REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST
NUMBER W912HZ-10-SOI-0003
PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2010

Project Title: Monitoring of Wood Stork and Wading Bird Reproduction in the Water Conservation Areas of the Everglades

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers Research and Development Center (ERDC) to provide information regarding long-term monitoring of federally endangered wood storks and wading birds in the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) of the Everglades. Approximately $260,000 is expected to be available to support this project for one (1) year. Additional funding may be available for further work in subsequent fiscal years for the successful Recipient/Awardee.

Background:

The wood stork (Mycteria americana) is the only stork breeding in the United States and is federally listed as endangered. Wood storks have special relevance for the restoration of the south Florida ecosystem. Historically, south Florida was the core reproductive habitat for the species. However, since the 1930s, the breeding population has been in decline. In addition, wood storks have shown marked shifts in the location and timing of nesting. These dramatic changes in the characteristics of birds nesting in south Florida is likely related to both the loss of wetlands and to the altered distribution and timing of surface water in the Everglades. Therefore, the restoration of south Florida wetlands is important to the reestablishment of breeding wood storks to the area.

In addition to the importance of wetland restoration to wood stork populations, improvements in wood stork reproduction may signal the successful restoration of key hydrological and biological functions of the south Florida ecosystem. By virtue of their unique grope-foraging technique, wood storks require very dense sources of prey in order to cue nesting and to nest successfully. Wood storks also appear to rely on some degree of surface water recession in order to concentrate prey. Successful foraging depends on the right mix of water depth and water level recession. The regular, successful reproduction of storks may indicate that the combination of several hydrological and biological functions in the Everglades has been correctly restored.

The roseate spoonbill (Platalea ajaja) is not federally listed, but is a Florida State species of special concern. It has historically been an important nesting bird in the coastal regions of the Everglades but has recently begun to breed in freshwater colonies. Therefore, this species is also of interest because of its potential responses to the Everglades restoration activities.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:
The purpose of this research is to continue monitoring stork and spoonbill reproductive responses in WCAs 1, 2 and 3 of the Everglades. Specifically, the objectives include:
Objective 1: The collection of data related to monitoring wood stork and roseate spoonbill reproductive responses in WCAs 1, 2, and 3 using standardized techniques employed since 1986, with additional modifications to allow more accurate assessment as appropriate;

Objective 2: The monitoring of other species using similar protocols as the opportunity presents itself.

Methods:
Successful applicants should have expert knowledge of the Everglades ecosystem (in particular the WCAs) and a record that demonstrates research experience in collecting and analyzing wading bird data within this region. Candidates should have prior experience with: aerial survey and on-ground wading bird colony sampling protocols, wading bird identification and behavior, and relating wading bird reproduction to hydrological change. The candidates will be required to prepare a Work Plan regarding the research to be conducted. The candidates will also be required to submit one (1) mid year status report and one (1) final report each year of the cooperative agreement to provide updates on monitoring, data collection and analyses, and assessments.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:
Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to:
Deberay.R.Carmichael@usace.army.mil
(Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).

1. Name, Organization and Contact Information

2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
   a. Biographical Sketch,
   b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
   c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
   d. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.).

Note: A proposed budget is NOT requested at this time.

Review of Statements Received: Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to prepare a full study proposal. Statements will be evaluated based on the investigator’s specific experience and capabilities in areas related to the study requirements. Additionally, the evaluation method and selection criteria for research and development awards must be: (1) The Technical merits of the proposed research and development; and (2) Potential relationship of the proposed research and development to the Department of Defense missions.
Please send responses or direct questions to:
Deberay R. Carmichael
U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC)
ERDC Contracting Office (ECO)
3909 Halls Ferry Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
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Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest: Review of Statements of Interest will begin after the SOI has been posted on the CESU website for 10 working days.