

# INYO COUNTY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Seeking Proposals for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Report and Public Outreach for the

## Owens River Water Trail

*A Recreation and Habitat Improvement Project  
On the Lower Owens River  
Lone Pine CA*

**Proposal Deadline 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 31, 2017**

**Proposals must be submitted in writing to:**

Larry Freilich, Mitigation Manager  
Inyo County Water Department  
P.O. Box 337  
135 S. Jackson Street  
Independence, CA 93526  
lfreilich@inyocounty.us  
www.inyowater.org; 760-878-0011

**This RFP and  
Modified Contract #156 are available to you as a PDF.  
Please send your request to [lpiper@inyocounty.us](mailto:lpiper@inyocounty.us) along with the  
contact information for your RFP lead staff.**

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## **SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **A. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

As outlined in detail in Section II (Scope of Work). This Inyo County Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks a contractor or consultant team with expertise in floodplain and riparian construction evaluation including river excavation dredge calculations and design, and expertise in the preparation of environmental impact reports pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and expertise in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements pursuant to the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA). The selected contractor or consultant team will be expected to secure such surveys and studies as may be necessary to prepare a draft and final environmental impact report (EIR) which addresses the Owens River Water Trail (“ORWT”, or Project), and to prepare any draft and final documentation that may be required pursuant to NEPA, and to participate in public outreach, including responses to comments on environmental documents.

### **B. BACKGROUND**

The County of Inyo, in scenic Eastern California, has been awarded a \$500,032 grant from the California Department of Natural Resources’ River Parkways Grant Program (Grant) for the purpose of clearing the Lower Owens River (LOR) channel of sediment and emergent vegetation (tules) to make navigable a 6.3 mile stretch of river just east of Lone Pine CA, from Lone Pine Narrow Gauge Road to State Highway 136 at the historic Keeler Bridge, and to make improvements at the top and bottom of the Project to facilitate water entry and exit. The river improvements will be funded separately by the California State Parks, Boating and Waterways Division. The OWRT grant proposal can be found at: <http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/OWENS-RIVER-WATER-TRAIL-FULL-APPLICATION-20150901.pdf>. All work under this Grant must be completed by March 2021.

The Project will benefit recreation by creating a water trail for kayaks, canoes, and other paddle craft. The flows in this section are highly controlled, creating a gentle stretch of river that is ideal for safe paddling. The impetus for the ORWT came from the Wounded Warriors Project of the Eastern Sierra. The group identified this stretch of river as being ideal for solo recreation for the disabled. The ORWT, under Mount Whitney, will be the first of its kind water trail developed in California. The project has broad support from a diverse group of proponents, both locally and in Southern California. There is no identified opposition.

The development of a 6.3 mile long ORWT involves dredging or excavating approximately 40 river occlusions formed by growth of emergent vegetation or accumulation of woody debris totaling about 1.1 river miles; and widening about 1.25 miles of river narrower than 10 feet. The occlusions include pre-LORP (Lower Owens River Project, discussed below), beaver dams and elevated marsh that spans the river creating backwater that formed under low intermittent flows conditions between 1913 and 2006. Other blockages are more recent and appear to have formed through accumulations of woody debris that were liberated with new flows, and have trapped sediment and debris that have encouraged the spread of emergent vegetation. The successful respondent will be expected to verify these assumptions as part of preparing its analyses.

When large flows are released upstream when river water is warm, organic material is mobilized and dissolved oxygen declines dramatically and large fish kills have been observed. Constructing a continuous open waterway is expected to improve water quality and benefit the warm water fishery. The County and LADWP have collected water quality data pre and post LORP. This data will be available to the consultant. Other habitat benefits related to an unimpeded channel are likely. The successful respondent will be expected to verify these assumptions as part of preparing its analyses.

The County intends to use Grant funds to construct the Project as part of its responsibility to fund recreational opportunities related to the Lower Owens River Project ("LORP"), (<http://www.inyowater.org/projects/lorp/>). Under the grant agreement with the State of California, the County must maintain the project for 20 years following completion of construction. Of concern is that this requirement might result in the County having to re-excavate the river if sediment were to make the river non-navigable during the 20 year period; however, the grantor has agreed that this will not be required if additional grant funds are not available for this purpose. Also of concern is the disposal of dredge spoil generated by construction. The successful respondent will be expected to assess and account for these concerns in its analyses.

Funding for the environmental review and documentation will be provided by the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The contract with the successful contractor or consultant team will be administered by the Inyo County Water Department acting as lead agency. The Project will be constructed and operated on lands owned by the City of Los Angeles and administered by the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

The section of the river proposed for the ORWT, is a segment of the 62 mile lower Owens River that was dried up when LADWP diverted the flow of the river into the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913. Under a Lower Owens River Project (LORP), the river was rewatered in 2006, with a guaranteed perpetual minimum flow. This is described in a settlement Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with the County of Inyo, LADWP, California Department of Fish and Game, the California State Lands Commission, the Sierra Club, and the Owens Valley Committee (<http://www.inyowater.org/documents/governing-documents/mou/>). The MOU specifies the amount of baseflow to be maintained in the river, the release of higher seasonal habitat flows, and sets out a schedule for establishing the baseflow in the river. As expressed in the MOU, "The goal of the LORP is the establishment of a healthy, functioning Lower Owens River riverine-riparian ecosystem, and the establishment of healthy, functioning ecosystems in the other physical features of the LORP, for the benefit of biodiversity and Threatened and Endangered Species, while providing for the continuation of sustainable uses including recreation, livestock grazing, agriculture and other activities."

Since December 2006, the LOR is now maintained with a constant minimum flow of 40 cubic feet per second (cfs), and a maximum flow of 200 cfs during annual seasonal habitat flows. A LORP Monitoring Adaptive Management and Reporting Plan was produced in 2008 that describes how the LORP, including the Lower Owens River, will be managed through 2022.

[http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/LORP\\_MonitoringAdaptiveManagementPlan\\_042808\\_Print\\_Small.pdf](http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/LORP_MonitoringAdaptiveManagementPlan_042808_Print_Small.pdf)).

Much of the local economy in Inyo County is supported by recreational tourism, and with a restored LOR the County has the opportunity to further diversify recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. A draft Recreational Use Plan (RUP) for the LORP has been prepared, but CEQA has not been prepared for the RUP. The recreation plan identified sections of river suitable for a “Lower Owens River Paddle Trail.” The 6.3 mile reach of the Owens River, from Lone Pine Station Road to Keeler Bridge, selected for the ORWT is one of the sections of the river identified in the RUP. A copy of the plan can be found at: ([http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Lower-Owens-River\\_Recreation-Use-Plan-DRAFT\\_011513.pdf](http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Lower-Owens-River_Recreation-Use-Plan-DRAFT_011513.pdf)).

The reach proposed for the ORWT begins 43.6 river-miles downstream of the LOR intake, and is characterized by a mostly open channel with ponds, the length of which is punctuated by dense tule occlusions and occasional woody debris jams. A hydraulic model for the Lower Owens River was developed in 2012 by Northwest Hydraulic Consultants, Inc. The study and model was based on a 2009 survey conducted by LADWP ([http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/LORPReport\\_4May2012.pdf](http://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/LORPReport_4May2012.pdf)). An objective of the ORWT construction will be to maintain, to the extent possible, the natural river form, contours, and features, rather than a canal-like waterway.

A map with shapefiles showing the areas to be cleared of emergent vegetation and/or dredged of soft sediment is available by request.

## **C. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **ORWT Goals and Objectives**

The goal of the ORWT is to develop an open water channel with improved water entry and exit points to provide sustainable paddlecraft recreation for a period of at least 20 years, while improving water quality and in-stream habitat.

The project objectives are:

- Open river blockages to maximize the channel conveyance for non-motorized watercraft
- Maintain an open channel (min. 3.5 meters width) over the 20 year life of the project
- Encourage river transport of dissolved organic loads and improve water quality
- Maintain diversity and complexity of river form
- Preserve or enhance instream habitat suitable for the warm water fishery
- Increase native composition of riparian species
- Minimize disturbance and impacts to adjoining property owners and lessees
- Create river boat entry and boat exit points suitable for the disabled

### Desired Outcome

The consultant, through a thorough understanding of the project and project area, and informed by their studies and investigations, will advise on the least impactful, most sustainable method of constructing and maintaining the ORWT, and prepare a CEQA EIR and, if necessary, a NEPA document that assesses the effects of the project on the environment.

## **SECTION II – SCOPE OF WORK**

### **A. PROJECT SCHEDULE**

Respondents should indicate their ability to meet this schedule; or suggest an alternative schedule based on respondent's experience and the availability of key staff.

#### **DOCUMENTATION SCHEDULE**

RFP Release	July 31, 2017	
RFP Due by 5 pm	Thursday, August 31, 2017	1 month
Proposal Evaluations and Board Recommendation	August 31-Sept 5, 2017	3 days
Board Consideration of Contract	September 18, 2017	-
Consultant NTP Issued	September 19, 2017	-
Preliminary Engineering and Alternative Development and Analysis	September 2017-January 2018	4 months
***FEIR Deadline***	September 6, 2018	-
Concurrent Permitting	January 2018-October 2018	9 months

#### **CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE**

Design and Engineering	January 2018-September 2018	9 months
Channel Construction Year 1	December 2018-March 2019	4 months
Channel Construction Year 2	September 2019-March 2020	7 months
Improvement Construction	March 2019-May 2021	3 months
***Grant funding expires***	March 2021	

### **B. PROJECT BUDGET**

The respondent's budget for conducting and completing the contract work will be fixed and no payments will be made in excess of the contracted amount.

### **C. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CONSULTANT**

The EIR and public outreach scope of services are expected to include, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

1. Coordinate staff and meetings, provide general project administration (including managing subcontractors) and provide required reporting;
2. Develop, coordinate, and implement a plan for public outreach for the overall project;
3. Participate in tribal consultation process for project pursuant to County policy <http://inyoplanning.org/projects/Tribal%20Consultation/InyoCountyTribalConsultationPolicy.htm>;
4. Estimate volume and characteristics of material to be dredged from river (spoil);
5. Assist staff in identifying two construction alternatives for opening the river channel and four or more alternatives for the disposal of spoils.

Initial construction alternatives to be considered:

- A. Clearing of the river with equipment working from the river channel
- B. Clearing of the river with heavy equipment working from the floodplain
- C. Clearing of the river with equipment working both from the floodplain and river channel

Spoil removal alternatives to be considered:

- A. Construction adjacent dispersed floodplain disposal
- B. Concentrated disposal on adjacent low terrace
- C. Disposal in a County landfill
- D. Other off-site disposal

6. Determine river channel maintenance requirements and related activities and evaluate these over the life of the Project;
7. Consider in CEQA analysis any impacts related to the construction, operations, and maintenance of improvements made to facilitate water entry and exit;
8. Consider how the Project is, or is not, consistent with the goals of the LORP, and whether it will or will not further achievement of these goals;
9. Prepare a EIR for the ORWT that includes all issues required by CEQA, including but not limited to: biological resources, cultural resources, air quality, greenhouse gases, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, transportation/traffic, recreation, utilities and service systems, archeological resources, and any other issues that are raised through scoping. The EIR work will require:
  - Information review including, LORP monitoring data (2009-2016), channel morphology and hydrologic model (2011), vegetation maps (2016), aerial imagery (2017), draft ORWT Construction Plan, and other available information as required.
  - perform additional studies as needed to characterize and predict and calculate short-term and long-term biological and physical impacts
  - prepare an initial study and notice of preparation
  - prepare a draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for internal review
  - update and publish the DEIR for public review
  - respond to comments and prepare a final environmental impact report (FEIR);

10. Evaluate whether a NEPA environmental document will be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and prepare any NEPA documentation required;
11. Participate and attend Board of Supervisors, stakeholder, tribal consultation, and public meetings; and,
12. All other tasks outlined in the SOW, not provided by the County of Inyo.

Specialists required for studies related to the engineering and environmental review might include riparian ecologists, fisheries biologists, fluvial geomorphologists, soils scientists, geochemists, and construction engineers with a background in river channel excavation and restoration work in wetlands. Additionally, an archeologist may be required.

#### **D. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY OF INYO**

County of Inyo staff will provide the services listed below in support of the consultant's services:

- Project management
- General administration support
- Logistical assistance for contractor's travel to and stay in the area
- Access to data, reports, maps, GIS files, and recent aerial imagery of the project site, and other materials.
- Scientific assistance, with limited field support
- Coordination with other County Departments including Planning, Public Works, Recycling and Waste Management, and Environmental Health
- Development and implementation of the public process plans
- Scheduling assistance and participation in meetings with consultants, sub-contractors, agency staff, stakeholders and appointed/elected officials as required
- Develop and maintain a project web presence

### **SECTION III – REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PROCEDURE**

#### **A. RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Respondents are required to submit a proposal describing how they will approach the project. They will also be required to submit a detailed written work program that describes their proposed approach to completing the work and an accompanying budget. The proposals will be limited to twenty-five pages, not including appendices and shall include the following tabs:

1. Approach and Work Plan. The consultant shall describe the overall approach to the study, specific techniques to be used, and specific expertise that would be employed, including a discussion of data needs and sources, analytical methodologies to be used in conducting any research and any expected research products and a strategy for garnering stakeholder, tribal, and community input. The work program shall clearly indicate that the consultant will cover all matters specified in the County's scope of work. This RFP, including the County's scope of work shall be incorporated by reference.
2. Schedule. A section shall be included detailing the scheduling of the various work items described in the work program. The schedule shall indicate (in weeks) when work will begin

on major sections and when completed, and the proposed time periods for County review and tribal consultation of administrative draft documents.

3. Staffing. A project manager for the project shall be designated. The lead personnel and any other personnel, including subcontractors (please highlight local subcontractors if used), to be actually employed in the study shall be named, and their specific responsibilities, qualifications, tasks, schedules, and hourly rates, shall be included in the proposal. The scope shall include a statement that substitution of the project manager or other key staff must receive prior written approval of the County. The specific effort to be contributed by each of the key personnel and sub-consultants, including a careful estimate of the number of hours each will contribute, shall be described. Person(s) who will attend any public meetings or hearings shall be identified.

4. Qualifications. The work program shall include the consultant's qualifications and a list of relevant experience. A brief resume of each person working on the project shall be included. Highlight professional experiences that are germane to the needs of the Project.

Respondents will describe the experience of their firm and members of the proposed team, within the last seven years, in evaluating:

- Projects that involve river restoration and associated floodplain impacts
- Projects under the jurisdiction of permitting agencies including the Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Army Corps of Engineers
- Short-term and long-term water quality impacts from construction
- Short-term and long-term ecological impacts to the riverine system including the fishery
- Short-term and long-term impacts to river and floodplain morphology
- Short-term and long-term impacts to emergent and riparian vegetation
- Short-term and long-term impacts related to construction equipment operating from both the floodplain and from the river channel
- The volume of material (spoil) to be generated by excavation and/or dredging
- Impacts from dredged or excavated spoils placed in the floodplain or otherwise disposed
- Impacts to archeological resources
- Impacts, the result of waterside improvement

5. Prior work with Inyo County or LADWP. Respondents will indicate if they have worked on any projects for LADWP or Inyo County. If so, they will list the title of project(s), provide a brief overview of the scope of work, and indicate the year in which their work on that project was completed.

6. References. Provide a description of similar work completed for other clients, and please include contact information for the reference project manager.

7. Exceptions to Inyo County Modified Contract #156 (enclosed). To be considered as part of any subsequent negotiation, possible exceptions to the contract must be noted in the contractor's proposal. Respondents should note that this RFP and their proposal shall be part of any contract awarded.

## **B. EVALUATION CRITERIA/SELECTION PROCESS**

The proposals will be evaluated by staff. If no one candidate is clearly the top scoring then interviews may also be conducted. The County reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals.

The responding firms will be evaluated based on selection criteria, as follows:

1. Knowledge of, and experience with, assessing channel and floodplain construction, including ability to conduct studies required to fully assess environmental impacts (25%)
2. Budget--including expenses and any fees (20%)
3. Scope of Services and approach to required studies and analysis, EIR development, and long range planning and sustainability (15%)
4. A clear demonstration of understanding the project and its impacts (15%)
5. Qualifications--including references and resumes (10%)
6. Schedule (5%)
7. Quality of proposal (5%)
8. Ability to enter into Inyo County Modified Contract #156 (5%)

The scoring committee will rank the respondents based on the above criteria. Interviews with prospective respondents may be conducted. The respondent with the highest score will be selected and will commence contract negotiations with the County. If the County and a selected respondent cannot agree to contract terms the next highest scoring respondent will be selected. This process may continue until the County reaches an agreement with a consultant. If the County is unable to reach an agreement with any of the responding firms, or there are no satisfactory proposals submitted, other consultants may be invited to submit proposals. The County reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals.

After an agreement is reached, the successful consultant shall execute Modified County Contract #156 (enclosed), which will then be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for approval. This RFP and the contractor's proposal will be incorporated in the contract. The execution of the contract by the Chairperson of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors will constitute notice to the consultant to proceed with the work.

## **C. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROPOSALS**

Government Code Sections 6250 et seq., the California Public Record Act, defines a public record as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public business. The Public Record Act provides that public records shall be disclosed upon written request and that any citizen has a right to inspect any public record unless the document is exempted from disclosure. Be advised

that any contract that eventually arises from this Request for Proposals is a public record in its entirety. Also, all information submitted in response to this Request for Proposals is itself a public record without exception. Submission of any materials in response to this Request for Proposals constitutes a waiver by the submitting party of any claim that the information is protected from disclosure. By submitting materials, (1) you are consenting to release of such materials by the County if requested under the Public Records Act without further notice to you and (2) you agree to indemnify and hold harmless the County for release of such information.

#### **D. INQUIRIES**

Please direct any questions or other inquiries to Larry Freilich, Mitigation Manager, Inyo County Water Department (760) 878-0011, or at [lfreilich@inyocounty.us](mailto:lfreilich@inyocounty.us). Consider registering your interest in this RFP by providing us your email address. By doing so you will receive announcements related to the RFP, including answers to common questions.

#### **E. DEADLINE**

To be considered, the initial proposals must be received, before 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 31, 2017, by the Inyo County Water Department, at 135 S. Jackson Street, P.O. Box 337, Independence, CA 93526. Note that delivery times to the County's offices may not be guaranteed by many delivery service providers, that some providers will not deliver to a P.O. Box, and that the Post Office may only provide notification of delivery once per day.

Selected respondents who wish to submit a proposal should send it to:

Larry Freilich  
Inyo County Water Department  
Post Office Box 337 (USPS)  
135 S. Jackson Street (UPS, FEDEX, courier, hand delivery)  
Independence, CA 93526  
[lfreilich@inyocounty.us](mailto:lfreilich@inyocounty.us)

Please submit four (4) hard copies of your proposal and one (1) electronic copy (usb drive, CD, or link to Google Drive or similar cloud source) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 31, 2017. Postmarks and facsimiles are not acceptable.

Signed: 

Date: 7/31/17

Bob Harrington, Water Department Director