Notice for Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Western Shore Watershed Management Planning
Mobile County Alabama

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program seeks a qualified environmental or natural resource planning, engineering, or other similar firm to prepare a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (WMP) for the Garrow's Bend (HUC 031602050101), Deer River (HUC 031602050105), and Delchamp's Bayou (HUC 031602050107) complex of watersheds in Mobile County, Alabama. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process will be used to select a firm who can develop such a conceptual engineering master plan based on new and available data. RFQ's must be sent to the attention of Bethany Dickey and received no later than **3:00 p.m. CST, Friday, March 8th.**

Summary of Offering

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), through a partnership with the State of Alabama, has secured funding through the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE) to develop WMPs for several intertidal watersheds along the Alabama coast. MBNEP partners with stakeholders to develop these plans, which will provide a roadmap for restoring or conserving watersheds and improving water and habitat quality in areas where resources could have been damaged by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. These plans will chart a conceptual course for improving or protecting the things people value most about living along the Alabama coast, including:

- **Water Quality**: Identify actions to reduce point and non-point source pollution (including stormwater runoff and associated trash, nutrients, pathogens, and erosion and sedimentation) and remediate past effects of environmental degradation, thereby reducing outgoing pollutant loads into the Gulf of Mexico
- **Fish**: Identify actions to reduce the incidence and impacts of invasive flora and fauna and improve condition of habitats necessary to support healthy populations of fish and shellfish.
- **Environmental health and resiliency**: Identify vulnerabilities in the watershed from increased sea level rise, storm surge, temperature increases, and precipitation, and improve watershed resiliency through adaptation strategies.
- **Access**: Characterize existing opportunities for public access, recreation, and ecotourism, and identify potential sites to expand access to open spaces and waters within these watersheds.
- **Culture and Heritage**: Characterize customary uses of biological resources, and identify actions to preserve culture, heritage, and traditional ecological knowledge of the watershed.
- **Shorelines**: Assess shoreline conditions and identify strategic areas for shoreline stabilization and fishery enhancements.

In addition to the six values identified above, these plans should provide a strategy for conserving and restoring coastal habitat types providing critical ecosystem services and identified by the MBNEP's Science Advisory Committee as most threatened by anthropogenic stressors. These habitat types- **freshwater wetlands; streams, rivers, and riparian buffers; and intertidal marshes and flats** - were classified as most stressed from dredging and filling, fragmentation, and sedimentation, all related to land use change. These habitats and the ecosystem services they provide are related to several, if not each, of the six identified values.

MBNEPs watershed planning process also conforms to NOAAs Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendment (CZARA) Section 6217 (g) management measures. As the State lead on water quality, ADEMs Alabama Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (ACNPCP) must conform to Section 6217(g) requirements to be compliant for funding under section 306 of the Coastal Zone Management Act and section 319 of the Clean Water Act. These so-called 6217 (g) requirements include geographic scope of the program; the pollutant sources to be addressed; the types of management measures used; the establishment of critical areas; technical assistance, public participation, and administrative coordination.

The firm selected must be able to develop a comprehensive plan to maximize environmental health and public benefit by identifying actions to improve local governance of the environment; promote community ownership, knowledge, and involvement in watershed management; and restore and conserve priority habitats beneficial to those resources that were, or could have been, damaged by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

An RFQ instead of a more traditional request for proposals (RFP) process is being used to select a Planner, in recognition of the need for sustained collaboration between the selected **Respondent**, municipal and county officials, local stakeholders, and the MBNEP to successfully achieve the stated wide-range of planning needs. Implementation funding is not currently identified in local, state, or federal budgets or from other sources. However, restoration projects identified in WMPs will be evaluated for future funding or other sources as appropriate.

EPA's Nine Key Elements: (http://www.mobilebaynep.com/images/uploads/library/9elements-WtrshdPlan-EpaHndbk.pdf)
Respondents should delineate how the project team will address the following objectives in the development of the watershed plan. These **objectives** conform to the U.S. EPA's nine key elements (listed parenthetically) of watershed planning:

- Build Partnerships, including identification of key stakeholders and solicitation of community input and concerns (1).
- 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 (2).
- Set Goals and Identify Solutions including determination of pollutant reduction loads needed and management measures to achieve goals (2-3).
- 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 the plan (4-9).

Request for Qualifications Inquiries, Contact Information, Timeline

Potential **Respondents** interested in this RFQ should contact The MBNEP and request placement on the RFQ mailing list to ensure receipt of amendments and other relevant information. Inquiries should be directed to: Bethany Dickey, bdickey@mobilebaynep.com 251-459-8871.

Proposed Time Line:

Solicitation Issue/Advertising Date	Friday, February 8th, 2019
Pre-Submittal Conference *	Monday, February 18th, 2019
Statement Receipt Closing Date	Friday, March 8th, 2019
Shortlist Notification	Monday, March 18th, 2019
Shortlist Interviews	Thursday, March 28th, 2019
Award Exclusive Negotiating Right	Monday, April 1st, 2019

**Attendance at the Pre-Submittal Conference is mandatory for statement consideration*

Pre-Submittal Conference

The most current RFQ document with any edits or modifications will be available at the MBNEP website (www.mobilebaynep.com). A mandatory pre-submittal conference will be conducted at **2:00 P.M. CST** on **Monday, February 18th, 2019** in the Killian Room at the International Trade Center located at 250 N. Water St. in Mobile, AL 36602.

Statement Contents

The Statement of Qualifications should be not more than **fifteen 8.5" X 11" single-sided pages, Times New Roman 11-point font (inclusive of the cover letter, conceptual approach, experience and background, and project team/level of participation)**, and should be divided by section, with Table of Contents (**cover pages and table of contents do not count against the 15-page limit**). All Statements shall be submitted in **electronic format** as a PDF. PDFs can be submitted on CD and mailed to **the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program c/o Bethany Dickey, 118 N. Royal St. Suite 601, Mobile, AL 36602** or emailed to bdickey@mobilebaynep.com

Statements submitted in response to this RFQ shall include a complete response to the requirements in the order presented below. 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 Form. Contents of the submitted Statements must include the following to be deemed responsive for evaluation:

A. Cover Letter

The Statement must include a cover letter accompanying the Statement and acknowledging receipt of all issued amendments to the RFQ. The letter should be addressed to: **Roberta Swann, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, 118 North Royal St. Suite 601, Mobile, AL 36602**.

- The letter should indicate a primary contact for the Statement and that person's title, address, phone number, and email address.
- The letter should introduce the **Respondent's** project team. The Project Team is defined as the lead plus any key team members who are critical for consideration by the evaluation team, and include relevant professional certifications (e.g., Professional Engineer, Certified Wetland Scientist, etc.) for each.
- The letter should include a general statement of approach distinguishing why the **Respondent** is the most suitable choice for this planning effort.
- The letter should include the statement that the Project Team is willing to complete the Project in a timely manner.
- The letter must 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 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.

B. Conceptual Approach & Methodology

Respondents are requested to demonstrate their understanding of this process by submitting a conceptual approach and methodology for project implementation. This narrative should articulate the **Respondent**'s methods and approach of engaging both partners and area stakeholders to create a feasible WMP and conceptual implementation strategy that advances the intent of this RFQ. In addition, the Respondent shall include a project schedule of major planning milestones.

The narrative must include, at a minimum, a conceptual approach for: watershed characterization (including assessment of climate change vulnerabilities); stakeholder outreach and engagement; prescription of management measures, regulatory evaluation and adaptation; long-term financing, prioritizing, and scheduling implementation activities; and monitoring and evaluation of success.

C. Experience and Background

Given the unique nature of the Project and its importance to local stakeholders, it is essential to fully understand the experience and capabilities of all key members of the Project Team. **Respondent** should include the following information about the Project Team:

- Describe your team's experience in specific projects relevant to watershed and community-scale engineering and planning projects (including public/private developments) relative to stormwater management, site preparation, stream modification and diversion, or environmental restoration.
- Demonstrate the ability and experience of key individuals on the **Respondent's** proposed Project Team to complete projects of the scale and complexity envisioned in this RFQ on budget and on schedule.
- Provide up to three examples of projects that incorporated LID/Green Infrastructure concepts, climate adapt or cultural preservation and public access into implementation activities.
- Provide details of any experience engaging diverse communities of stakeholders in projects that incorporated concepts of climate change, seal level rise, community resilience, and adaptation planning.
- Describe key Project Team members' involvement in above projects including project conception and financing, through the design and implementation phase and leading to project completion and assessment.
- Provide details of any experience working in the Mobile area and surrounding communities in south eastern Mobile County, AL.
- Relate how past projects have successfully engaged diverse communities of stakeholders and created community ownership of the project.
- Please provide the names and phone numbers of references for at least **two** completed projects for which the Project Team acted as 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 period of their involvement.
- Respondents should identify with specificity any other relevant organizational, consulting, or other available resources that will be committed to the Project.

D. Project Team / Level of Participation

Given the complex nature of the Project, the Evaluation Team and MBNEP must understand the roles of key Project Team members, their availability to complete specific Project tasks in a timely manner, and the overall organization and decision-making process of the Project Team.

- Identify key Project Team members with responsibility for leading main project tasks, including the percentage of time each is expected to commit through the duration of the planning process.
- Include an organization chart of the Project Team showing lines of communication, clearly-defined roles, availability, and decision-making hierarchy.

Selection of Planner

Statements will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee composed of representatives from the MBNEP, state and federal agencies, and other watershed stakeholders. 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 Planner will be based on: the quality, clarity, and thoughtfulness 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.

The following criteria, corresponding to the categories set forth in the Submittal Instructions will be used to evaluate **Respondents**' Statements. The weighted score for each category is indicated in parentheses:

A. Cover Letter / Comprehensive Project Team (5%)

1. Completeness of information on proposed project team.
2. Succinctness and ingenuity of the statement of approach.
3. Timeliness of approach.

B. Conceptual Approach & Methodology (50%)

1. Strategy for addressing the EPA's nine key elements.
2. Overall approach to literature review, field assessment, and data analysis, including willingness to generate additional data sets, when necessary, to supplement existing water quality, ecosystem, cultural, and demographic data.
3. Strategy for using available watershed data and modeling, including, but not limited to, build-out, water quality, and climate change vulnerability assessments to achieve project goals.
4. Demonstration of innovative methods for soliciting, assessing, and using community input, comments, and suggestions during project development and for working with diverse stakeholders to achieve project goals; including strategies for addressing concepts related to community resilience and adaptation planning.
5. Strategy for identifying implementation activities to support the six things people value, Section 6217 (g) management measures, and EPA's nine key elements, including but not limited to identification of opportunities to celebrate culture and connect community to water resources and install best management practices for improving habitat and water quality.
6. Innovative approaches for long-term financing, including strategies for partnering/leveraging resources and cost/benefit analyses for best management practices.
7. Innovative approaches for driving regulatory change.
8. Strategy for monitoring system changes effected by management measures and generating measurable results that incorporates a meaningful volunteer monitoring program.
9. Approach for promoting completed WMP and engaging locally-elected and State officials in adopting plan recommendations.
10. Strategy for completing the work in a timely manner.

C. Experience and Background (25%)

1. Diversity of expertise of key team members.
2. Years of experience in undertaking similar planning efforts by key team members.
3. Demonstrated team experience working in local watershed community.
4. Demonstrated team experience working with public entities to structure and implement watershed-scale LID projects, stream modification and diversions, environmental restoration, cultural preservation, community resilience and adaptation, and expansion or provision of public access.
5. Demonstrated team experience engaging diverse communities.
6. Demonstrated team experience in completing projects of the scale and complexity envisioned, from project conception through completion and assessment, on budget and on schedule.
7. Provision of at least two references.

D. Project Team / Level of Participation (20%)

1. Roles, availability, and time allocation of key Project Team members are clearly defined and reasonable.
2. Provided organizational chart of key Project Team members clearly delineates roles/responsibilities, lines of communication, and decision-making hierarchy.

Shortlist Consideration

The MBNEP 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. **Respondents** shortlisted for interviews will include those 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. Upon completion of the interview process, MBNEP reserves the right to immediately enter negotiations with a selected **Respondent** and execute the standard MBNEP Professional Services Contract**.**

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**.

Supplemental Materials to this RFQ

Additional resources are available on the MBNEP's website: http://www.mobilebaynep.com/library

Disclaimer

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** who submit a Statement of Qualification are responsible for becoming fully informed regarding all circumstances, information, laws and any other matters that might, in any way, affect the **Respondent**'s submitted Statement.

Respondents are responsible for acquainting themselves with all available information and documented conditions of or affecting the watershed. The MBNEP, federal, state or local agencies, Mobile County, local municipalities, and participating individuals make no representations about the environmental conditions, or presence or absence of contaminated materials within the watershed referenced in this solicitation.

MBNEP, federal, state or local agencies, Mobile County, local municipalities, and individuals assume no responsibility for any interpretations made by **Respondents** based on information provided in this offer or through any other sources. The MBNEP, and its employees, and/or agents shall not be liable at any time for any costs associated with or related to this Request, which are incurred by any Respondent to the RFQ, subsequent amendments or cancellation.