



Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

5855 Capistrano Ave, Suite D, Atascadero, CA 93422 | 805.460.7272 | www.us-ltrcd.org

Request for Bid

Rancho Marino Reserve Wildfire Prevention and Forest Health Project

Response Due: March 29, 2024, at 5:00pm

Contact:

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1. Introduction

This request for bids (RFB) pertains to a wildfire prevention and forest health project in Cambria, California, being undertaken by the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (hereafter referred to as “USLTRCD”). The project consists of vegetation management treatment of 44.4 acres of land within the University of California Natural Reserve System’s Kenneth S. Norris Rancho Marino Reserve (RMR). The work under this contract is being funded by a CAL FIRE wildfire prevention grant.

RMR is a 521-acre reserve; however, vegetation treatments are permitted for 187 acres of Monterey pine forest (Figure 2-1) within the reserve, and 44.4 acres are planned for the initial vegetation treatment phase. The Monterey pine forest on RMR is also part of the Pico Creek Cambria stand, one of the three natural stands of the species in mainland California and is designated by California Department Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as a sensitive natural community (CDFW 2022). The management of RMR by the University of California, Santa Barbara as a research station began in 2001.

This project includes creating a 20 acre shaded fuel break along Randall Rd. and ecological restorative forest thinning borders Camp Oceans Pines as well as two interior plots. *Contractors are required to have a certified California Burn Boss on staff and or subcontracted to develop a burn plan and implement pile burning.* USLTRCD and registered professional forester staff will provide project oversight and management on-site.

Interested contractors are invited to submit qualifications in accordance with the requirements of this Request for Proposal by **Friday, March 29, 2024, at 5:00 pm.**

1.1 Background

1.1.1 CalVTP/Public Work Plan and Coastal Act

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) certified the Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) in December 2019. The Program EIR evaluates the potential environmental effects of implementing vegetation treatments throughout much of the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and selected portions of the Local Responsibility Area (LRA) in California. This project has a Project Specific Analysis (PSA) which serves as the environmental compliance via CEQA and the Coastal Act. The PSA process was designed during Program EIR preparation for use by many state, special district, regional, and local agencies to help increase the pace and scale of vegetation treatment by employing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining tools (i.e., a within-the-scope finding based on the PSA).

The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District's (US-LTRCD) certified Public Works Plan (PWP) is a companion to the CalVTP that provides a streamlined mechanism for Coastal Act compliance within the Coastal Zone of a portion of San Luis Obispo County. The PWP requires adherence to the Coastal Vegetation Treatment Standards (Coastal VTS) approved as part of the PWP and additional information about project design within the Coastal Zone. The PSA addresses the components of the CalVTP as required pursuant to CEQA and includes information that responds to the Coastal VTS as required pursuant to the Coastal Act and PWP.

1.1.2 Baseline Conditions

The best available information suggests that this Monterey pine forest is outside the natural fire regime. Therefore, it is assumed that the understory density is greater than what would have occurred with a natural fire regime. In addition, prolonged drought conditions and climate- and disease-induced demographic shifts have led to widespread mortality and stressed forest conditions for the Monterey pines in the Cambria area where RMR is located. Furthermore, excessive buildup of understory shrub composition could serve as available ladder fuels resulting in increased severity of fire behavior. The resulting and continued accumulation of dry, dead vegetation poses a significant risk of a catastrophic, stand-replacing wildfire.

Initial treatment activities would aim to return the landscape closer to conditions that mimic the coastal Monterey pine natural fire regime of approximately 11–20 years by reducing excess buildup of fire fuels in conjunction with controlling nonnative, invasive plants. Reducing fuels to a level that enables prescribed broadcast burning is a long-term goal. Reduction of existing fuels coupled with invasive species management would ultimately support habitat conditions, including habitat quality and natural fire processes.

Treatment activities are split into two categories: Shaded fuel break and ecological restoration.

1.2 Project Goals

1.2.1 Shaded Fuel Break

This project proposes installing a 20-acre shaded fuel break with the primary objective of protecting the campers at Camp Ocean Pines (refer to map on page 8). The proposed shaded fuel break would be implemented in forested habitats that occur between the neighborhood adjacent to the north boundary of RMR and Camp Ocean Pines, a privately owned children's camp inholding adjacent to but outside the treatment area. The proposed shaded fuel break treatment type would occur adjacent to Randall Road and extend south for 400–500 feet to the bordering property of Camp Ocean Pines fuel break designs are variable, and the width of each fuel break varies and depends on location, vegetation, topography, fire regime, and property.

Various factors contribute to the proposed design of this shaded fuel break. The access road is the only access to Camp Ocean Pines, which receives 5,000 visitors annually and visitors usually spend four nights resulting in 20,000 person nights. The treatment area vegetation type from Randall Road to Camp Ocean Pines is primarily forest (e.g., Monterey pine forest and approximately 5.5 acres of riparian woodland) and contains slopes up to 50 percent. Surface and ladder fuels within the treatment area range from fine to large and woody. Concentrations of downed woody fuel (jackpots) occur sporadically along Randall Road. Vertical and horizontal arrangement of both live and dead fuels within the treatment area could lead to increased rate of spread or an independent crown fire. In conjunction with native plants, a suite of nonnative invasive weeds exists in the fuel break treatment area. Steep topography and dense vegetation could result in extreme fire behavior in the event of a wildfire. Prolonged exposure of children housed at Camp Ocean Pines to hazardous existing fire conditions presents high fire risk to a vulnerable population in the community. Therefore, adequate protection is paramount to ensure safety and is necessary in the case of mandatory evacuation or shelter in place protocols.

The approximate distance from Randall Road to the access road is 150 feet and from the access road to the camp is 250 feet. Measurements made via aerial imagery indicate that distances from Randall Road to the camp vary between 400 and 500 feet. The resulting 400- to 500-foot shaded fuel break width is the approximate sum of the treatment area from Randall Road to the camp, incorporating both sides of the access road and extending to the camp structures. The justification for the width of the fuel break is supported by local California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) representatives.

1.2.2 Shaded Fuel Break Objectives

The shaded fuel break treatment type would be used to restore ecosystem processes, native stand conditions, and forestland resiliency by reducing dead, dying, and irreversibly diseased trees, and thinning live/healthy trees up to 8 inches dbh. Generally, minimum treatment activity specifications would be achieved in the shaded fuel break treatment plot outside of the WLPZ. Therefore, the results of the shaded fuel break will contrast the surrounding forested area. Ladder fuels would be thinned to reduce the vertical arrangement of hazardous fuels leading to forest canopy. Selective thinning of shrubs would occur to reduce horizontal continuity while retaining a mosaic of native shrubs at a spacing of 75–100 feet between crowns, where the combined crown for each clump is approximately 15–25 feet wide. Downed, woody surface fuels and leafy material would be piled for later burning to reduce understory fuel loads, while retaining some understory vegetation and downed wood for wildlife habitat.

The shaded fuel break treatment area would encompass Strawberry Creek, a Class II seasonal creek, and associated riparian habitat. SPRs from the CalVTP Program EIR would be required to maintain water quality and maintain habitat function of the riparian habitat. At least 75 percent of the overstory and 50 percent of the understory would be retained within the limits of riparian habitat, and equipment limitations, restrictions on pile burning, and additional surface vegetation retention requirements would be implemented in designated watercourse and lake protection zones (WLPZ). The Wetland and Lake Protection Zone width is based on water class and slope. For Strawberry Creek, a Class II stream with an approximately 30 to 50 percent slope on either side, a 75-foot WLPZ would be implemented on each side of the creek. Removal of riparian hardwood trees would be minimized to the extent feasible, and 75 percent of the native riparian tree canopy would be retained, as described previously. Removed trees would be felled away from the adjacent stream and piled outside of the WLPZ. Manual treatment would be utilized in the WLPZ to reduce ground disturbance and potential erosion into waterway.

The objectives and goals of the proposed shaded fuel break are multi-faceted. Treatment types within the shaded fuel break would help to restore ecosystem processes, native stand conditions, and forestland resiliency. Moreover, implementing a shaded fuel break along Randall Road would reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire to the camp and its campers as well as protect the surrounding residents that live in the neighboring community. The goals tailored to this project location include creating control points to allow firefighters to actively fight wildfire and improve the safety of the singular ingress and egress roadway that serves as an escape route for Camp Ocean Pines. The proposed shaded fuel break would not halt extreme wind driven wildfires, but would reduce potential fire spread, flame lengths, and probability of torching/independent crown fires. Furthermore, in combination with Randall Road, the shaded fuel break would result in a reduction of flammable vegetation along the access road. The combination of Randall Road and gaps in vegetation in the

shaded fuel break could provide value for staging equipment and personnel at Camp Ocean Pines for fire suppression efforts.

1.2.3 Ecological Restoration

The ecological restoration treatment type would be implemented within a maximum of 24.4 acres (units 2-4) at RMR to protect and restore ecological function of native Monterey pine forest. The ecological restoration treatment type would be used to restore ecosystem processes, native stand conditions, and forestland resiliency by reducing dead, dying, and irreversibly diseased trees as well as thinning live/healthy trees up to 8 inches dbh. Monterey pine removal would preferentially target diseased (e.g., pitch canker, heavy mistletoe infestation) trees to reduce stand density and increase sunlight penetration. Ladder fuels would be thinned to reduce the vertical arrangement of hazardous fuels leading to forest canopy. Downed, woody surface fuels and leafy material would be piled for later burning to reduce understory fuel loads with the exception of retaining woodrat middens as well as a mosaic of woody debris and herbaceous vegetation for wildlife habitat.

Treatments would largely consist of a mixture of manual and mechanical treatment activities. The primary treatment activity would be manual treatment. Mechanical treatment would be a secondary option that is used sparingly because it can create ground disturbance and may result in a landscape that is not consistent with UC reserve aesthetic standards.

The objective of this work is to selectively thin dense/overstocked tree stands, diseased tree populations, and underlying brush to improve forest health, increase climate resiliency, and lessen the risk of wildfire through these restoration activities. Implementation of the ecological restoration treatment type would result in a modification of the existing fuels, which would reduce the risk of stand-replacing fire events and support the restoration of native vegetation and habitat conditions. This would result in an increase in habitat quality and allow for natural low intensity fire events. The removal of understory vegetation would mimic a natural disturbance that encourages forest succession to occur, influencing the amount of carbon stored in the forest. Thinning of the stand from below through the removal of small diameter live trees and understory vegetation would result in an increased carrying capacity of the site, which would stimulate growth of the residual dominant and codominant trees. The accumulation of fuels and vegetation creates competition for the available water, nutrients, and sunlight plants need to grow; therefore, the reduction of vegetative competition in the understory would increase the growth and carbon storage capacity in the residual stand.

2. Scope of Services

2.1.1 Vegetation Treatment Activities

The proposed vegetation treatment activities include manual treatment, mechanical treatment, prescribed burning, and targeted ground application of herbicides. Treatment activities would consist primarily of manual and mechanical treatment. Pile burning would be used for biomass disposal of slash and debris piles, and occasional use of herbicide treatments may be employed in areas of French broom. Treatments would occur in Monterey pine forests. Treatment activities could occur during any time of year, although implementation of treatment activities during the nesting bird season would be avoided when feasible. Although there is the potential for prescribed burning to occur during nighttime and weekend hours, all mechanical, manual, and herbicide treatment activities would be limited to daytime hours on Monday through Friday. Treatments would likely begin in spring of 2024 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Vegetation removal during treatment activities other than prescribed burning would follow the hierarchy described in the Coastal Vegetation Treatment Standards and the order of priority for removal to meet project goals will be as follows: first thinning and removal of dead, dying, and diseased vegetation; then removal of nonnative, invasive plant species; and lastly removal of healthy native species.

Generally, treatment activities would:

- remove live trees up to 8 inches dbh and live woody shrubs, while maintaining retention standards listed below;
- retain 150–250 trees per acre and three to five snags per acre with a preference for the largest snags that exhibit the form and decay characteristics favored by wildlife;
- retain a 15–20 foot spacing between retained trees under 8 inches dbh;
- retain woodrat middens for wildlife habitat;
- retain woody debris in strategic locations to maintain forest floor complexity while reducing fuel connectivity. While masticating, operators would minimize disturbance to down wood greater than 12 inches in diameter where feasible, only moving large pieces of woody debris when necessary to reduce fire behavior or gain access to larger portions of treatment areas, with a per acre retention target of 1–4 downed logs 15 feet in length and greater than or equal to 12 inches in diameter (Strong et al. 2016) per acre with a preference for the largest logs that



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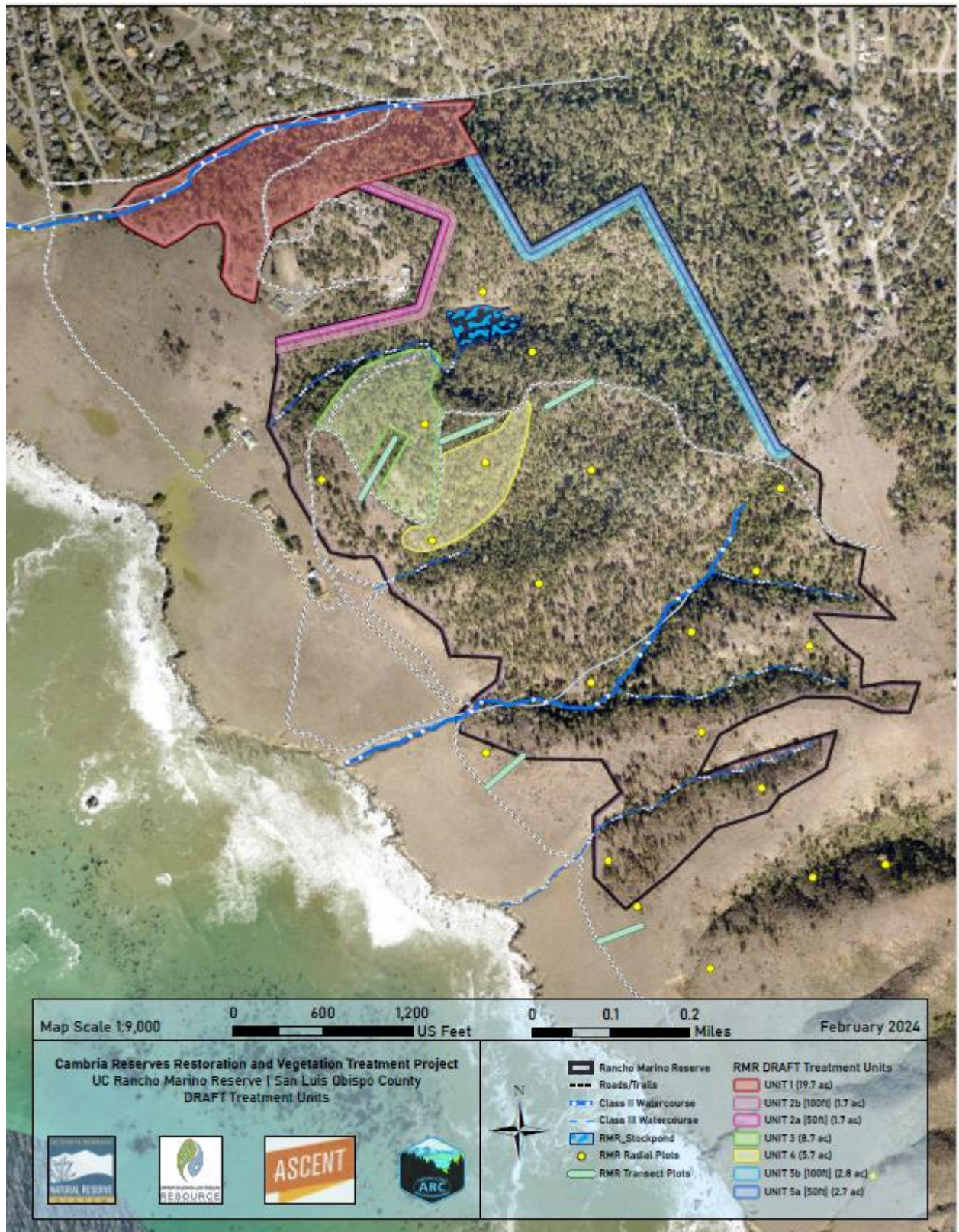
exhibit the form and decay characteristics favored by wildlife;

- retain a mosaic of native shrubs at a spacing of 75–100 feet between crowns, where the combined crown for each clump is approximately 15–25 feet wide. Retention of less common native shrubs (i.e., coffeeberry and toyon) would be prioritized over common shrubs (e.g., poison oak);
- retain existing native herbaceous species to the extent practicable in ecological restoration treatments;
- outside of riparian areas, generally retain a minimum of 5–10 percent herbaceous understory vegetation per acre in a mosaic pattern;
- selectively thin dead and dying, irreversibly diseased, and hazard trees of any size;
- remove dead and dying ladder fuels including shrubs, subshrubs, and tree limbs;
- although chips would not remain on-site in most areas, where retained on-site, chip depth would average 3 inches in depth (maximum of 4 inches) and spread in a mosaic pattern such that herbaceous vegetation growth would not be suppressed; • biomass remaining after mastication would be no more than 6 inches deep;
- reduce nonnative, invasive plant species; and
- pile material for future pile burning during appropriate time of year. Vegetation treatment activities would be implemented by cutting vegetation with manual hand tools (e.g., chainsaws) or mechanical mastication, followed by pile or broadcast burning (or through use of specialized biomass processing technologies).

Trees greater than 8 inches dbh may be removed if they are a public safety hazard, dead or dying, irreversibly diseased, substantially damaged, or an invasive nonnative plant species.

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3. Proposal Content and Format

Contractors will clearly indicate in their proposals the services, as described above, and their ability to perform those services to USLTRCD.

The following information will be included in the proposal:

3.1 Executive Summary

Include a concise synopsis of the proposal focused on how the contractor will address USLTRCD's key issues with the contractor's approach to the services described above.

3.2 Qualifications

Because of the time sensitivity and critical nature of the work described within this RFP, USLTRCD seeks services from highly experienced and qualified firms/team. The firm/team must be able to staff this project with qualified individuals, experienced in the key technical disciplines needed, who will remain committed to this work from inception through completion. A clear and comprehensive organization chart must be presented to illustrate the organization of the team and key team members, including any subcontractors. The contractor must be familiar with and adhere closely to regulations put forth in project permits.

3.2.1 Firm/Team Qualifications

Provide a statement of the firm's/team's qualifications, including a brief resume(s) of lead staff members and/or subcontractors proposed to work on the project. Include the office locations of key staff and subcontractors. The information should be focused on experience on similar and/or complementary projects. The roles proposed for each sub-contractor as well as their qualifications in that area will also be identified in the proposal. Your ability to identify and highlight key staff in the proposal will be considered when evaluating your understanding of the project. The Contractor's team members should be able to exhibit and understand the appropriate licenses, certifications and pre-qualifications for services.



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Include a description of three (3) of the most recent projects/programs/efforts that included similar scope of work. The following information will be included for each project:

- Client
- Client contact information
- Project Description
- Start and end dates of the project
- Key staff member's role
- Contractor fees and overall project budget
- Contractors' ability to manage purchasing materials with long lead times
- Contractor's role in the project – highlight roles of staff

3.2.2 Technical Approach

The contractor(s) technical approach to the project is a very important component of the selection. In the proposal, the contractor(s) is requested to demonstrate their project understanding, provide a summary of the critical issues, and describe the contractor's proposed sequence of activities to meet the USLTRCD's objectives for the services they are proposing.

3.2.3 Cost Estimate

Costs will be broken down by personnel, supplies, materials, equipment, and any subcontractor costs. Contractors will be required to submit weekly material tags and employee timesheets. A Scope of Work Template is provided for reference to develop a cost estimate.

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SOW template (to be used for grants and TA agreements)			
A. PERSONNEL SERVICES			
Project Role	Hours	Rate	Total
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
		Subtotal	
SUBTOTAL A: PERSONNEL SERVICES			\$ -
B. GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES			
Item	Units	Rate	Total
mileage		\$ 0.655	\$ -
		Subtotal	
SUBTOTAL B: OPERATING EXPENSES: GENERAL			\$ -
C. SUBCONTRACTORS:			
Subcontractor or Role		C(iii) Total Subcontractor Cost (C(i) + C(ii))	
		\$ -	
SUBTOTAL C: OPERATING EXPENSES: SUBCONTRACTORS		\$ -	
D. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES			
Item	Units	Cost	Total
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
SUBTOTAL E: OPERATING EXPENSES: EQUIPMENT			\$ -
F. GRAND TOTAL (A + B + C + D)			
			\$ -
			\$ -

3.2.4 Timeline

The contractor(s) will provide a detailed timeline for phases of project including contingency plans in the event that an ecologically sensitive species are found such as nesting birds.

3.2.5 Safety Procedures

Contractor(s) will provide examples of safety measures and protocols from previous construction operations and or potential safety protocols for this project. Examples should demonstrate exemplary safety procedures for employees as well as the public. Contractors(s) will provide examples of avoidance measures to minimize impacts on sensitive plants and animals (i.e. nesting birds, Ca red legged frog etc.)

3.3 Statements

The contractor(s) will include a statement confirming no personal or organizational conflicts of interest are known to exist.

3.4 Licenses, Certifications, and Pre-qualifications

The contractor(s) will include a table detailing the licenses, certifications, and pre-qualifications currently held by each team member. Copies of said licenses, certifications, and pre-qualifications will be provided upon the request of the USLTRCD.

3.5 Detailed Resumes

Detailed resumes for key team members may be included as an appendix. No more than two pages per resume.

4 Evaluation & Selection Process

The USLTRCD will not accept proposals delivered after the closing date and time. Proposals will be E-mailed, or hand delivered, prior to the closing date. The written proposals will be evaluated and scored by the USLTRCD utilizing the following criteria:

Written Qualifications (40% of Total Score)

Firm/Team Qualifications – 25%

Performance on previous jobs – 15%

Technical Approach (60% of Total Score)

Project understanding – 40%



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Critical issues – 20%

Review of proposals will include staff members of USLTRCD, UC Santa Barbara and contracted Registered Professional Forester. The proposals will be ranked individually, and the highest scores will be recommended for consideration by USLTRCD, in compliance with the USLTRCD Procurement Policy. Upon approval by the USLTRCD Board of Directors, USLTRCD staff will announce to all bidding contractors who the selected proposal is awarded to.

After USLTRCD approval, the USLTRCD will enter negotiations with the highest ranked firm. Upon reaching agreement on the scope of work and total not-to-exceed prices for the project, the USLTRCD will award a contract to the selected contractor(s). The selected contractor(s) cannot commence work on any aspect of the project prior to execution of the USLTRCD's standard Agreement.