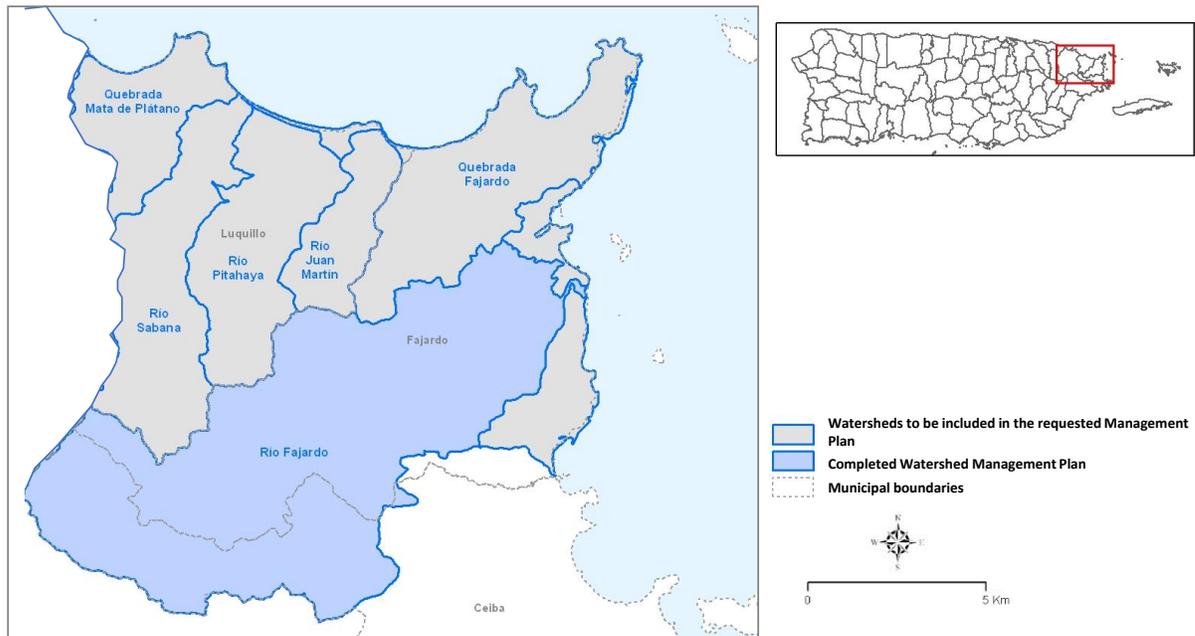


Request for Proposal **Northeast Ecological Corridor Natural Reserve Watersheds Management Plan**

Due: 4:00pm on February 16, 2016

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Puerto Rico Coral Reef Program (PRCRP) under the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) is seeking to engage the services of a qualified firm or individual (hereinafter known as the Consultant) to lead the preparation of a comprehensive watersheds management plan (WMP) for the eight (8) watersheds of the Northeast Ecological Corridor Natural Reserve (CEN, by its Spanish acronym), that extend through the coast of the municipalities of Luquillo and Fajardo. These are the Quebrada Mata de Plátano, Río Sabana, Río Pitahaya, Río Juan Martín, Quebrada Fajardo, and three other coastal watersheds. This Project is possible thanks to the sponsorship of the NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program.



The selected Consultant will work under the direction of the PRCRP Coordinator, the DNER Director of the Bureau of Coasts, Reserves and Refuges, and the DNER Watershed Advisory Committee, a volunteer committee reporting to the DNER Secretary. The contractor must maintain collaboration with federal agencies such as NOAA and NRCS, since the beginning of the process.

It is the intent of DNER to contract one firm. If sub-contractors or sub-consultants are used, they and their responsibilities must clearly be identified in the Consultant's



proposal. The performance of any sub-consultant shall be the sole responsibility of the Consultant. The Consultant will supervise the sub-consultant(s) work, keeping in mind that DNER will coordinate the project solely with the Consultant.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Northeast Ecological Corridor Natural Reserve (CEN, by its Spanish acronym) is comprised of a sequence of terrestrial and marine habitats, riverbeds, ravines, and estuarine lagoons, conforming an important biological corridor. The terrestrial and marine resources of this Reserve are impacted by the water flow from several watersheds, such as the rivers Juan Martín and Sabana. To cope with the challenge of managing such a vast area, in a coordinated effort, with limited funds and many stakeholders, the PRCRP in coordination with NOAA CRCP determined to create a watershed management plan (WMP) that will guide the activities conducted in the area, in order to conserve and preserve the region's resources, particularly its coral reefs.

The Fajardo River WMP was recently completed. Therefore, the Fajardo River WMP is not part of the scope of this RFP.

NOAA is conducting the management plan for the marine portion of the North East Reserves (from Río Espíritu Santo to Canal Luis Peña Natural Reserves). The information from this management plan should be taken into consideration in the development of the requested WMP. Some of the agencies that must be involved in the development of this WMP are: NOAA, NRCS, US Forest Service, Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, Environmental Quality Board, Puerto Rico Land Authority, as well as the municipalities, among other stakeholders.

Two WMPs that could be used as an example for this project are the Cabo Rojo and the Culebra ones.

3.0 PROJECT SCOPE

In order to maintain and enhance the CEN's water quality and thus, enhance coral ecosystem resilience, it is necessary to understand the issues facing on a watershed scale. The goal of this project is to document existing conditions, identify and prioritize problems, and develop specific recommendations with concrete watershed restoration projects, such as Best Management Practices (BMPs), among others.



4.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Consultant shall develop a comprehensive WMP for the CEN which shall be presented to the local stakeholders upon completion. This WMP will propose a series of actions that can be taken to address known Land Based Sources of Pollution (LBSP). The Comprehensive WMP for the CEN will include a watershed characterization, a field assessment, a prioritized list of recommended projects and associated BMP information, the various federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and jurisdictional partners working on LBSP issues to leverage support to implement key management projects, and the results of the stakeholder processes. This plan must address the EPA's 9 elements of a WMP. These components are further described on the column to the right

A. Watershed Characterization

Develop a watershed characterization and baseline assessment of the CEN watersheds. The characterization shall include a summary and review of all relevant past management documents and planning reports as well as a review of available water quality studies, land use surveys, land cover including the density of housing, a description of point sources of pollution in the watersheds, water quality monitoring stations and results, appropriate GIS data, fresh water ecosystems, benthic habitats, road drainage plans, infrastructure mapping, and terrestrial surveys.

This information will be compiled and summarized to provide a general overview and understanding of the watersheds and associated pollutant threats.

The watershed characterization should also include consultation of the relevant agencies in order to find out if there is any future private or public project that could affect the watershed(s). A compilation of all these information into a

EPA'S 9 MINIMUM ELEMENTS OF A WMP

1. Identifying causes and sources of pollution
2. Estimating load reductions expected for management measures
3. Describing Non-point sources of pollution management measures (MM)
4. Estimating the amount of technical and financial assistance needed for implementation
5. Information and education component
6. Schedule of MM implementation
7. Measurable milestones
8. Criteria for measuring effectiveness
9. Monitoring for evaluation.

See
<http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/nonpoint/9elements-WtrshdPlan-EpaHndbk.pdf>
for a detailed list of EPA's Nine Minimum Elements to be included in a watershed plan for impaired waters using incremental section 319 funds.



composite overview will provide a thorough understanding of the present and future status of the watershed.

B. Field Assessment

Conduct a watershed field assessment to examine where storm water drainage, septic systems, streams/guts, erosion issues, and road impacts actually occur as well as any other activities that could potentially have negative impacts on off shore reef environments and water quality. This assessment shall identify information such as locations of unpaved roads, impervious surfaces, conveyances, or detention areas, locations of point sources of pollution (including commercial, industrial, and municipal), intermittent streams and/or wetlands to develop a full watershed inventory. This information should be combined with the information in activity A to estimate existing pollutant loads from each subwatershed and to inform priority restoration actions.

C. Identify watershed restoration projects

The Consultant shall use the information obtained in activities A and B to identify appropriate and feasible management, mitigation, and restoration strategies to reduce the negative impacts of LBSP to coral reefs and other habitats within NERs watersheds. The Consultant shall also provide an estimate of the load reduction for each project identified, using standard and existing citations; and address EPA's 9 elements to position applicants for future EPA 319 funding. EPA's 9 elements include the above characterization results, any modeling results, load reduction per project implementation, a prioritized list of MPs or watershed restoration projects and associated BMPs, potential funding sources, and the identification of any responsible parties or agencies who would likely implement the projects. A prioritized list of projects shall be developed with information derived from the field assessment, the characterization of the watershed, and through community participation.

D. Stakeholder involvement

The consultant shall identify, coordinate and convene with the local point of contact, local stakeholders/partners, and NOAA to gather input for the watershed planning process. Periodical check-in meetings should take place with DNER and NOAA, and any other agency that might be implicated.

A review of watershed management approaches shall be presented to the stakeholders. Stakeholder and partner concerns or ideas shall be noted and incorporated into the plan as appropriate. The Consultant shall hold at least four (4) public meetings but preferably more, and will ensure stakeholders and NOAA involvement in the development of the prioritized list of restoration activities. Meeting outcomes shall be included in the final Comprehensive WMP for the NERs.



- E. Support and Coordination Services
- F. Support the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and NOAA collaborators to identify projects suitable for immediate restoration. The consultant shall also coordinate and collaborate with other project partners to identify, develop, and implement BMPs and other watershed restoration projects. The consultant shall incorporate data gathered and analyzed from these efforts to inform the final Comprehensive WMP in order to assist local coral reef managers to effectively manage and reduce the impacts from LBSP on coral reef ecosystems.

5.0 Schedule of Deliverables

Deliverables shall be provided using Microsoft Word and or Microsoft Excel. GIS layers created during this process should also be included with the final product, which should be handed out in print and digital formats.

The suggested schedule of deliveries is the following:

Activity	Activity Name	Deliverable	Schedule of months after contract
	Kick-off meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week after contract
A y B	Watershed Characterization & Field Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary findings of the Watershed Characterization • Preliminary findings of the Field Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2
A y B	Watershed Characterization & Field Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft • Final Characterization (all watersheds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 8
C	Recommendations and watershed restoration projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft listing for each watershed • Final listing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 • 10
D	Stakeholder involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the project and validate preliminary findings with the public in each municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the final CEN WMP for the public in each municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
	Watershed Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of the WMP • Final WMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 • 12



6.0 CONSULTANT SELECTION

The Consultant will be selected based on the responses to this RFP, the qualifications of the team members assembled for the project, and the scientific and technical merit of the proposal. The DNER CRP & NOAA staff will be involved in the project but, as described in the tasks, the Consultant will have lead responsibility for the detailed functions.

Note: All deliverables will be intellectual property of DNER.

7.0 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The Project Proposal should address the following items in a concise and yet complete manner and offer all the necessary information for the evaluation of the proposal:

- A. Project Team/Project Team Organization (Key Personnel)
- B. Project Understanding (Background, Proposed Goals, Project Objectives)
- C. Technical Approach offer a detailed description of the proposed methodology and identify all tasks to be completed by team members and subcontractors
- D. Project Schedule (dates of starting and finishing project, as well as a detailed timeframe regarding reports, milestones and/or specific activities). The contractor should be able to start this project by March 1st, 2016 and complete it March 1st, 2017.
- E. Project Budget- It has a maximum of \$145,000. In addition, the budget must include at least \$100,000 in matching, preferably more. The matching may include committed support from municipalities, volunteer students, agencies, and other stakeholders or parties.
- F. If more than one firm will be involved, a description of the organization of your project team, including information of the individuals that will perform each function and their level of experience and education. Identify the person who will be responsible for the completion of the project.
- G. Other issues or information relevant to your proposal.
- H. Copy of the Department of State certification to do business in Puerto Rico.

Potential Contractors must submit the proposal no later than 4:00pm on February 16, 2016. Proposals should be submitted in hard copy and digital format:



- Hard copy (paper) - One executed original Proposal, clearly marked on the cover and three (3) copies of it.
- Digital- CD or pen drive with documents in pdf or Microsoft formats.

Deliver the proposal to:

Mrs. Damaris Delgado
9th floor
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Edificio Cruz A. Matos
Carr. 8838 km 6.3 El Cinco
Río Piedras, PR 00936

For any other information regarding this process, please contact Tania Metz, CRP Coordinator, at 787-999-2200, extension 2111, or tmetz@drna.gobierno.pr.

8.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Qualified potential Consultants will be short-listed and the final selection will be made taking into consideration the recommendations provided by the DNER Watershed Advisory Committee and by NOAA staff. The criteria that will be used to evaluate the Proposals will be:

- A. Comprehensiveness of the proposal.
- B. Individual or firm's experience and history of performance on similar projects, regarding such factors as quality of work, cost control, and ability to meet schedule.
- C. Adequacy of technical staff, as demonstrated by experience, education, and potential project role.
- D. Firm or individual understanding of the services required by this RFP.
- E. Proposed costs.
- F. Organization and scheduling of the project requirements.
- G. Knowledge and ability to comply with EPA's requirements for a watershed management plan.
- H. Professional quality of the Project Proposal: conciseness, clarity, and thoroughness of presentation.
- I. Project manager accessibility.
- J. Ability to complete the project by March 1st of 2017.



9.0 CONSULTANT SELECTION NOTIFICATION

DNER- CRP will notify the selection of the consultant no later than March 1st, 2016.

10.0 SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- This RFP does not commit the DNER to award a contract, to defray any costs incurred in the preparation of a Proposal pursuant to this RFP, or to procure or contract for work.
- All Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the DNER and will be public records, and as such they may be subjected to public review.
- The DNER, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to cancel this RFP for any or no reason, in part or in its entirety, including but not limited to: selection schedule, submittal date, and submittal requirements. If the DNER cancels or revises the RFP, all potential Contractors will receive a notification letter advising the cancelation or revision of the RFP.
- The DNER reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarifications from any or all potential Contractors participating in this RFP.
- Announcement of the selected contractor, contract awards, and all data provided by DNER shall be protected from public disclosure. Consultants desiring to release information to the public must receive prior written approval from DNER. DNER, at its sole discretion, shall determine the release and disclosure of information related to this RFP and any final work products as a result of this.
- It will be required that, the selected Contractor signs a contract for Professional Services.

Aviso Requerido Por Ley:

Ley Núm. 23 del 20 de agosto de 1972, según enmendada, y la Ley Núm. 170 de 12 de agosto de 1988, según enmendada, conocida como Ley de Procedimiento Administrativo Uniforme del DRNA

Certificación sometida el 25 de diciembre 2015. CEE-SA-16-2653

