**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**North Platte Chokepoint Engineering Services**

DRAFT

PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Office of the Executive Director

4111 4th Avenue, Suite 6

Kearney, Nebraska 68845

**March X, 2023**

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DRAFT

**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- PROGRAM)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**SUBJECT:** North Platte Chokepoint Engineering Services

**REQUEST DATE:** March 10, 2023

**PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING:** March 30, 2023

**CLOSING DATE:** April 14, 2023

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Seth Turner

Headwaters Corporation

(720) 524-6115

[turners@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:turners@headwaterscorp.com)

1. OVERVIEW

The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program) initiated on January 1, 2007 between the states of Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado and the Department of the Interior to address endangered species issues in the central and lower Platte River basin. Program “target species” include the whooping crane, piping plover, interior least tern (now de-listed), and pallid sturgeon.

A Governance Committee (GC) has been established that reviews, directs, and provides oversight for activities undertaken during the Program. The GC is comprised of one representative from each of the three states, three water user representatives, two representatives from environmental groups, and two members representing federal agencies. Headwaters Corporation provides the Executive Director and staff for the Program, collectively known as the Executive Director’s Office (EDO). Program staff are located in Nebraska and Colorado and are responsible for assisting in carrying out various Program-related activities.

The North Platte chokepoint is the reach of the North Platte River extending a few miles upstream and downstream of the Highway 83 bridge at the City of North Platte, Nebraska. Flow capacity through this reach declined in recent decades due to diminished peak flows, floodplain development, vegetation encroachment (primarily *Phragmites*), and other factors. This reach is important to the Program because it represents a potential constraint on the ability to deliver water from the Lake McConaughy Environmental Account (EA) upstream to the Associated Habitat Reach (AHR) downstream, particularly in drier years with higher demands for irrigation water in the central Platte region.

Map

Description automatically generated

The 2006 Program Document (Section III.E.2.d.iii) and the 2017 Addendum to the Program Document (Section II.B) set forth a goal of achieving and maintaining a flow capacity of 3,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the North Platte chokepoint, with the critical limitation that this be accomplished while remaining below the National Weather Service (NWS) minor flood stage of 6.0 ft.[[1]](#footnote-1) Efforts to accomplish this were to continue as long as deemed appropriate by the GC or until alternative means of providing similar benefits to the Program’s target species were developed. Recent measurements show the average shift-adjusted capacity of the North Platte River at North Platte to be only about 1,770 cfs.

A series of studies, model analyses (both channel hydraulics and sediment transport), and conceptual designs were undertaken during the Program’s First Increment in an attempt to resolve both capacity and flooding issues at the chokepoint, culminating in the completion of two flood-proofing projects. The Whitehorse Creek Drainage Project (2014) installed driveway culverts along North River Road to direct stormwater and high groundwater to the east of Highway 83 towards Whitehorse Creek. The State Channel Berm Rehabilitation (2018) restored a low berm that directs high flows away from the north bank neighborhood towards the main North Platte River channel.

In July 2020, the Program completed a flow test to observe the impacts of river flows up to and exceeding a stage of 6.5 ft; increasing minor flood stage to this level would add about 800 cfs of usable flow capacity for the Program. The flow test successfully demonstrated that the flood-proofing projects eliminated flooding along the north bank at those stages but NWS declined to raise minor flood stage because of observed impacts (mostly groundwater related) at residences along the south bank upstream of Highway 83.

The GC submits this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from Consultants to provide engineering services associated with re-evaluation of past alternatives as well as development of new alternatives to increase conveyance capacity through the chokepoint. The full scope and appropriate methods for performing analyses will be developed jointly by the EDO, the Chokepoint Planning Workgroup, and the Consultant after selection and prior to performing the analyses.

The term Consultant shall be used throughout this document to describe both potential RFP Respondents submitting a proposal and the successful Respondent performing the work upon award of the project.

1. PAST CHOKEPOINT EFFORTS

Past work to evaluate and address capacity and flooding issues at the chokepoint is summarized in an April 2021 memorandum to the Program’s Chokepoint Planning Workgroup that is attached as **Exhibit A**. All materials referenced in that memo will be made available to prospective Consultants and can be obtained electronically by sending a request via email to Seth Turner of the EDO at [turners@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:turners@headwaterscorp.com). The recently published North Platte Chokepoint Investigation Final Report completed by River Design Group (RDG) on behalf of The Crane Trust and Audubon Nebraska that explores additional possible alternatives to address chokepoint issues is included in that package of reference materials.

1. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected Consultant will provide engineering services associated with re-evaluation of past alternatives to increase chokepoint capacity as well as development of new alternatives. The scope and appropriate methods for performing analyses will be discussed with the Chokepoint Planning Workgroup prior to performing the analyses.

As stated previously, the Program’s objective is to achieve and maintain 3,000 cfs conveyance capacity through the North Platte chokepoint reach while remaining below NWS minor flood stage which is set at 6.0 ft for the North Platte River at the North Platte gage (06693000). The shift-adjusted capacity at a stage of 6.0 ft in this reach has averaged around 1,770 cfs over the last 2.5 years. Objectives of the study under this RFP are as follows:

* Identify, screen, and rank past and potential new alternatives to improve conveyance capacity and reduce flood risk through the North Platte chokepoint reach.
* Update and calibrate baseline model(s).
* Conduct detailed hydraulic and/or sediment transport modeling as needed to evaluate the effectiveness of selected alternatives at achieving and maintaining gains in conveyance capacity through the North Platte chokepoint.
* Complete assessment of permitting requirements, estimated costs, and implementation timeline for selected alternatives.

The specific scope of work to achieve these study objectives will be determined once a Consultant is selected based on experience and qualifications, but a general description of the anticipated progression of the study is provided below.

Once selected, the Consultant, EDO, and the Chokepoint Planning Workgroup will work collaboratively to review past alternatives and identify new and/or refined alternatives that will be subjected to further analysis as part of this project as well as the analysis tools and metrics that will be employed. The results of this task will be used to develop the scope of work for the remainder of the project. Potential alternatives may include the kinds of channel and floodplain modifications described in past chokepoint work, vegetation control, alternatives that bypass the chokepoint by routing flow from the North Platte to the South Platte via existing or new canals, modifications to existing irrigation diversion infrastructure to increase sediment conveyance, or other alternatives brought forward by the Consultant or Chokepoint Planning Workgroup members.

Alternatives will be evaluated by the Consultant to assess effectiveness in meeting Program objectives. Technical evaluation of the feasibility of alternatives will likely require (at a minimum) updating of existing 1-D and/or 2-D hydraulic models. Modeling will encompass a range of flow rates to assess incremental changes in channel conveyance capacity but will emphasize the goal of achieving and maintaining 3,000 cfs capacity. It may also be necessary to develop a 2-D mobile bed sediment transport model to evaluate alternatives designed (for example) to enhance sediment convenance through the chokepoint reach.

Once alternatives have been evaluated for effectiveness, the Consultant and the Chokepoint Planning Workgroup will collaboratively screen alternatives that meet minimum suitability criteria to be carried forward for consideration as part of a structured decision-making process. This will require the Consultant to develop pre-feasibility level cost estimates for alternatives as well as provide information on the scope and complexity of permitting and other legal/administrative factors. The final task anticipated under this project will be providing technical support during the structured decision-making process. Selected alternatives may be carried forward to design, permitting and construction under an extension to this contract or a new competitive selection process.

The following areas of expertise may be necessary to complete the full scope of work:

* Civil engineering
* Fluvial geomorphology
* Riparian vegetation dynamics
* General hydrology and hydraulics
* 2-D hydrodynamic modeling
* 2-D mobile bed sediment transport modeling in sand bed rivers
* Structural engineering (bridge and diversion infrastructure, other hydraulic control structures)
* Irrigation/hydropower operations
* Environmental permitting

1. PROJECT BUDGET

The Program budget for this project is on the order of $400,000. However, an estimated project

budget should **NOT** be submitted in the proposal and proposals will not be evaluated based on cost. The scope of work and budget for alternatives review will be negotiated prior to commencement of work. The remainder of the scope of work and project budget will be developed based on the results of that task.

1. CONTRACT TERMS

The selected Consultant will be retained by:

Nebraska Community Foundation

PO Box 83107

Lincoln, NE 68501

Proposals should indicate whether the Consultant agrees to the contract terms as outlined in the attached Program’s Consultant Contract (**Exhibit B**) or provide a clear description of any exceptions to the terms and conditions.

The initial term of the contract will be for a one-year period beginning at the date of final signing of the contract (mid-2023 through mid-2024). Contracted services will be performed on a time and materials not to exceed basis. Under the final contract, a written Notice to Proceed from the EDO will be required before work begins. All work will be contingent on availability of Program funding.

**The selected Consultant may be requested to negotiate additional services, with the option to renew, re-compete, or cancel at the discretion of the GC.**

1. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All interested parties having experience providing the services listed in this RFP are requested to submit a proposal.

*Instructions for Submitting Proposals*

One (1) electronic (PDF) copy of your proposal must be submitted to Seth Turner by email at [turners@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:turners@headwaterscorp.com) *no later than 5:00 PM Central Time on Friday, April 14, 2023.* The maximum allowable proposal PDF size is 15MB, and proposals are to be limited to a total of 50 pages or less.A proposal is late if received any time after 5:00 PM Central Time and will not be eligible for consideration.

Questions regarding the information contained in this RFP should be submitted to Seth Turner at[turners@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:turners@headwaterscorp.com)*.* A list of compiled Consultant questions and responses will be maintained on the Program web site ([www.PlatteRiverProgram.org](http://www.PlatteRiverProgram.org)) in the same location as this RFP solicitation.

*RFP Schedule*

The EDO expects to complete the selection process and award the work by June 2, 2023. The following table represents the RFP schedule:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Date** | **Time (Central)** |
| Issue RFP | By March 10, 2023 | n/a |
| Pre-proposal virtual meeting | March 30, 2023 | 12:00 PM |
| Last day for respondents to submit questions regarding the RFP | April 6, 2023 | 5:00 PM |
| Proposals due from Consultants | April 14, 2023 | 5:00 PM |
| Evaluation of Proposals | April 17 through April 28, 2023 | |
| Interviews | Week of May 15, 2023 | |
| Award of Work | On or before May 25, 2023 | |
| Start of Work | Mid- to late-June, 2023 | |
| Completion of Work | Approximately June 30, 2024 | |

*Virtual Pre-Proposal Meeting*

A **mandatory** virtual pre-proposal meetingof interested parties will be held on March 30, 2023 from 12:00-1:30 PM Central Time via Microsoft Teams for the purpose of familiarizing potential Consultants with the Scope of Work and requirements included herein before submitting a response to this RFP. To register, please email Seth Turner ([turners@headwaterscorp.com](mailto:turners@headwaterscorp.com)) with names and email addresses for the people from your firm and/or team expected to join the virtual pre-proposal meeting by 12:00 PM Central Time on March 24, 2023. A meeting invite with the Microsoft Teams link will be forwarded to expected participants.

The meeting will include a brief overview by the EDO regarding the objectives of the project, the scope of services, and the timeline. It is the Consultant’s responsibility, during the pre-proposal meeting, to ask questions necessary to understand the RFP so the Consultant can submit a proposal that is complete according to the RFP requirements. No minutes will be distributed by the EDO regarding the meeting. Any proposals submitted by Consultants who did not register for and participate in the mandatory virtual pre-proposal meeting will be rejected.

*Proposal Content*

Proposals should respond to the following general topics:

1. **Project understanding:** Discussionthat demonstrates the Consultant’s understanding of key project design elements and operational goals and constraints.
2. **Project approach:** Discussion of the Consultant’s approach to providing the scope of work including critical issues, tasks, or considerations that may have shaped your approach. This section should not be a reiteration of the general scope of work presented in Section III of this RFP. That scope was provided as general guidance and original thinking and/or discussion of improvements to that approach are welcome and encouraged.
3. **Qualifications and project experience:** Provide project team organization, resumes/qualifications, and responsibilities. Identify relevant project experience, particularly within the past five years, including the name, location, and brief description of the projects; name, address, email, and phone number for the primary client contact; and the involvement/role of the proposed team members in those projects. A Nebraska licensed Professional Engineer is required.
4. **Rate Schedule:** Schedule of standard hourly and reimbursable cost rates by labor category.
5. **Conflict of interest statement:** addressing whether or not any potential conflict of interest exists between this project and other past or on-going projects, including any projects currently being conducted for the Program.
6. **Description of insurance:** shall be provided with the proposal. Proof of insurance will be required before a contract is issued. Minimum insurance requirements are described in the attached Program’s Consultant Contract (**Exhibit C**).
7. **Acceptance of the terms and conditions** as outlined in the attached Program’s Consultant Contract, or clear description of any exceptions to the terms and conditions.
8. **Affirmative Statement** – that the firm and the principals of the firm (and any members of the team if relevant) are NOT on the federal suspended and disbarred list. A DUNS[[2]](#footnote-2) and SAM[[3]](#footnote-3) number are required to assist in verification.
9. **Lobbying Certification** – Form to complete attached as **Exhibit D**.

*Criteria for Evaluating Proposals*

The GC appointed a Proposal Selection Panel that will evaluate all proposals and select a Consultant based on the following principal considerations:

1. The Consultant’s understanding of the overall project goals, constraints, design elements, and operational scenarios and project approach.
2. Qualifications and the relevant experience of the proposed project team members and firm, including:
   1. The selected Consultant will be expected to demonstrate experience with a comprehensive alternatives analysis process for identifying potential project components, developing and applying appropriate screening criteria, and formulating and ranking project alternatives configurations.
   2. The selected Consultant will be expected to demonstrate extensive experience with both 1-D and 2-D hydraulic modeling as well as sediment transport modeling, with specific experience in braided sand-bed rivers.
   3. The selected Consultant will be expected to demonstrate experience with water management and reservoir operations/routing, irrigation operations, etc.
   4. The selected consultant should demonstrate experience with the various levels of permitting involved in developing water resources projects as well as experience developing opinions of probable cost for such projects.

Interviews may be held if necessary, as determined by the Proposal Selection Panel.

*Award Notice*

After completing the evaluation of all proposals and, if deemed necessary, interviews, the Proposal Selection Panel will select a Consultant. That firm will negotiate with the EDO to establish a fair and equitable contract. If an agreement cannot be reached, a second firm will be invited to negotiate and so on. If the Program is unable to negotiate a mutually satisfactory contract with a Consultant, it may, at its sole discretion, cancel and reissue a new RFP.

*Program Perspective*

The GC has the sole discretion and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP and to cancel this solicitation if it is deemed in the best interest of the Program to do so. Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the Program to award a contract, or to pay Consultant’s costs incurred either in the preparation of a response to his RFP or during negotiations, if any, of a contract for services. The Program also reserves the right to make amendments to this RFP by giving written notice to Consultants, and to request clarification, supplements, and additions to the information provided by a Consultant.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, Consultants understand and agree that any selection of a Consultant or any decision to reject any or all responses or to establish no contracts shall be at the sole discretion of the Program. To the extent authorized by law, the Consultant shall indemnify, save, and hold harmless the Nebraska Community Foundation, the states of Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska, the Department of the Interior, members of the Governance Committee, and the Executive Director’s Office, their employees, employers, and agents, against any and all claims, damages, liability, and court awards including costs, expenses, and attorney fees incurred as a result of any act or omission by the Consultant or its employees, agents, sub-Consultants, or assignees pursuant to the terms of this project. Additionally, by submitting a proposal, Consultants agree that they waive any claim for the recovery of any costs or expenses incurred in preparing and submitting a proposal.

**EXHIBIT A**

**PRRIP Chokepoint Workgroup Alternatives Memorandum**

**EXHIBIT B**

**Standard Consulting Services Contract**

**EXHIBIT C**

**Certification Regarding Lobbying**

1. The Adaptive Management Plan (Program Document, Attachment 3, Section II.A) specifies that “management of Program water will not cause flows above the flood stage as defined by the National Weather Service.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://federalcontractorregistry.com/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)