

## **Notice for Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Fowl River Watershed Management Planning Mobile County Alabama**

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), through its Project Implementation Committee (PIC), is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select an environmental planning, engineering, natural resource planning or other similar firm to prepare a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (WMP) for the **Fowl River Watershed** in Mobile County, Alabama. **Statements of Qualification will be accepted until Friday, June 27, 2014, 12:00 p.m. and must be sent to: Mobile Bay National Estuary Program- Fowl River Plan, 118 North Royal St., Suite 601, Mobile, AL 36602.**

The PIC five year strategy included in the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for 2013-2018 identified three goals: Improve trends in water quality in priority watersheds that discharge into priority fishery nursery areas; improve ecosystem function and resilience through protection, restoration, and conservation of habitats, including beaches, bays, backwaters, and rivers; and restore/expand human connections to Alabama's coastal resources. To achieve these goals, the PIC has identified a need for comprehensive watershed planning for 2nd and 3rd order streams (HUC12s) within the Mobile Bay estuary, or those that are intertidal.

To assist the PIC in achieving this objective, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) has received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund to develop a comprehensive management plan for the **Fowl River Watershed**. The purpose of this plan will be guide watershed resource managers, policy makers, community organizations and citizens to protect the chemical, biological, and cultural integrity of **Fowl River** watershed, and specifically its waters and habitats that support healthy populations of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the waters of the Mobile Bay estuary.

The **goals** of this watershed planning effort are to:

1. Improve water quality to support healthy populations of fish and shellfish
2. Improve habitats necessary to support healthy populations of fish and shellfish
3. Protect continued customary uses of biological resources to preserve culture, heritage and traditional ecological knowledge of the watershed
4. Improve watershed resiliency to sea level rise and changing climate impacts
5. Expand opportunities for community access to the open spaces and waters of the watershed

The **objectives** of this watershed planning effort conform to the U.S. EPA's nine elements of watershed planning:

1. Build Partnerships, including identification of key stakeholders and solicitation of community input and concerns
2. Characterize the Watershed, including creation of a natural and cultural resource inventory, identification of causes and sources of impairments, identification of data gaps and estimation of pollutant loads (1)
3. Set Goals and Identify Solutions including determination of pollutant reduction loads needed and management measures to achieve goals (2-3)
4. Design Implementation Program including implementation schedule, interim milestones, criteria to measure progress, monitoring component, information/education program, and identification of technical and financial assistance needed to implement plan (4-9)

For more information: ([http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/upload/watershed\\_mgmnt\\_quick\\_guide.pdf](http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/upload/watershed_mgmnt_quick_guide.pdf))

Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and PIC **expectations** of how the watershed planning process will be undertaken include:

- Planning activities that are conducted at an appropriate scale
- Planning that is focused on long term management processes and measures
- Adequate and consistent involvement by stakeholders and local property owners
- Adequate assessment and presentation of land use/management issues, including any that may be controversial in nature
- Conflicts and limitations of watershed planning and implementation are identified and addressed
- Information prepared in a clear and concise manner, including a comprehensive document and a smaller case statement for communication purposes.

The firm selected must be able to develop concepts that maximize environmental health and public benefit. It is our intent that the firm selected will work with and be guided by a steering committee made up of key stakeholders of the watershed, PIC representatives, and MBNEP staff in performing the activities necessary to produce a comprehensive plan.

The most current RFQ document is available at the MBNEP website ([www.mobilebaynep.com](http://www.mobilebaynep.com)). A **mandatory** pre-submittal Conference will be held on **June 11, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.**, at the International Trade Center, 250 Water Street, Mobile Alabama. Potential **Respondents** interested in this RFQ should contact the MBNEP and request placement on the RFQ e-mail distribution list to ensure receipt of amendments and other relevant information. Inquiries should be directed to: Mr. Christian Miller at [christian@auburn.edu](mailto:christian@auburn.edu) or by phone at 251-438-5690. **Statements of Qualification will be accepted until 12:00 p.m., June 27, 2014 and must be sent to: Mobile Bay National Estuary Program- Fowl River Plan, 118 North Royal St., Suite 601, Mobile, AL 36602.**

## The Fowl River Watershed

### ***Watershed Size and Location***

The Fowl River Watershed (HUC 031602050206) encompasses 52,782 acres, drains much of southern Mobile County, and is a direct contributor to Mobile Bay. Its headwaters are located near the Mobile suburb of Theodore, AL and it splits just south of Bellingrath Gardens into East Fowl River, which flows northeasterly into Mobile Bay, and West Fowl River, which flows south into Mississippi Sound. Land use in the Fowl River Watershed is varied and characterized as urban, residential, and rural. Twenty-one percent of the watershed area is classified as urban, 15% as crop or pasture land, and 63% as forested. Stakeholder concerns include loss of wetlands and shoreline erosion, largely related to recreational boat use. Increasing development and continuing erosion and sedimentation threaten water and habitat quality.

### ***Main Tributaries and Tidal Influence***

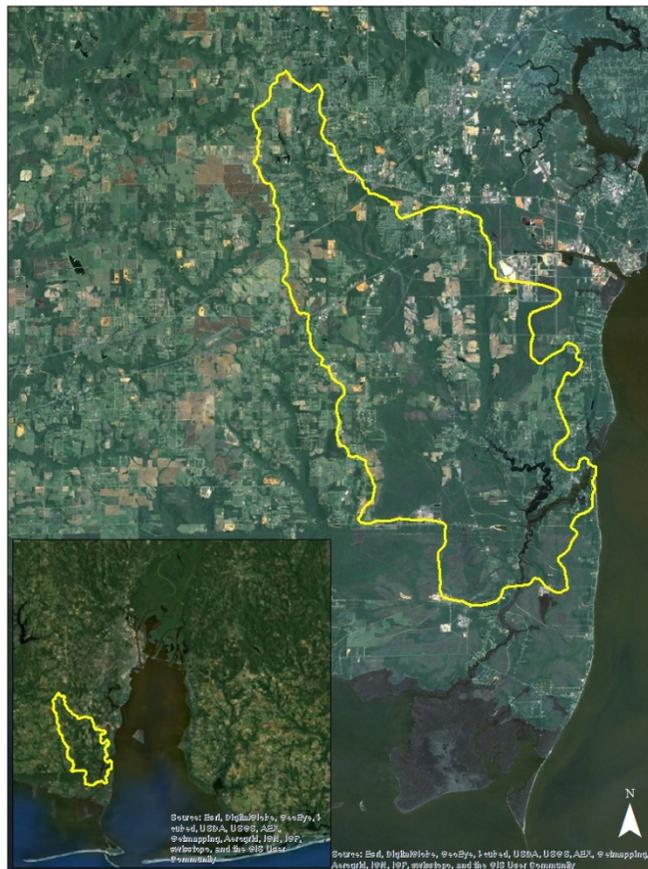
Fowl River has only two named tributaries, both of which are located in the central portion of the watershed. Muddy Creek originates east of Bellingrath Road, approximately two miles north of Laurendine Road (CR 24), and flows south for 4.5 miles to its confluence with Fowl River near Fowl River Road (CR 20). Dykes Creek originates less than a mile east of Muddy Creek, south of CR 24, and flows south for 2.5 miles to its confluence with Fowl River just south of CR 20. Due to its close proximity to Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, the lower portions of the watershed are tidally influenced. Based on field observations and water quality analysis from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), under normal conditions tidal influence extends north from the mouth of East Fowl River past its confluence with Muddy Creek near CR 20. ADEM monitoring stations north of CR 20 have not detected tidal influence except under extreme conditions, such as excessive storm surge.

### ***Impervious Coverage***

Over the last decade, more attention has been paid to the effects of non-point source pollution as a significant contributor to water quality degradation. Of particular importance is the correlation between increased impervious surfaces (roads, parking lots, sidewalks, rooftops, etc.) and decreased quality of receiving waters. Studies show that impairment to streams occurs when the amount of impervious cover within a watershed exceeds 10%. A 2006 analysis of impervious surfaces within the watershed by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) indicated impervious surface coverage was approximately **8%**.

### ***Water Use Classification and Impairments***

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management establishes the water use classifications for interstate and intrastate waters. **Fowl River** carries the **water use classification of Swimming & whole body contact** along its entire course. Since 2000, Fowl River has been listed on the **303(d) list of impaired waters for**



**Mercury.** A consumption advisory for largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) has been issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health for fish taken from Fowl River as a result of mercury concentration in samples collected from that watershed. Sediment samples taken by ADEM in the watershed didn't indicate elevated levels of mercury or any other metals.

Although no impairments currently exist for pathogenic bacteria, it should be noted that a large number of onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS), or septic systems, are present in watershed. An ADEM 2009 OSDS inventory indicated that there were a total of 6,002 septic systems within the watershed, ranking it second among 12-Digit HUCs in Mobile County for number of OSDS within the watershed. ADEM sampling in the watershed during 2004-06 indicated multiple instances of elevated fecal coliform bacteria, which were attributed to the large number of residential septic tank systems and abundant wildlife within the watershed. ADEM also noted that these instances of elevated fecal coliform concentrations occurred during and immediately following rain events. As noted by ADEM in their 2006 watershed assessment, other than instances of elevated fecal coliform bacteria, overall water quality for the watershed is satisfactory.

### ***Ecological Health***

The general ecological health of the watershed is good, which is supported by the diverse array of flora and fauna present. During ADEM's 2006 watershed assessment they noted an abundant presence of wading birds, generally accepted to be indicative of overall environmental health of a given area and indicators of ample food supply and suitable habitat.

### ***Human Uses***

Access to our coastlines is something that residents of the watershed and all of coastal Alabama greatly appreciate and is a primary value addressed under the MBNEP's CCMP. Access to the waterways along Fowl River is primarily private with paid access available at the Pelican Reef Restaurant and where Fowl River Road crosses the river, at Memory's Fish Camp. This river is a popular recreational boating and fishing location as observed from the number of small vessels that frequent it on a regular basis.

## The Watershed Management Planning Scope

### **Overview**

A WMP is considered an essential first step in preserving water quality in a relatively pristine, tidally-influenced watershed and mitigating the impacts of future development pressures. It provides documentation of existing environmental conditions and challenges and a vision and strategy for protecting the chemical and biological integrity for fish, wildlife, and human uses. The plan will be used to engage city, county, state and federal agencies, our legislative delegation, and the watershed community in demonstrating how both private and public objectives can be achieved for community environmental and economic development benefits. The WMP will definitively identify and categorize watershed/water quality issues and problems, identify climate change vulnerabilities, identify restoration and adaptation projects necessary to improve resiliency and conditions within the watershed, identify human and financial capital needed to implement identified management measures, institute reasonable implementation timelines, and document and measure success.

Henceforth in this RFQ, the term “**Respondent**” will be used to denote any of the categories of firms or teams noted or others who, by virtue of experience, technical capability and interest, consider themselves to have the capacity and demonstrated experience to successfully handle all aspects of the concept development and planning process including: planning, designing, stakeholder involvement, identification and facilitation of necessary public-private partnerships, identification and structuring of potential financing sources, and restoration project identification.

### Section A: Expected Watershed Management Plan Components

It is expected that **Respondents** to this request will address the following factors in the development of the watershed management plan:

#### **1. Literature/Data Review**

- The **Respondents** will conduct a literature and data review of available monitoring, scientific, and planning information for the Fowl River Watershed. This review shall include but not be limited to relevant court cases; federal, state or local planning documents; scientific studies and publications; and other documents that may contain information relevant to calculating and gaining understanding of streambed sediment loading, stream flows, water use/restrictions, etc. for the watershed and its tributaries will be conducted. Sources will be cited in the WMP and may include but not be limited to the following:
  - Source Water Assessments (A Study of the Fowl River Sub Watershed. ADEM 2006)
  - County Stormwater Management Plans
  - Other Federal, State or local Resource Management Plans
  - Comprehensive Plans
  - Facility Plans
  - Wetland Assessments
  - Wildlife Management Plans
  - Aquatic GAP analyses

#### **2. Data Gathering, Inventory, Characterization**

The WMP will impact more than thirty (30) linear miles of streams (Fowl River, Muddy Creek, Dykes Creek, and unnamed tributaries to Fowl River and Dykes Creek), and approximately 9,600 acres of open water and wetland habitat within the Hydrologic Unit Code 031602050206 watershed boundary. The **Respondent** will propose a strategy for data gathering and inventory, documenting data gaps, and characterizing watershed

including preparation of a demographic, historical and cultural assets profile and addressing the following components:

*2a. Clean Water Act- Section 319*

Although many different components may be included in this watershed plan, EPA has identified nine key elements that are critical for addressing non-point source reductions and management. All watershed management plans produced by the MBNEP and its PIC will require that these elements be addressed. For the purposes of characterization, the **Respondent** shall address elements “a” and “b”:

- a. **Identification of causes of impairment and pollutant sources** or groups of similar sources that need to be controlled to achieve needed load reductions, and any other goals identified in the watershed plan. Sources that need to be controlled should be identified at the significant subcategory level along with estimates of the extent to which they are present in the watershed
- b. **An estimate of the load reductions** expected from management measures
- c. **A description of the nonpoint source management measures** necessary to achieve load reductions, and a description of the critical areas in which those measures will be needed to implement this plan.
- d. **Estimates of the amounts of technical and financial assistance needed**, associated costs, and/or the sources and authorities necessary to implement this plan.
- e. **An information and education component** used to enhance public understanding of the plan and encourage early and continued participation in selecting, designing, and implementing nonpoint source management measures.
- f. **Schedule for implementing the nonpoint source management measures** recommended in this plan that is reasonably expeditious.
- g. **A description of interim measurable milestones** for determining whether nonpoint source management measures or other control actions are being implemented adequately.
- h. **A set of criteria that can be used to determine whether loading reductions are being achieved** over time and substantial progress is being made toward attaining water quality standards.
- i. **A monitoring component to evaluate the effectiveness** of the implementation efforts over time, measured against the criteria established under item h immediately above.

*2b. Sediment Loading Analysis*

Concurrent to the development of this WMP the Geological Survey of Alabama will assess sediment loads and transport to Mobile Bay from the Fowl River watershed to assess current impacts of land use on erosion and sedimentation in this drainage basin. The study will not only evaluate current loading rates, but will assess impacts of future watershed development and sediment load contributions. This assessment will focus on stream flows in an area that receives an average of 66 inches of rain annually, characterized by thunderstorms, heavy rains, and tropical weather events.

Documentation of land use in the watershed and corresponding sediment transport will provide data useful in determining current and potential areas of particular concern with regard to erosion and sedimentation and guide limited regulatory and remedial resources to where needs are the greatest. Sampling sites will be selected to reflect the range of land uses in this watershed, and sediment loads will be determined by direct measurement of suspended and bed sediment over a range of discharge events. Data will be evaluated by regression models to

determine annual sediment loads. It is expected that the **Respondent** will propose a strategy for incorporating the results of this study to inform the WMP process.

### *2c. Assessing Impacts related to Sea Level Rise and Impacts from Changes in Climate*

Climate change has the potential to negatively impact significant acreage in the Fowl River Watershed. The **Respondent** will set forth a strategy for how climate change impacts will be evaluated including but not limited to:

- What types of modeling will be used to assess the sensitivity of the hydrological and water quality response to future climate conditions
- How many climate change scenarios will be run and what impacts will be assessed (i.e. salt water intrusion, inundation of wetlands, water availability and quality, changes in habitat and species distribution, predictions of increased storms)
- How findings will be incorporated into management measures and plan implementation.

### **3. Stakeholder Engagement/Partnership Building**

WMP development is generally characterized by the expression of many varied and often conflicted opinions. This diversity of public opinions is largely attributed to the inherent complexity of the scientific and sociological issues involved with management issues but it is also intensified by human bias and self-interest. Differences among user groups regarding perceptions of environmental health can be expected with no clear understanding or consistent prioritization of the environmental concerns about the watershed among the many and varied stakeholder groups. The inherent complexity involved in developing a WMP requires that measures be taken to guarantee that consistent, factual information is presented to all citizens, with great care to ensure that the message is understandable. The **Respondent** will set forth a strategy for gathering community input throughout the planning process and for working with key stakeholders, PIC representatives, and MBNEP staff. For the purposes of engagement, the **Respondent** shall address elements “e”. This strategy shall include the following:

- How the Respondent will gather input from the community related to watershed concerns and potential opportunities for achieving the objectives set forth in this RFQ;
- How community input will be incorporated into the planning and implementation process;
- How Respondent will communicate with stakeholders and community during the planning process, including number of public meetings anticipated and at what points in the process and frequency and usage of other media;
- How the Respondent will provide updates to MBNEP’s Community Action Committee on progress of the WMP.

### *3a. Maps and Other Graphic Materials*

The **Respondent** will describe the level of detailed maps, sketches and other information that will be produced under this project to communicate existing conditions of the watershed; demonstrate the potential effects of proposed engineering projects (dams, sumps, retention structures, stream restorations etc.), political subdivision regulatory actions (land disturbance ordinances, cross-jurisdictional cooperation, etc.), land use planning (zoning actions or changes, establishment of buffer zones etc.) and other actions recommended.

### **4. Development of Management Alternatives and Restoration Opportunities**

Historical and recent scientific research data and information will be used to develop management alternatives to recommend load reduction goals and achieve the objectives of the WMP. An evaluation of these alternatives will be provided with recommendations/prioritizations for best courses of action. The WMP will not include specific engineering design specifications. However, it will provide detail, maps, sketches, and information sufficient for stakeholders to conceptualize potential engineering needs (hydrological modification, retention structures, stream restoration, etc.); address political issues (land disturbance ordinances, jurisdictional boundaries and cooperation,

and environmental justice); direct land use planning (zoning actions/changes, establishment of buffer zones, easements, coastal zone enforcement/regulations, watershed management, etc.), and base overall watershed management decisions. The **Respondent** will provide a strategy for how management alternatives will be developed, evaluated, and prioritized. For the purposes of developing management measures, the **Respondent** shall address element “c”.

#### **5. Examination of the Regulatory Framework**

A thorough review of applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, laws, statutes, and ordinances addressing erosion, sediment containment, storm water management, stream restoration, nonpoint source pollution, etc., shall be conducted and cited in the WMP. Authorities and responsibilities granted to local, state, and federal entities to address water quality issues, including nutrient and pathogen control and storm water runoff will be discussed in the WMP. If an enforcement or mitigation role or responsibility can be attributed to a particular resource agency under an existing authority, the agency/action should also be identified or described.

#### **6. Development of Implementation Program and Financing Alternatives**

Detailed and specific timelines, responsibilities and resource needs will assure management measures are effectively, efficiently, opportunistically and expeditiously implemented in order to achieve short and long-term water quality and habitat protection goals and objectives. The WMP will be used as a definitive reference or “needs” document to secure political interest and human and financial capital to implement recommended actions. The **Respondent** will propose a strategy for development of an implementation plan for the next three years, including financing mechanisms that provide a stable funding source for the management and restoration of the watershed. For the purposes of developing management measures, the **Respondent** shall address element “d”, “f”, and “g”. “h”, and “i”. The Implementation Plan will include but not be limited to the following:

- Description of the major issues negatively impacting the watershed, its water quality and fishery habitats;
- Identification of areas under most and least stress throughout the watershed;
- Recommendations of restoration projects with maps, outlining estimated linear feet or acreage restored, pollution reduction estimates, time sensitivities, complexities due to multiple property owners, descriptions of proposed traditional/innovative best management practices (BMPs) or other engineered solutions, and expectations of effectiveness, longevity, and maintenance requirements of those practices that may be required.
- Recommendations of actions/projects to improve community resiliency to SLR and changing climates
- Rough order of magnitude cost estimates including: planning design/activities, real estate/ right-of-way acquisition, construction, outreach, other)
- Regulatory changes necessary to ensure sustainability of restoration into perpetuity
- Project Financing Options/Resource Development including but not limited to feasibility of creating public-private partnerships, private sector sponsorship, issuing bonds or tax-based financing, use of state revolving funds
- Identification of potential partners for implementation, including public, private, and non-profit entities.
- Strategy for engaging federal, state, and local agencies; private sector; and citizens in watershed plan implementation, including any training that may be required
- Recommendations for distributing plan once published

#### **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Watershed management programs require a broad and effective monitoring and evaluation system to track performance against objectives and provide information to help managers at all levels with implementation. The **Respondent** will propose a strategy for monitoring the effectiveness of the actions recommended in achieving estimated load reductions and evaluating the success of achieving other outcomes identified in the plan.

## **Section B: Knowledge of RFQ and Site Investigation**

**Respondents** who submit a Statement of Qualification (Statement) are responsible for becoming fully informed regarding all circumstances, information, laws and any other matters that might, in any way, affect the **Respondent's** roles and responsibilities in the project. Any failure to become fully knowledgeable of any other matters that might in any way affect the project shall be at the **Respondent's** sole risk. MBNEP, and any other participants organized to assist in the development of this WMP (including but not limited to federal, state or local agencies, and individuals) assume no responsibility for any interpretations made by **Respondents** on the basis of information provided in this request or through any other sources.

By submitting a Statement, **Respondents** acknowledge that they have acquainted themselves with the available information and have investigated conditions affecting the Project. Except as specifically discussed in the request, the MBNEP, federal, state or local agencies, participating individuals make no representations about the environmental conditions or the presence or absence of contaminated materials at any site(s) within the watershed.

### *On-Site Inspections*

The listing and descriptions of management actions should be based upon on-site examinations of potential trouble spots. The likelihood of best management practice implementation success/failure rates should also be described. Written summaries and photo-documentation of the general condition/health of impaired and threatened sites will be included in the WMP. No detailed surveys are required, but on-site assessment of watershed conditions, particularly known problem areas throughout the watershed are expected to be conducted by **Respondent**. Any inspection or other on-site investigations during this RFQ process must be coordinated through **Christian Miller, Nonpoint Source Outreach Specialist for the MBNEP**. Mr. Miller can be contacted at 251-438-5690 or christian@auburn.edu.

This RFQ is conducted under applicable provisions of Alabama Bid Law. Please note that Statements in response to this RFQ are sought only from experienced consultants and developers of large scale environmental planning and construction projects. **Respondents** are asked to carefully review the RFQ. Potential responders interested in this RFQ should contact this office and request placement on the RFQ mailing list and attend the Pre-Submission Conference in order to ensure receipt of amendments or other relevant information.

**Respondents** are advised that the MBNEP, its employees, and/or agents shall not be liable at any time for any costs associated with or related to the Project, which are incurred by any submitter during any phase of this RFQ or subsequent amendment or cancellation.

### **Statement Contents**

Statements submitted in response to this RFQ shall include a complete response to the requirements in Section A of this RFQ in the order presented below. The information should be presented in 8.5" X 11" size and should have tabs/bookmarks for each section. Statements should be a straightforward delineation of the **Respondent's** capability to satisfy the intent and requirements of this RFQ, and ***should not contain redundancies or conflicting statements***. An officer authorized to make a binding commitment for the **Respondent** making the Statement shall sign the Statement submitted. Contents of the submitted Statements must include the following to be deemed responsive for evaluation:

### ***Cover Letter***

The Statement must include a cover letter transmitting the Statement and acknowledging receipt of any and all issued amendments to the RFQ. The letter should be addressed to: Ms. Roberta Swann, Director, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, 118 N. Royal Street Suite 601, Mobile, AL 36602.

- The letter should introduce the **Respondent's** project team. The Project Team is defined as the lead plus any key team members such as engineers, environmental experts, economists, contractors, bankers, etc. who are critical for consideration by the evaluation team.
- The cover letter should include the statement that the Project Team is willing to complete the Project as defined in this RFQ. **Respondents** are also advised to include a statement that the Project will conform to all applicable federal, state and county laws and ordinances, and that they accept responsibility to ensure compliance with them.
- The cover letter must also include a statement that the firm is not in arrears in the payment of any obligation due and owing to the State of Alabama, including tax payments and employee benefits and that it shall not become so during the term of the agreement if selected; a statement that the proposing **Respondent** will negotiate in good faith with the MBNEP and appropriate local entities; and a statement that the firm grants to the MBNEP a non-exclusive right to use, or cause others to use the contents of its Statement, or any part thereof, for any purpose.

### ***Conceptual Approach & Methodology***

**Respondents** are requested to demonstrate their understanding of this program by submitting a conceptual approach and methodology for project implementation. This narrative of no more than 15 pages should articulate the **Respondent's** strategies for addressing the expectations of planning in **Section A: Expected Watershed Management Plan Components 1-7**.

### ***Experience and Background***

Given the importance of this planning effort to local residents and political subdivisions, it is essential to fully understand the experience and capabilities of all key members of the Project Team. The **Respondent** should include the following about the Project Team:

- Description of the relationship between team members and their respective roles and contributions and percentage of effort anticipated by each team member for this watershed planning project. An organization chart would be an appropriate attachment.
- Resumes and overview of current and past activities of all key Project Team members to be involved in the Project including:
  - Education and professional licensing qualifications,
  - Description of experience within the most recent seven-year period related to watershed planning and project implementation, including but not limited to regional scale environmental engineering projects (i.e. storm water management, stream restoration, other) with details regarding the specific role and percentage of effort allocated to each project.
  - Indication of projects where members of the Project Team have previously collaborated.
- A summary of the **Respondent** lead's experience in complex, environmentally-sensitive projects that required interaction with a broad range of stakeholders from both the public and private sectors.
- Demonstration of **Respondent** lead's /Project Team's experience in completing projects of the scale and complexity envisioned in this RFQ on budget and on schedule.
- Names and phone numbers of references for at least three completed projects for which the Project Team acted as lead consultant and that may be considered comparable to the project envisioned in this RFQ. For each reference, indicate the contact person's role in the completed project and the time period of his or her involvement. Projects included for reference should be described only once, and the description

should include: Project size in total area; project scope; project location; value; project length from inception to completion; and roles of Project Team member or members during project execution.

- Respondents should identify with specificity any other relevant organizational, consulting or other available resources that will be committed to the Project.

### **Selection of Firm**

Statements will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee composed of MBNEP staff and PIC members, state and federal agencies, Mobile County, and other stakeholders. Please note that in coordinating this review process, any final decision will represent the consensus of the entire committee. Selection criteria will include but not be limited to:

- Proposed Project Approach - The statement outlines practical and realistic strategies to address needs outlined in the RFQ
- Projected tasks and timeline
- Success with similar projects
- Personnel qualifications
- Minority participation

The MBNEP reserves the right to contact **Respondents** with requests for clarification or additional information, or to arrange other follow up activities it deems appropriate. Selection of a Firm will be based on the quality, clarity and thoroughness of the submitted Statement and its compatibility with the RFQ's stated objectives, statements of intent, and submission requirements, plus the results of information gathered from interviews with shortlisted **Respondents** and client reference checks. Once it has completed this solicitation process, the MBNEP will be available to debrief **Respondents** who have submitted statements. The MBNEP will not share information from Statements made by other **Respondents**.

### **Proposed Time Line:**

Solicitation Issue/Advertising Date	<b>Wednesday, May 28, 2014</b>
Pre-Submittal Conference	<b>Wednesday, June 11, 2014</b>
Statement Receipt Closing Date	<b>Friday, June 27, 2014, 12:00 noon</b>
Shortlist Notification	<b>July 8, 2014</b>
Shortlist Interviews (if applicable)	<b>July 11, 2014</b>
Award Exclusive Negotiating Right	<b>July 15, 2014</b>
Delivery of Final Product	<b>July 31, 2015</b>

### **Shortlist Consideration**

The MBNEP acting as an agent for the Evaluation Committee, reserves the right to accept, reject, and/or interview any or all qualified **Respondents** and intends to select a limited number of **Respondents** for interviews. Qualified **Respondents** shortlisted for interview include those responsible **Respondents** who submit Statements initially judged by the Evaluation Committee to be reasonable. Shortlisted **Respondents** selected for interview shall be notified of the time, date, and location for oral presentations if applicable. Upon completion of the interview process, MBNEP reserves the right to immediately enter into negotiations with a selected **Respondent** and execute the standard MBNEP Professional Services Contract.

### **Submittal Instructions**

**Respondents** to the RFQ should limit their submissions to **no more than 15 single-sided pages**, excluding illustrative materials and Respondent Team qualifications and experience. All proprietary information should be identified as such by the **Respondent**. The MBNEP reserves the right to cancel or amend this RFQ, and will announce revisions to it by amendment.

*Two hard copies and a complete electronic copy for distribution to reviewers and funding organization of the Statement of Qualifications shall be sealed, marked and addressed as directed in this request. Statements (including electronic copy) may be mailed or delivered in person to the MBNEP at: 118 N. Royal Street Suite 601, Mobile, AL 36602 no later than 12:00 p.m. CST on June 27, 2014.*