

NORTH FORK PMU HABITAT CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT

Project Scope

The Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group (NNSG), through a contract arrangement with a professional consulting group or groups, will complete a habitat conservation evaluation (Project) of the North Fork Sage Grouse Population Management Unit (PMU). The goal of the Project is to describe existing field conditions, identify impacts to the sagebrush ecosystems and make recommendations for reasonable management actions that will establish an improved and functioning sagebrush obligate habitat. These recommended management actions will recognize the role of existing land uses, and will complement joint efforts between the management agencies, landowners and users, NNSG and others to improve the sage grouse populations.

Background

NNSG began working to secure sagebrush complex habitat in 2004 with the completion of the Elko County Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Strategy (Strategy). Elko County commissioners have incorporated the Strategy as a tool for county landscape planning. Landscape assessments provide a baseline of information for comprehensive and coordinated restoration projects.

NNSG and Elko County secured a Nevada State Question 1 Habitat Conservation grant in 2007 to complete the Tuscarora Population Management Unit/Independence Basin, Willow Creek Basin, and Rock Creek Basin Watershed Assessments. This project was completed in early 2009. The North Fork Sage Grouse Population Management Unit habitat conservation Project will add to the county's sagebrush complex database, and importantly, prepare for restoration project planning.

The Project will include the following Tasks and schedule:

Task 1: Project Coordination and Stakeholder Engagement

- Plan and implement three stakeholder field meetings in the conservation assessment study area between landowners/ranchers, management agencies, project consultants, NNSG and others that have interest in the Project.
- Plan and make two presentations to the NNSG membership: 1) present the Draft Report in June 2010, and; 2) present the Final Report in December 2010.
- Conduct quarterly Project update phone conferences between NNSG, State Lands and Elko County.

Task 2: Review existing information available for the Project area

- Gather, review and compile existing data from the BLM, USFS, NDOW and other sources.
- Compile GIS data to develop baseline maps.
- Evaluate data adequacy and develop strategy for gathering additional required data to complete the Project.

Task 3: Collection of Field Data

- Gather sufficient field information so that a compilation of vegetation types can be adequately determined.

- Determine ecological status for each vegetation type with a focus on which areas have crossed specific ecological thresholds (for example, areas that have become cheat grass dominant or areas that are missing perennial bunchgrasses).
- From areal data collected and interpreted, determine ecological status for relevant areas so that classifications can be made in the North Fork PMU into habitat values; specifically R0, R1, R2, R3, R4 or R5.
- Identify key issues and potential threats to healthy sage grouse / watershed function. This would include, but not be limited to, vegetation removal, roads, power lines, transportation corridors, fences, housing developments, communication structures, mining and exploration activities, oil and gas geophysical disturbance and noxious weed infestations.
- Develop a qualitative assessment of the condition of riparian habitat as it pertains to the sage grouse. Classify the riparian habitat according to accepted evaluation standards.

Task 4: Data Compilation

- Synthesize field and existing data adequate to facilitate Project objectives.
- Conduct data analysis.
- Develop a sage grouse habitat value map.
- Develop an issues and threat map.
- Draft specific management recommendations.
- Propose projects to locally improve habitat and provide a map showing locations of the projects.

Task 5: Document Preparation

- Draft Report: Deadline June 2010 – Ten hard/ten digital copies.
- Draft review of Final Report: Deadline August 2010 -- thirty hard/thirty digital copies.
- Final Report: Deadline December 15, 2010 -- ten hard/20 digital copies.

Instructions to Bidders

The consultant must submit a contract proposal that addresses the deliverables as stated in the RFP. Upon successful award of the contract, the consultant, Elko County, Nevada State Lands, and NNSG shall meet to finalize contract details. Proposals will be evaluated by a five-member committee selected by the County and the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group.

- The proposal should include the following sections:
 - Summary
 - Qualifications of Firm submitting Proposal and the Individual Consultants assigned to the Project
 - Project Work Plan
 - Price Proposal – Fixed Price broken down by task, including expenses.

The calendar of events for the proposal and this project are:

June 16, 2009 Release Request for Proposal
June 30, 2009 Questions on Project Due to NNSG
July 6, 2009 Questions Answered by NNSG
July 20, 2009 Proposals Due to NNSG
July 24, 2009 Contract Award or Rejection
July 27, 2009 Meeting to finalize contract details
July 28, 2009 Project Work Begins
December 15, 2010 Completed Project Submitted

PLEASE RETURN PROPOSAL TO:

Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group
PO Box 1677
Elko, NV 89803

For requests and questions contact:

- Gerry Miller, 775-778-3355, nvtreeguy@frontiernet.net or
- Teven Perkins, 775-777, 1437, teven_t@hotmail.com

Written proposals must be received by the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group's PO Box by July 20, 2009