TAHOE
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Request For Proposals for Services And Equipment

Tahoe Resource Conservation District Seeks Bids for Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Projects

Announcement: August 8, 2022

BACKGROUND:

Lake Tahoe is an Outstanding Natural Resource Water threatened by environmental degradation. Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) strives to protect this national treasure for the benefit of current and future generations. As a part of this effort, Tahoe RCD works with partner agencies to control Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the Lake Tahoe Region. With the establishment of Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) in Lake Tahoe, attention has turned to controlling these aquatic invasive plants. Significant habitat disruption, impacts on native plant and animal communities, loss of property value, reduced recreation opportunities, and large public/private expenditures have accompanied aquatic plant invasions throughout the lower 48 states.

Early detection, prevention, and control are the best defenses against AIS and offer the best hope for successful management of aquatic invasive plant infestations in Lake Tahoe. Although aquatic invasive plants can be difficult and costly to control once widespread establishment has occurred, the AIS Programs' strategy for Lake Tahoe has demonstrated efficacy in controlling satellite infestations.

In collaboration with the NAWWG and the AISCC, Tahoe RCD and partner agencies have successfully implemented projects to control and manage infestations in Nevada and California through the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Program (Control Program). In 2019, the *Lake Tahoe Region Aquatic Invasive Species Action Agenda 2021-2030* (Action Agenda) was released. The Action Agenda is a 10-year plan, structured in two five-year implementation phases:

- *Phase I (2021–2025)* aggressively treats and controls AIS throughout the Region while conducting environmental review and a testing program for long-term AIS management within the Tahoe Keys. The Phase I goal is to reduce aquatic invasive plants to maintenance levels (or complete eradication) while actively exploring solutions to the largest infestation in the lake — the Tahoe Keys.

- *Phase II (2026–2030)* focuses on reducing aquatic invasive plants and invasive fish in the Tahoe Keys while continuing to maintain, reduce, or when possible, eradicate AIS in other parts of the Lake Tahoe Region.

Additionally, the Action Agenda

- Increases the pace and scale of AIS control
- Identifies priorities for AIS investments
- Maximizes return on investment
- Incorporates new performance metrics
- Supports adequate levels of monitoring
- Adds capacity to achieve goals
- Supports an all-taxa approach

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify a contractor or team of contractors that can contribute to accomplishing the objectives of the Action Agenda by removing aquatic invasive plants using physical direct and indirect methods. We envision this RFP resulting in a list of qualified contractors. While some contractors may possess the skills and experience to perform all tasks outlined below, we also encourage proposals from consultants who are qualified to perform a

specific task or sub-task (ex. *Subtask 2A: conduct pre-treatment and post-treatment site assessment surveys).* We will then go into contract with contractors on specific projects based on the qualifications, availability and proposed cost of specific projects.

Please visit the Tahoe RCD website for more information on Tahoe RCD's Aquatic Invasive Species control and monitoring program. Here you can find useful background information on project locations and progress, as well as underwater photos of plant removal showing the various methods contracted divers have used to remove plants. Tahoe RCD has also developed 2 story maps relevant to this project; the first introduces the overall framework of the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species control program illustrating the nature of the plant control work implemented for previous projects, and in particular those funded by the Lake Tahoe Science and Lake Improvement Account. The second story map presents successful work that has been completed at Crystal Shores Marinas, and highlights plant control methods.

EVALUATION:

Section	Evaluation Criteria
1. Definition of the Project	• Demonstrates exceptional knowledge of the overall goals and objectives
2. Project Approach	• Provides a comprehensive project approach, strategy, and deliverables.
3. Team Organization	• Provides a qualified project team and leadership.
4. Qualifications and Experience	• Depth of relevant experience, verifiable ability of proposed firm to meet Agency expectations.
5. Schedule & Cost	• Acceptability of proposed overall cost and specific cost • Availability and accessibility during the duration of this project.
6. References	• Satisfactory responses from prior engagement references.
7. Content	• Satisfactory completion of all general RFP content and submission requirements

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SCHEDULE:

Date of Announcement:	August 8, 2022
Proposing Firms' Questions Due:	August 17, 2022
Questions and Answers posted:	August 19, 2022
Deadline for Proposal Submissions:	August 26, 2022
Interviews (if necessary):	Sept.1--Sept 2, 2022
Notification of Award(s):	by September 9, 2022

Late proposal submissions will not be considered.

PROJECT DESRIPTION:

Control of aquatic invasive plants requires maintaining populations at a small enough size and density to prevent further growth or spread of the infestation. Aquatic invasive plant control can be achieved using multiple methods including 1) bottom barriers, 2) diver-assisted hand or suction removal, 3) hand removal, or 4) a combination of these methods.

Control and management of plant fragments to prevent spread and establish of new populations and to reduce habitat suitability can be accomplished through active and passive means with tools that include 5) laminar flow technology and 5) installation and maintenance of bubble curtains. In some cases, specialized dive experience is also needed to conduct plant surveys, repair equipment, or test innovative control and monitoring methods.

We are seeking to develop an implementor referral list to draw from on an on-call basis when specific expertise is needed. The following is an outline of potential services and expertise being requested in this RFP, as well as potential tasks. Please note that the following tasks will require the contractor to discuss and refine work products with Tahoe RCD staff. Depending on responses and qualifications, Tahoe RCD may award multiple contracts under this RFP.

Responses should include a statement of qualifications and expertise working on one or more of the following tasks:

The objectives of the Project are:

1. **Control of AIS.** Control aquatic invasive plant infestations in select sites throughout the near-shore of Lake Tahoe. Project sites may be located in open water, marinas and embayments, marshes, and tributaries. Not all methods are approved for use in all above-mentioned habitats.
2. **Removal of AIS.** Successfully remove 100% of aquatic invasive plant material within the project area.
3. **Rapid Response.** Execute rapid-response control efforts on new or priority aquatic invasive plant infestations in priority sites within the Lake Tahoe Basin.
4. **Effectiveness Surveys.** Conduct baseline and effectiveness monitoring surveys using diver surveys or other methods (hydroacoustic methodology).

These objectives will be accomplished through implementation of effective aquatic invasive plant removal techniques. The focus of this Project is the physical removal of aquatic invasive plants in a manner that achieves the greatest environmental gain at Lake Tahoe. Tahoe RCD acknowledges that the Project requires a diverse skill set that may not be available from a single company; therefore, we encourage proposals that combine skill sets to form a team that is best qualified to accomplish the Project objectives. In addition, Tahoe RCD reserves the right to select multiple companies to complete discrete tasks in the best interest of the Project.

SCOPE:

Proposals need to demonstrate the ability to complete the tasks described below. Implementation of the Project is anticipated to require under-water scuba diving, hand-removal in shallow waters, watercraft and equipment use, data collection, efficient management and operation of plant-removal crews, debris containment, and disposal abilities.

Task 1: Project Management

The Project requires reliable project management. Essential duties include team organization, policy integration, task or subtask evaluation, reporting, permit compliance, and budgeting. Proposals should demonstrate experience and efficiency in performing management duties in

similar project efforts, as well as the demonstrated ability to communicate and work with multiple regulatory and/or land management agencies. Adherence to a budget schedule is required.

Subtask 1A: Attend Meetings

Project management meetings will be held on a regular basis at a convenient location or by phone. The purpose of these meetings will be to provide progress/status reports, discuss project challenges, and provide administrative direction and decisions.

Special and/or season-end meetings will be held as determined necessary by Tahoe RCD or selected contractor. Such meetings may be determined necessary when site specific challenges require discussions beyond the scope of regularly scheduled meetings.

Meetings may take place remotely, at the Tahoe RCD office in South Lake Tahoe, CA, other facilities located around the Tahoe Basin, or at the project site.

Subtask 1B: Coordination

The contractor will be responsible for coordinating with Tahoe RCD. The contractor will be responsible for communicating project challenges, safety concerns, and management decisions to Tahoe RCD in a timely manner. This task will typically entail daily email or phone call correspondence to discuss project progress, monitoring, and evaluation. It is expected that minor project challenges will be addressed at this level of communication.

Subtask 1C: Supervise Control Crew(s)

The contractor will provide for and supervise top-side control crew(s) for each project site or activity. Supervision must include all necessary safety measures, such as described in the "Special Qualifications" section below. The contractor will be responsible for ensuring safety plans, on-site coordination measures, and permit compliance is implemented correctly. Proposals should include a project team organization structure that addresses the need for on-site supervision, and the supervisors' role in the project management task.

Task 1 Deliverables:

- *Participate in project management meetings on a regular basis*
- *Communicate with Tahoe RCD on a daily basis via phone or e-mail addressing any project challenges and safety concerns*
- *Submit invoices monthly*

Task 2: Control Aquatic Invasive Plant Populations

Aquatic invasive plant infestations will be controlled over multiple years to achieve the objectives of this RFP. Critical to this effort will be conducting accurate pre- and post-surveys of treatment sites and documenting type and duration of control method(s) used.

Under Task 2, survey inventories will be conducted before and after treatment efforts at each project site. Approved control techniques that have been deployed at Lake Tahoe and proven successful are: hand removal, diver-assisted hand or suction removal, and placement of bottom barriers. Proposals should include a strategy to address infestations under the various conditions in Lake Tahoe. Emphasis should be placed on efficiently using established approaches and demonstrating an organizational structure that supports evaluation and adaptive management. Successful proposals will integrate documentation and evaluation of treatment methods with the implementation of all project activities.

Aquatic invasive plant infestations at Lake Tahoe can be classified as 1) known and/or documented with estimates on size and location, or 2) currently unknown or suspected, and lacking data on location and size. Identifying new infestations early and responding with aggressive treatment greatly increases the likelihood of controlling satellite populations and reducing dispersal. New information on plant infestations is likely to become available within the timeline of

this task. Therefore, proposals should provide a scope and cost estimate that can address unknown infestations. This can be presented as a treatment cost per acre.

Subtask 2A: Conduct Pre-Treatment and Post-Treatment Site Assessment Surveys
The contractor will conduct a pre-treatment and a post-treatment survey at each project site prior to and immediately following plant control efforts. The purpose of these surveys is to document the pre- and post-project conditions and to assess the work completed. Typically, site surveys will require the use of divers trained in aquatic invasive plant identification. Hydro-acoustic survey methods may also be used in some projects. Training for identification of aquatic invasive plant species that occur in or around the Tahoe area can occur as part of project start-up meetings. However, divers must possess the skills necessary to understand taxonomic terminology and the ability to distinguish plant characteristics. Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) will be used to document the extent/perimeter of each treatment area. Digital underwater photographs will be taken and divers will record observations on substrate, debris, and vegetative cover. Pre- and post-treatment surveys will also quantify the infestation area, percent coverage, density estimates, and species composition.

Subtask 2B: Conduct Plant Control Treatments
Control crews will conduct plant control at specific infestation sites. Treatment will be accomplished using the most appropriate methods for each infestation as defined in the Final_Lakewide_AIP_Control_IS/IEC/EA; bottom barriers, diver-assisted hand or suction removal, and hand pulling. In addition, installation of laminar flow technology and installation and maintenance of bubble curtains may be required. The program currently owns some plant control equipment that would be available for use; these resources are described in the *Equipment* section below. Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate related experience with aquatic invasive plant removal techniques and equipment, a familiarity with the project area, and the ability to effectively implement one or several treatment efforts. Adequate proposals will describe how effective control methods will be implemented and how treatment teams will be deployed.

Based on surveys conducted throughout Lake Tahoe in 2018, Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed infestations are located at approximately 25 known sites. These infestations range in size from approximately .10 acre to 100 acres on the lake bottom. In some instances, new aquatic invasive plant infestations are detected and divers would be expected to be able to response rapidly to remove the infestations using the most appropriate control method. Many infestation sites will require the integrated use of underwater divers and “topside” crewmembers on a vessel, dock, or on shore. Lake Tahoe is a popular destination for boaters; boat traffic patterns and tendencies create dangerous situations for divers in many parts of the lake and during times of high-volume use. Proper diving and safety procedures are a required element of all project activities and will be the responsibility of the selected contractor(s). Proposals should address diver safety plans, responsibilities, and other necessary conditions related to the safety of professional underwater divers and all crewmembers involved.

In addition to physically pulling plant stems or placing bottom barriers, treatment crews will be responsible for the containment of plant fragments, proper storage of aquatic invasive plant material, transport of materials from the site, and proper disposal of all material at an approved facility. Permit conditions that require decontamination of equipment and critical control-point procedures will also be the responsibility of the treatment crews, see *Special Considerations* below.

Task 2 Deliverables:
- *Use ArcGIS Field Maps to record data and upload daily. Tahoe RCD will provide Field Maps template*
- *Submit monthly summary report of project surveys and treatment accomplishments to Tahoe RCD*

Task 3: Permit Compliance

The Projects will be permitted through several authorizing agencies, including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, Nevada Division of State Lands, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Lands Commission and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. These permits contain mitigation measures that the contractor may be required to implement. Tahoe RCD will provide contractors with the tablet templates to document their compliance with these measures. For example, the Project will require water quality monitoring in order to ensure Project impacts do not exceed permit conditions. The parties selected for this task will be responsible for conducting water quality monitoring, sample collection and analysis, and compliance reporting according to permit requirements. Monitoring will include turbidity, temperature, time of observation, and description of project activity. The contractor will also be responsible for implementing a hazard assessment and critical point plan (HACCP Plan) according to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidelines.

Task 3 Deliverables:

- *Upload turbidity and water quality monitoring data daily*
- *Document HACCP compliance to Tahoe RCD prior to project start date*
- *Submit to Tahoe RCD documentation of compliance with mitigation measures for potential impacts to other resources such as recreation and non-target species*

Task 4: Reporting

Contractor will be responsible for reporting. The contractor will provide monthly progress reports to Tahoe RCD that detail survey, treatment, and water quality results. The contractor will be responsible for delegating reporting responsibilities and structure to their crews as part of project initiation. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the reporting structure and responsibilities.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- *Monthly progress reports for each project site*
- *Final Project Summary Report submitted to Tahoe RCD within 30 days post-project completion*

PROJECT SCHEDULE: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Contracts Awarded	September 2022
Planning, Strategy, and Coordination (Task 1)	September 2022 and ongoing
Aquatic Invasive Plant Control (Tasks 1, 2, & 3)	Work may commence in Fall 2022 at some sites. Most work will commence in May 2023.
Reporting (Task 4)	Monthly and post-project

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Equipment

Tahoe RCD and its partners maintain a limited supply of equipment that is available for contractor use in this Project:

- Suction Dredges (float mounted and pontoon mounted for diver-assisted removal)
- Bottom barriers (poly tarps), 10’ x 40’ rectangles
- Rebar, 10’ x ¼” dia.
- Rebar, 2’ x ¼” dia. “U” staples
- Collection bins

Proposals must address equipment needs and company/agency contributions.

Special Qualifications

Professional under-water diving at Lake Tahoe requires specialized skills and qualifications. In addition, under-water diving for plant control efforts at Lake Tahoe will require site-specific safety and diver-support planning. Table 1 provides a summary of required or desired safety qualifications, diver certifications, and pertinent information that should be provided in proposals that include diver services. For more detailed insurance requirements, please see the example Professional Services Agreement posted with this RFP on the Tahoe RCD website.

Table 1. Diver-related Safety Qualifications, Special Certifications and Liability Insurance

Special Qualifications	Diver Certifications	Required Information
Experience in Scientific Research Diver Safety Plan Experience in Aquatic Invasive Plant Removal Liability Insurance Emergency First Responder (optional)	Commercial Altitude Diver Dry Suit Diver Rescue Diver Master Diver	Years of commercial and/or professional dive experience Proof of liability insurance including but not limited to the following: 1) Commercial General Liability Insurance which affords coverage at least as broad as the latest version of the Insurance Services Office "occurrence" form CG 0001, with minimum limits of at least $1,000,000 per occurrence. 2) Automobile Liability Insurance with coverage at least as broad as the latest version of Insurance Services Office Form CA 0001 covering "Any Auto" (Symbol 1) with minimum limits of $1,000,000 each accident. 3) Workers' Compensation Insurance, as required by the State of California and Employer's Liability Insurance with a limit of not less than $1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury and disease.

Hazard Assessment and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan

The contractor will be responsible implementing a hazard assessment and critical point plan (HACCP Plan). The purpose of HACCP planning is to identify critical points in controlling the potential spread of invasive species and other environmental hazards. Critical control points for this project may require procedures prior to arriving at a site or prior to moving from one infestation to another. Standard procedures for decontamination will be provided during pre-project planning. Please refer to Section 3.9--Public Safety, Hazards, and Hazardous Materials of the Lake-wide Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Project environmental document for more specific direction on this task.

Team Organization

Due to the nature of the project scope, complexity of aquatic invasive plant control, and potential for project resources to substantially increase, Tahoe RCD recognizes that a combination of two or more proposals may best accomplish the project objectives. Further, the large range of skill sets

required for this project may not be available from a single contractor. Therefore, proposals are encouraged to include any combination or subset of tasks and subtasks described in this RFP. Tahoe RCD reserves the ability to select the combination of proposals that provides the best services at a reasonable cost. Please provide rate sheet for dive services. Cost will be considered in selection but will not be the only factor evaluated.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:

Address all responses via email to:

Mollie Hurt, Director of Programs, mhurt@tahoercd.org, 530-543-1501 ext. 102

Minimum required proposal contents:

1. Definition of the Project: Indicate your understanding of the Project objectives and of aquatic invasive plant control at Lake Tahoe.
2. Project approach: Describe how the Project will be managed, implemented, and evaluated to accomplish the objectives and requirements outlined in this request. Comprehensive approaches that effectively use the available control methods are strongly encouraged.
3. Team Organization: Describe how the project team will be organized to facilitate safe and effective management, implementation, and evaluation.
4. Qualifications and Experience: Provide a summary of company and project team qualifications related to AIS control. Describe examples of past experience pertinent to the Project. Refer to Special Qualifications section for required diver safety qualifications and/or certifications.
5. Schedule and Cost: Provide an itemized cost estimate based on the Tasks described in Scope of Work section. Adequate cost estimates will address unique control opportunities that have not yet been quantified, such as with a "per area" or "per time" estimate.
6. References: Provide a list of references (with current phone numbers and e-mail addresses) of professionals who are familiar with your team's experience.

NOTIFICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS:

The selection process will be completed within 3 weeks after proposals are opened. The process for selection is as follows:

1. Proposal evaluation criteria will include content of the proposal, project approach, qualifications, references, cost, and service availability.
2. Interview criteria will be based on project understanding, organization, and professionalism.

The grantee reserves the right to award any part of or the whole proposal to one or multiple companies. Tahoe RCD will contract with the party that will best accomplish the project objectives for the best value and in the best interests of the Agency.

For questions:

Contact: Mollie Hurt, Director of Programs at mhurt@tahoercd.org, or 530-543-1501 ext. 102

- All written questions and requests for clarification should be directed to Mollie Hurt by August 17. Questions and responses will be posted for all bidders at https://tahoercd.org/our-work/aquatic-invasive-species/publications-helpful-links/
- Bidder must certify to the best of its knowledge and belief that it and its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency.

- Costs to prepare proposals will not be reimbursed.
- All submittals are public information. Restrictions on any information submitted will render a bid non-responsive.
- Selected consultant(s) will be expected to sign Tahoe RCD Professional Services Agreement
- All subcontractors, if any, used by the selected consultant will require prior written consent of Tahoe RCD and will be subject to all provisions stipulated in the Professional Services Agreement.
- This contract may be funded by federal, state, local or private grant awards and is subject to corresponding grant award requirements and cost principles. Specific cost principles and administrative regulations applicable to this work will be identified during contract negotiations.