson Preserve. The Preserve includes a multi-use trail network, fishing access, canoe/kayak launches and paddling routes, picnic areas, a visitor center



with exhibits, and structures for wildlife observation. The expected timing and duration of data collection should

be included in any description of methodology. The overall number of visitors to Robinson Preserve varies significantly by season, and some visitors likely visit the Preserve only when conditions are optimal for a specific activity (e.g., the park may attract more kayakers when water levels are high, more fishermen when certain sport fish are in season, or more birdwatchers when migratory species are most likely to be present). For recreational fishing activities, there is further interest in identifying the fish species targeted and caught by Preserve visitors.

Task 2: Analyze the impact of recreational spending related to Robinson Preserve on the local economy.

Description: Applicants should describe methods to gather data and estimate the effects of visits to and recreation at Robinson Preserve on local economic output and employment (to include Manatee County and, preferably, surrounding counties). This may require gathering data on the distance visitors travel to get to the Preserve, how often they visit, and spending associated with activities at or travel to the Preserve. If applicants expect to draw on existing travel cost or recreational spending data, they should briefly note the source of those data in their proposal. If applicants expect to survey visitors or collect observational data at the Preserve, they should describe the expected timing and duration of data collection.

Task 3: Estimate the value of Robinson Preserve to visitors.

Description: Applicants should propose methods to estimate Robinson Preserve's total economic value (use and nonuse values) to visitors. If applicants expect to use contingent valuation, a choice experiment, or other method that requires surveying visitors, they should describe the expected timing and duration of data collection. We would prefer applicants to use quantitative methods used in analyses of other coastal restoration sites, to support future cross-site comparisons.

General population

While the first three tasks focus narrowly on Robinson Preserve, this project is also intended to improve our understanding of how the general population uses and values coastal natural areas (with a focus on restored habitats). An important part of these tasks will be to assess usage by low-income and minority populations. The results of this study will inform planning for restoring and protecting coastal areas, helping site managers and funding agencies to prioritize public amenities and activities that are valuable to the community, broadly accessible, and compatible with habitat conservation and restoration.

Task 4: Estimate local residents' participation in outdoor activities compatible with coastal natural areas.

Description: Applicants should propose methods for estimating the participation of local residents in different outdoor activities that are available or could be supported by coastal natural areas. The results will be used to plan and improve public access to sites managed primarily for environmental protection. As such, the applicant should focus on activities with a limited footprint that are likely to be compatible with habitat conservation and restoration. This may include extractive activities (e.g., recreational fishing) and activities that require some built infrastructure (e.g., trails, shelters, parking, visitor centers, boat launches).



This study must consider the environmental justice implications of access to and use of coastal natural areas. In addition to estimating public participation in activities at coastal natural areas, applicants should describe methods to capture differences in how these areas are used by low-income residents, people of color, and other communities that may face barriers to access.

Task 5: Estimate the use value of common activities at coastal natural areas and the total economic value of coastal natural areas to local residents.

Description: Applicants should propose methods to estimate the value of common activities at coastal natural areas to participants. This is intended to capture the use value of these sites for visitors and study which activities are valued more or less by the public. In addition, applicants should propose methods to estimate the total economic value (use and non-use value) to local residents of expanding or improving/restoring local protected areas. This is intended to capture benefits from coastal natural areas that are not associated with on-site activities. We would prefer applicants to use quantitative methods used in similar socioeconomic studies, to support future cross-site comparisons.

REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND PROPOSED STAFF

Required expertise includes designing and implementing socioeconomic studies, building economic valuation models, and proficiency with any data collection and analysis software required for the Offeror's proposed technical approach. Additional experience with analyzing the environmental justice implications of resource management decisions is preferred.

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Offerors should organize their Statement based on these sections:

- 1. Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach should clearly describe how the offeror will conduct the tasks outlined in the above scope of work. The section must demonstrate that those methods are robust and appropriate for the project and should also address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with the process. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 30%
- 2. Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** The section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provide the requisite experience to do so successfully. Weight: 25%
- 3. Applicant's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance conducting modeling and socio-economic data collection efforts of this type. If sub-contractors are to be used, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well. Describe how that past performance is applicable to this evaluation. Weight: 20%



NFWF

- 4. Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use the [Budget Template](#) provided. Weight: 25%

ELIGIBLE OFFERORS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state and Indian tribal governments.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the Proposal, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Proposal) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the contractor, the contractor's employees, or the contractor's subcontractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise.

Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror's employees, or the offeror's future subcontractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the Offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a Contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an Contract with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Is listed on the General Services Administration's, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension," or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other



NFWF

Contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions instructions can be found here:

https://www.fws.gov/northeast/refuges/agreements/Documents/SAM_Exclusions_how_do_i_search_exclusions.pdf

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same email at the same time, in three distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) Budget, and 3) Evidence of Financial Stability. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to NFWF (Margette Bourne at Margette.Bourne@nfwf.org) using the requirements below:

1. Technical Proposal

- ***Format:*** Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
- ***Contact information:*** Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- ***Narrative:*** Concise (5-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered.
- ***Biographies:*** Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area.
- ***References:*** List two clients who have received services from the applicant that are similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email address.

2. **Budget:** The budget proposal must be submitted using the following NFWF [budget template](#).

3. **Evidence of Financial Stability:** The applicant shall provide with the RFP response, proof of financial stability in the form of financial statements, credit ratings, a line of credit, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant's capability to meet the requirements of this RFP.



NFWF

SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF and project partner staff will review the full proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Only one award will be made for this project. If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through sub-contracts.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

September 24, 2021

Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF.

Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Margette Bourne (margette.bourne@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. In order to provide equitable responses, all questions must be received by NFWF **no later than 11:59 PM EDT on September 24, 2021.**

September 29, 2021

NFWF response to questions about the solicitation.

NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website at.

October 11, 2021

Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals.

Proposals must be received electronically as an email attachment to Margette Bourne (margette.bourne@nfwf.org) by **11:59 PM EDT on October 11 2021.** Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.

Mid-November 2021

Contract to selected Offeror