



Request for Quotation

Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network Enhancements for Southwest Louisiana and Central Texas

Requesting Organization:

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
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Contact Information:

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Application Deadline: March 6, 2023 11:59 PM Eastern Time

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), seeks qualified Contractors to assist us with the implementation of Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) Enhancements in the Gulf of Mexico for the *Deepwater Horizon* Regionwide Trustee Implementation Group (RW TIG) Project. The *Deepwater Horizon* Sea Turtle Early Restoration project is designed to restore sea turtle populations impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill. The project addresses threats to sea turtles on land and in the marine environment and is focused on Kemp's ridley, green, and loggerhead sea turtles. The funding for these contracts will provide personnel, equipment, supplies, and technical expertise to enhance the ability of the STSSN to conduct sea turtle stranding surveys and respond to live and dead stranded sea turtles in Louisiana, and / or Texas.

The successful Contractors will be selected through a competitive process that assesses the Contractors' plan for achieving stated work items, technical qualifications, and cost considerations. The award level will be based on the Foundation's evaluation of the proposal and budget documentation and contingent upon available funding.

The Contract Period of Performance is estimated to be nine (9) months (including final reporting), with NFWF's option to annually extend for up to an additional three (3) years, for a total period of up to 3 years 9 months. Offerors can submit proposals to work in 1, 2 or all 3 of the Areas of Interest outlined below, with annual budgets for each proposed Areas of Interest submitted on separate tabs of the budget spreadsheet.

BACKGROUND

Since 2007, NFWF has partnered with NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) to implement restoration activities related to injuries from oil spills, vessel groundings, and hazardous waste releases. These activities achieve our mutual mission to further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

The comprehensive *Deepwater Horizon* Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project, as outlined in the [Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments](#), contains four complementary components. NOAA is the lead implementation Trustee on the “Enhancement of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) and Development of an Emergency Response Program” and the “Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Trawl Bycatch Reduction” components. NOAA is partnering with NFWF to complete activities associated with enhancing the STSSN across the Gulf of Mexico.

Three Areas of Interest across the Gulf of Mexico have been identified by NOAA and STSSN partners for enhanced stranding surveys and response: 1) SE Louisiana remote barrier islands (Figures 1a and 1b), 2) SW Louisiana beaches (Figure 2), and 3) Matagorda Island, TX (Figure 3).



Figure 1a. SE Louisiana barrier islands east of Grand Isle, LA for sea turtle stranding response and surveys



Figure 1b. SE Louisiana barrier islands west of Port Fourchon, LA for sea turtle stranding response and surveys

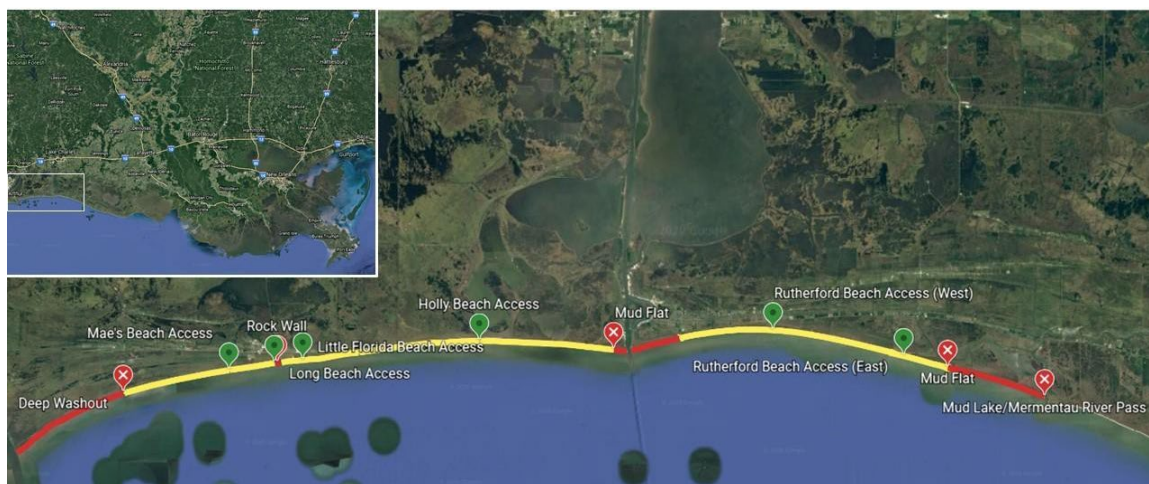


Figure 2. Beaches in southwest Louisiana for sea turtle stranding response and surveys



Figure 3. Beaches on Matagorda Island, Texas for sea turtle stranding response and surveys

In each of the three areas of interest, project goals to be addressed include:

- conduct sea turtle stranding surveys
- document stranded sea turtles and salvage sea turtle carcasses according to protocols
- transport live stranded sea turtles to a USFWS-approved sea turtle rehabilitation facility or a designated meeting place and transport sea turtle carcasses to the STSSN State Coordinator or a designated meeting place
- conduct opportunistic educational outreach during surveys/response
- provide stranding and survey data/forms in a timely manner

SCOPE OF WORK

Area of Interest 1: SE Louisiana Remote Barrier Islands- Stranding surveys and response

The SE Louisiana coast is a mix of inhabited and uninhabited barrier islands, marshes, and bays.

Uninhabited islands to the east of Grand Isle and to the west of Port Fourchon are likely to have stranded sea turtles wash ashore but they are not likely to be reported unless a boater or wildlife observer working on these islands sees the stranded turtle and knows to report it to the STSSN. Due to the remote nature of these islands, additional and dedicated effort is needed to document and recover stranded sea turtles from these beaches. Accessing these islands will require a small boat and surveys must be conducted below the mean high tide line.

The Contractor will ensure a minimum of two stranding response personnel are available in SE Louisiana during the peak stranding season, from April through June for dedicated stranding surveys and to provide timely response to sea turtle strandings per STSSN protocols. Optionally, up to 4 days during the last week of March may be used for mobilization of personnel, preparation of gear/equipment, and preliminary surveys to identify hazards before dedicated stranding surveys begin on April 1, and up to 2 days may be

used for demobilizing survey efforts at the end of June/beginning of July. The Contractor will conduct sea turtle stranding surveys on barrier islands east of Grand Isle and west of Port Fourchon, maintaining a minimum of two person teams due to the remote location and risks associated with small boat operations and beach surveys/driving. Islands identified as high and medium priority (Figures 1a, 1b) are to be surveyed below the mean high tide line on foot or by ATV. The desired survey effort is to complete one survey per high and medium priority island every other week. The Contractor may alternate survey areas on a weekly basis if desired. For example, during the first week, surveys may be conducted east of Grand Isle on high priority barrier islands (Chaland Headland) and medium priority barrier islands (East Grand Terre and Grand Terre); and during the second week, surveys may be conducted west of Port Fourchon on high priority barrier islands (Whiskey and Timbalier) and medium priority barrier islands (Trinity and West Belle Pass). Additional survey locations (i.e., on lower priority islands), alternate survey frequency, and use of drones to conduct surveys would be reviewed and considered in coordination with NOAA.

Deliverables: The Contractor will: (1) coordinate survey schedule and stranding response with the LA STSSN State Coordinator, (2) conduct stranding surveys on high and medium priority islands at least one time every other week, (3) photograph and measure stranded turtles, (4) complete STSSN forms and survey logs, (5) collect carcasses according to protocols and guidelines for salvaging carcasses for necropsy and transport to an STSSN freeze at the LDWF lab or an alternate location in Grand Isle, (6) bury or dispose of carcasses not suitable for necropsy, (7) transport live stranded sea turtles to a specified destination in coordination with the LA STSSN State Coordinator (to be charged only when activity is performed, estimated up to 5 times during performance period), (8) report basic stranding data and photos to the LA STSSN State Coordinator within 48 hours, (9) enter stranding data and forms into the STSSN database within 7 days or upload survey logs, stranding forms and photos to a shared google drive folder within 7 days.

Area of Interest 2: SW Louisiana - Stranding Surveys and Response

SW Louisiana beaches are remote and previous stranding surveys indicated large numbers of sea turtles strand along this stretch of coast; however, stranding reports are infrequent because the area is sparsely populated. NOAA has enhanced the STSSN in this area by conducting periodic stranding surveys, encouraging residents to report strandings to the LA STSSN hotline through outreach and education, and providing stranding responder training to local residents. Additional and dedicated effort is needed to document stranded sea turtles in SW Louisiana. There is a need for frequent, dedicated sea turtle stranding surveys along approximately 40 miles of shoreline from the TX/LA state line to Rutherford Beach (Figure 3) during the peak stranding season (March through June) to document stranded sea turtles and collect carcasses for NOAA's mortality investigations. No permits are required for driving on the beach in SW Louisiana.

The Contractor will ensure at least two trained and permitted sea turtle stranding response personnel are available in the SW Louisiana area (e.g. communities such as Lake Charles, LA; Port Arthur, TX; Holly Beach, LA) from the last week of March through June for dedicated stranding surveys and to provide timely response to sea turtle strandings per STSSN protocols. Optionally, up to 4 days during the last week of March may be used for mobilization of personnel, preparation of gear/equipment, and preliminary surveys to identify hazards before dedicated stranding surveys begin on April 1, and if necessary up to 2 days may be used for demobilizing survey efforts at the end of June/beginning of July. The Contractor will conduct sea turtle stranding surveys along approximately 30 miles of shoreline from the TX/LA state line to



Rutherford Beach maintaining a minimum of two person teams due to the remote location and risks associated with beach driving. The desired survey frequency is five days per week, weather permitting. Additional survey locations and alternate survey frequency would be reviewed and considered in coordination with NOAA.

Deliverables: The Contractor will: (1) coordinate survey schedule and stranding response with the LA STSSN State Coordinator, (2) conduct stranding surveys up to 5 days per week, weather permitting, (3) respond to strandings on non-survey days as needed (to be charged only when activity is performed, estimated up to 10 times per performance period), (4) photograph and measure stranded turtles, (5) complete STSSN forms and survey logs, (6) collect carcasses according to protocols and guidelines for salvaging carcasses for necropsy and transport to an STSSN freezer, (7) in consultation with the LA STSSN State Coordinator, transport frozen carcasses to Audubon Nature Institute or a specified location as needed (to be charged only when activity is performed, estimated up to 4 times per performance period), (8) bury or dispose of carcasses not suitable for necropsy, (9) in coordination with the LA STSSN State Coordinator, transport live stranded sea turtles to a rehabilitation facility or designated meeting place (to be charged only when activity is performed, estimated up to 5 times per performance period), (10) report basic stranding data and photos to the LA STSSN State Coordinator within 48 hours, (11) enter stranding data and forms into the STSSN database within 7 days, (12) upload survey logs to a shared google drive folder within 7 days, and (13) conduct opportunistic educational outreach with the public during stranding surveys/response and document the number of handouts distributed on survey logs. Costs for reproducing NOAA-approved outreach materials will be considered up to \$500.

Area of Interest 3: Matagorda Island, TX - Stranding Surveys and Response

Matagorda Island is a remote barrier island along the central Texas coast. The land is jointly owned and managed by the Texas General Land Office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is cooperatively managed as the Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge and State Natural Area. Texas Parks and Wildlife manages the Area for public use and the Fish and Wildlife Service has the main responsibility for managing the wildlife and habitat on the island. The island is 38 miles long and accessible by boat. There are no fees, permits, or restrictions on the use of this area. Due to the remote nature of this stretch of coast, additional and dedicated effort is needed to document and recover stranded sea turtles from this area.

The Contractor will ensure at least two trained and permitted sea turtle stranding response personnel are available from April through August for dedicated stranding surveys and to provide timely response to sea turtle strandings per STSSN protocols along approximately 35 miles of shoreline on Matagorda Island, maintaining a minimum of two person teams due to the remote location and risks associated with beach driving. Optionally, up to 4 days during the last week of March may be used for mobilization of personnel, preparation of gear/equipment, and preliminary surveys to identify hazards before dedicated stranding surveys begin on April 1, and if necessary up to 2 days may be used for demobilizing survey efforts during the last week of August. The desired survey frequency is 2 days per week, weather permitting. Alternate survey frequency would be reviewed and considered in coordination with NOAA.

Deliverables: The Contractor will: (1) conduct two stranding surveys per week, weather permitting, (2) coordinate stranding response with the STSSN State Coordinator, (3) photograph and measure stranded turtles, (4) complete STSSN forms, (5) collect carcasses according to protocols and guidelines for salvaging carcasses for necropsy and transport to an STSSN freezer, (6) bury or dispose of carcasses not suitable for necropsy, (7) transport live stranded sea turtles to a rehabilitation facility as instructed by the TX STSSN



State Coordinator, (8) report basic stranding data and photos to the TX STSSN within 48 hours, (9) submit completed stranding forms to the TX STSSN within 7 days, and (10) upload survey logs and stranding forms to a shared google drive folder within 7 days.

Schedule: Desired timelines for these contracts includes—

- Area of Interest 1 & 2: LA STSSN Enhancements
 - March 2023 – Contract(s) begin
 - March 26, 2023 - June 30, 2023 – Contractor(s) conduct(s) activities in Louisiana
 - September 31, 2023 – Final report due to NFWF
- Areas of Interest 3: TX STSSN Enhancements
 - March 2023 – Contract begins
 - March 26, 2023 - August 31, 2023 – Contractor conducts activities in Texas
 - November 30, 2023 – Final Report due to NFWF

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Area of Interest 1 - The Contractor must have access to a small boat for travel to remote barrier islands and experience driving small boats, a vehicle capable of beach driving and transporting carcasses (4WD truck, ATV, or UTV), and experience conducting beach surveys for wildlife (e.g., driving an ATV, UTV, or 4WD truck to survey for sea turtles, birds, or other wildlife). Experience in documenting and responding to reports of stranded sea turtles is desired and all candidates must complete the required STSSN training before handling stranded sea turtles. Equipment required for documenting strandings includes: smart phone or digital camera, GPS unit, personal computer or tablet, and internet. A chest freezer to store carcasses or ability to coordinate with other STSSN partners for freezer access is necessary. The individuals must be able to work in remote locations, be comfortable working with dead animals, and be able to lift up to 50 lbs. Familiarity with the local area is desirable but not required.

Area of Interest 2 - The Contractor must have access to a vehicle capable of beach driving and transporting carcasses (4WD truck, ATV, or UTV) and experience conducting beach driving surveys for wildlife (e.g., driving an ATV, UTV, or 4WD truck to survey for sea turtles, birds, or other wildlife). Experience in documenting and responding to reports of stranded sea turtles is desired and all candidates must complete the required STSSN training before handling stranded sea turtles. Equipment required for documenting strandings includes: smart phone or digital camera, GPS unit, personal computer or tablet, and internet. A chest freezer to store carcasses or ability to coordinate with other STSSN partners for freezer access is necessary. The individuals must be able to work in remote locations, be comfortable working with dead animals and be able to lift up to 50 lbs. Familiarity with the local area is desirable but not required.

Area of Interest 3 - The Contractor must have access to a vehicle capable of beach driving and transporting carcasses (4WD truck, ATV, or UTV) and experience conducting beach driving surveys for wildlife (e.g., driving an ATV, UTV, or 4WD truck to survey for sea turtles, birds, or other wildlife). Experience in documenting and responding to reports of stranded sea turtles is desired and all candidates must complete the required STSSN training before handling stranded sea turtles. Equipment required for documenting strandings includes: smart phone or digital camera, GPS unit, personal computer or tablet, and internet. A chest freezer to store carcasses or ability to coordinate with other STSSN partners for freezer access is necessary. The individuals must be able to work in remote locations, be comfortable working with dead animals and be able to lift up to 50 lbs. Familiarity with the local area is desirable but not required.

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

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

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Scope of Work must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables.
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for conducting stranding surveys and stranding response and reporting should clearly describe the proposed methods necessary to conduct the project. The section must demonstrate that those methods are robust and appropriate for conducting the project and address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with conducting the project.
3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** This 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.
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance experience in conducting beach surveys and stranding response. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered. If subcontractors 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.
5. **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 attached Contractor Budget Template. You may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed, but should not make any other changes. If applicable, please include the proposed budget for equipment purchase in the proposal separate from the Contractor Budget Template.

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 Statement of Quotations, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Quotations) 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 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.sam.gov/SAM/>

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same cover 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 (Jody Olson, Jody.Olson@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 (10-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience, organized by the Criteria for Competitive Applications.

- 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 is 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 [Budget Instructions | NFWF](#).
 3. **Evidence of Financial Stability:** The applicant shall provide 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 solicitation.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF and NOAA staff will review the proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Specific funding amounts will be negotiated with NFWF and funding for optional elements will be considered based upon the expressed needs of the Project. As Offerors may apply for 1, 2, or 3 of the requested Areas of Interest, multiple awards may be selected under this RFQ. If multiple institutions are involved within a single application, they should be handled through subcontracts.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

February 24, 2023	Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Jody Olson (Jody.Olson@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 sent to NFWF no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on February 24, 2023
March 1, 2023	NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the RFQ website.
March 6, 2023	Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals. Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to Jody Olson (Jody.Olson@nfwf.org) by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on March 6, 2023 . Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.
April 2023	Contract award to selected Offeror
January 2024	Deliverables Due