

# Request For Proposals

NEPA Documentation for the  
San Bernardino National Forest  
Community Defense Fuel Break Project

REVISED October 10, 2024



**Deadline for Proposal Submission:**

**October 24, 2024**

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This Request for Proposals was revised on October 10, 2024. The changes are in red strikethrough text.

## I. Summary

The Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the San Bernardino National Forest, requests proposals from professional consulting firms related to the completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for the Community Defense Fuel Break Project. Tasks 1 and 2 must be completed by July 1, 2025. Tasks 3, 4, and 5 must be completed by November 1, 2025.

## II. Contact and Timeline

### Project Contact

Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, [rfp@iercd.org](mailto:rfp@iercd.org)

### RFP Timeline

Activity	Date
Release of RFP	September 26, 2024
Registration Deadline	October 4, 2024
RFP Questions Deadline	October 4, 2024
Proposal Submission Deadline	October 24, 2024
Notice of Contract Award	November 1, 2024
Board Meeting/Contract Executed	November 14, 2024
Project Start Date	November 15, 2024

## III. Project Background

The San Bernardino National Forest (BDF) has developed the Community Defense Fuel Break Project (Project) to establish fuel breaks in all three BDF Districts (San Jacinto, Mountaintop, and Front Country Districts). Fuel breaks will be established in three approximately 3,000-acre areas within each BDF District, for a total of 9 phases and approximately 25,000 acres. The purpose of the Project is to create a more fire-resilient forest structure across the vegetation communities within the Project area. See the Project map in **Attachment 1** as well as the Purpose and Need and Proposed Actions in **Attachment 2** for additional details about the Project activities.

The selected consulting firm (Contractor) will assist in developing Specialist Reports. Each Specialist Report developed by the selected Contractor will evaluate all 9 Project phases within one report per specialty. The reports will support the BDF in developing the Decision Memos for the Project; development of Decision Memos is not part of this scope. The selected Contractor will work with and coordinate subcontractors, the BDF Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) and Inland

Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) to complete this Project according to the timeline below.

IERCD will be the contract administrator and BDF will direct the Contractor's work.

## IV. Scope of Services

The scope of services below describes the services to be completed by the selected firm (Contractor). IERCD reserves the right to modify the scope of services at their discretion, including curtailment of some activities, to meet budget constraints and project deadline.

### **Task 1: Refine proposed action and finalize the integrated design features.**

The proposed action was developed by the BDF ID Team. The Contractor will participate in IDT meetings to understand the proposed actions and help refine the action by adding design features.

#### **Deliverables:**

1. Packaged list of appropriate design features incorporated into the proposed action that will be used for analysis

**Task 2: Perform an effects analysis on the proposed action and prepare specialty reports.** An example report will be provided for each specialty. Conduct the right-sized analysis for CE documentation and provide quality specialty reports. The subtasks below provide additional detail.

#### **Task 2.1: Vegetation and Fuels Specialty**

- ~~• Prepare a silviculture report that documents the vegetation community in the project area; the prescription for shaded fuel break if planting is appropriate; proposed planting species; and overall protection of the montane forest for resiliency.~~
  - ~~○ The report will be completed to BDF specifications. The BDF has some limited LiDAR data that may be used for stand composition and delineation of vegetation existing conditions. The BDF will provide the Contractor with an example report to reference for formatting and content specifications with an outline of specific elements to be included.~~
- Prepare a fuels report and assessment of the existing condition of the current vegetation in and immediately around the Project. The fuels assessment will help articulate the pre- and post-treatment conditions and the report will document the effectiveness of the treatment. The modeling exercise will yield quantitative results and the report will be qualitative. The following are assumptions for completing the fuels modeling:
  - The Contractor will use spatially explicit fire models to predict potential effects to

the landscape and compare the effectiveness of treatments under varying scenarios for each Project phase.

- Each project site will be spatially modeled to determine potential fire behavior characteristics over the entire landscape with constant weather and fuel moisture conditions.
- Input classifications are elevation, slope, aspect, fuel model, canopy cover, canopy height, crown-base height, bulk density, fuel moisture, and wind. Outputs include fireline intensity, rate of spread, flame length, heat/unit area, crown fire activity, 1-hour fuel moisture, 10-hour fuel moisture, and mid-flame wind speed.
- Using the proposed treatments and silviculture prescriptions, the contractor will adjust the inputs and keeping all weather and fuel moisture settings constant to the baseline simulations, the landscape will be modeled again. Using results from the baseline and the action simulations, we will compare the resultant outputs.
- The analysis will consider differing fire/fuel scenarios, as well as comparing effects of differing treatment schedules.
- The draft fuels report will identify effects from the proposed actions related to fuels and the expected fire behavior characteristics. Maps and tables will be built to support the analysis and interpretations.

**Deliverables:**

- ~~1. Silviculture modeling documentation~~
- ~~2. Silviculture report~~
3. Fuels modeling documentation
4. Fuels report

**Task 2.2 Biology Specialty**

- **Biology Design Features**
  - The biologist will prepare a full list of design features to avoid or minimize the effects of the proposed Project on threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive (collectively, TEPCS) wildlife and plants. These will be incorporated into the project design.
  - Design features will be in alignment with the San Bernardino National Forest Land Management Plan and referenced guidance documents (i.e. TE Recovery Plans, California spotted owl conservation strategy, etc.,).
  - Design features will be crafted in an interdisciplinary fashion. They must be reasonable, feasible, and implementable.
  - Where possible, the biologist is encouraged to recommend treatments that align with the Purpose and Need of the Project which promote and increase the quality of habitat for wildlife and native plants.

- **Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluations**
  - Prepare a combined Wildlife and Botany Biological Assessment (BA) report that will be submitted to US Fish Wildlife Service as part of Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation. The BA will focus on how Project activities will impact TEPC and their habitat.
  - Prepare two Biological Evaluations (BEs), one for each botany and wildlife discipline. The BEs will focus on how Project activities will have adverse or beneficial effects on Forest Service Region 5 sensitive species and their habitat. The wildlife BE will include a discussion of impacts/benefits to migratory birds in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the US Forest Service Memorandum of Understanding with US Fish and Wildlife Service.
  - Policy direction for preparation of these documents can be found in Forest Service Manual 2600 Chapter 2670.
  - Communication and collaboration with an assigned US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist will be necessary during the preparation of project Design Features and the BA. US Forest Service biologists and botanists will assist in those communications.
  - Development of the BA/BEs will require data collection in existing databases as well as field trips. Previous survey data will also be utilized, as feasible. The US Forest Service will provide all available agency data, including spatial data and survey reports.
  - Example and/or template BA/BEs will be provided to the contractor.
  - The BA/BEs will include a current description of the species' known distribution, habitat suitability within the project area, and an analysis of potential project adverse and beneficial effects. The complete list of requirements for these documents are listed as follows:
  - 2672.42 - Standards for Biological Evaluations – In order to meet professional standards, biological evaluations must be conducted or reviewed by journey or higher-level biologists or botanists (FSM 2634). Biological evaluations shall include the following:
    - An identification of all listed, proposed, and sensitive species known or expected to be in the project area or that the project potentially affects. Contact the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as part of the informal consultation process for a list of endangered, threatened, or proposed species that may be present in the project area.
    - An identification and description of all occupied and unoccupied habitat recognized as essential for listed or proposed species recovery, or to meet Forest Service objectives for sensitive species.
    - An analysis of the effects of the proposed action on species or their

occupied habitat or on any unoccupied habitat required for recovery.

- A discussion of cumulative effects resulting from the planned project in relationship to existing conditions and other related projects.
  - A determination of no effect, beneficial effect, or "may" effect on the species and the process and rationale for the determination, documented in the environmental assessment or the environmental impact statement.
  - Recommendations for removing, avoiding, or compensating for any adverse effects.
  - A reference of any informal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service as well as a list of contacts, contributors, sources of data, and literature references used in developing the biological evaluation.
- **Invasive Weed Risk Assessment**
    - Existing data from field surveys will be used to identify invasive plant species occurrences in the Project area. Prepare an analysis of the potential for Project activities to contribute to the spread and expansion of these invasive plant

**Deliverables:**

1. List of design features to reduce or limit adverse impacts to TEPCS wildlife and botany resources;
2. Final Biological Assessment including Botany and Wildlife TEPC that has been reviewed by US Fish and Wildlife Service;
3. Final Biological Evaluation for sensitive plants;
4. Final Biological Evaluation for sensitive wildlife species;
5. Invasive weed risk assessment and data.

**Task 2.3 Hydrology Specialty**

Prepare a concise hydrology report that analyzes for Project effects on wetlands, floodplains, and municipal watersheds. It is assumed that additional jurisdictional delineation will not be required. Changes to drainage patterns will be compared against baseline conditions of affected surface water hydrology and watersheds.

Prior to the first ID Team meeting, the Contractor will review hydrology in the Project area including springs/seeps, geology, soils, and landforms. The Contractor will collect field data to identify water sources, erosional sources, and further determine Project effects. The Contractor will prepare a draft and final Hydrology specialist report to be reviewed by the BDF hydrologist. The report will recommend design features for the Project which will minimize erosion. The national Best Management Practices (BMP) and regional BMP will be used to produce a Project-specific BMP checklist.

**Deliverables:**

1. Hydrology report including effects on wetlands, floodplains, and municipal watershed; maps with affected watersheds, and Project-specific BMP checklist.

**Task 3: Cultural Resources Surveys**

Complete cultural resource field surveys, complete DPR forms, and develop a one final field report per district based on priority. The purpose of this survey is to identify new cultural resources and update previously recorded sites and isolated artifacts, and record, describe, and map their components such that these sites can be managed during implementation of the activities needed to achieve project goals. For this task, it is expected approximately 8,037 acres of intensive surveys and 10,605 acres of reconnaissance/non-intensive surveys will be needed. It is expected that portions of the 8,037 intensive strategy acres will be non-surveyable due to extremely dense vegetation upon field verification, as well as portions of the 10,605 reconnaissance/non-intensive survey areas will be non-surveyable after thorough pre-field analysis is completed and verified with spot field inspections. This task is further detailed in **Attachment 3**.

Please propose costs per survey unit area as described and shown on the maps in **Attachment 3**: FC-1, FC-2, FC-3, MT-1, MT-2, MT-3, SJ-1, SJ-2, and SJ-3. A summary of the approximate acres per survey unit is also included below:

Survey Unit Area	Total Unit Acreage	Approximate Acres Intensive Survey	Approximate Acres Non-intensive (>30% slope)	Approximate Number of Known Sites	Approximate Number of Known Isolates
FC-1	2,982	512	1,945	18	4
FC-2	2,845	826	2,019	6	0
Central					
FC-3 West	2,840	1,856	984	23	1
MT-1	2,997	590	503	29	2
GVSBB					
MT-2 Hwy 38	2,980	776	965	138	1
MT-3 Hwy 18-330	2,460	576	1,440	42	3
SJ-1 Rouse	2,849	1,085	890	9	0
SJ-2	2,661	836	981	22	0
Idyllwild					
SJ-3 North	2,260	980	878	25	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,874</b>	<b>8,037</b>	<b>10,605</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>11</b>



**Deliverables:**

1. Monthly or bi-monthly field survey reports (depending on length of time expected in the field)
2. Fieldwork completion report
3. Draft survey report
4. Final survey report and all site records submitted

**Task 4: Project Management**

IDT meetings will be held virtually. The IDT and Contractor will be in communication at least bi-monthly (twice per month), or more often via email. The IDT will review documents and provide feedback in a timely manner.

The Contractor is expected to perform these project management services:

- Communicate with the BDF at least bi-monthly, or more often via email;
- Project organization, communication, scheduling, billing, and clerical work;
- Take proactive approach to ensure Project timeline is met;
- Solicit Project input and clarification from BDF when needed;
- Facilitate IDT meetings and prepare and provide IDT meeting notes to Project team;
- Coordinate review and editing of documents; and
- Provide final documents and data to BDF in digital formats, in a well-organized project record.

**Deliverables:**

1. Attend IDT meetings remotely, take meeting notes, and provide meeting notes to BDF electronically. Contractor to provide updates at each IDT meeting. There will be one Project kickoff meeting and then bi-monthly meetings.
2. Attend up to 2 line officer briefing meetings to provide Project information.

**Task 5. GIS Support**

The Contractor will provide GIS management for the specialist reports and for the BDF Decision Memos. The Contractor is expected to perform activities including but not limited to:

- Prepare maps to be considered for analysis. Scale to be determined by BDF.
- Prepare detailed maps for each phase per district, for a total of 9 maps to support decisions.
- Prepare map unit cards that will display areas where resource concerns for each site to be analyzed.

- Maintain and submit GIS data in useful formats, in compliance with the BDF GIS Standards and Best Practices included in **Attachment 4**.
- Manage all GIS data for the Project, in compliance with the BDF GIS Standards and Best Practices included in **Attachment 4**.
- Participate in IDT meetings as needed.

## V. Proposed Timeline

The proposed Project timeline is below. If a proposal deviates from the proposed timeline, the proposer should note the reason for the change. The proposed schedule below does not include activities related to Task 3. The proposer should develop a timeline for this task as specified in **Attachment 3**.

It is expected that Task 3 – Cultural Resources Surveys will take longer than the Task 2 – Specialist Reports and Effects Analysis. The proposed timeline for cultural resource surveys may go beyond the July 1, 2025 timeline but must be complete by November 1, 2025.

#	Activity Description	Responsible Party	Completion Date
1	Draft proposed action	BDF	Complete
2	IDT meeting 1 – Project kickoff to finalize Project schedule	BDF, Contractor	11/19/2024
3	Provide Project package to Contractor, including draft proposed action and existing data	BDF	11/19/2024
4	Begin field data collection and analyses for specialty reports	Contractor	11/20/2024
5	IDT meeting 2 – Project check-in	Contractor, BDF	12/03/2024
6	IDT meeting 3 – Project check-in	Contractor, BDF	12/17/2024
7	IDT meeting 4 – Contractor provide overview of report progress and template, solicit feedback from BDF.	Contractor, BDF	01/14/2025
8	IDT meeting 5 – BDF provide feedback on report progress and template reviewed in IDT meeting 4.	Contractor, BDF	01/28/2025
9	IDT meeting 6 – Project check-in	Contractor, BDF	02/11/2025
10	IDT meeting 7 – Project check-in	Contractor, BDF	02/25/2025
11	IDT meeting 8 – Contractor provide overview of draft reports progress and solicit feedback from BDF.	Contractor, BDF	03/11/2025
12	IDT meeting 9 – BDF provide feedback on draft report progress reviewed in IDT meeting 8.	Contractor, BDF	03/25/2025
13	IDT meeting 10 – Project check-in	Contractor, BDF	04/08/2025
14	IDT meeting 11 – Project check-in	Contractor, BDF	04/22/2025
15	IDT meeting 12 – Contractor provide full draft reports for BDF review.	Contractor, BDF	05/06/2025
16	IDT meeting 13 – BDF provide review of full draft reports.	Contractor, BDF	05/20/2025
17	IDT meeting 14 – Contractor submit final reports and all other deliverables.	Contractor, BDF	06/03/2025
18	IDT meeting 15 – Project closeout meeting	Contractor, BDF	06/17/2025
19	Project closeout; invoice due to IERCD	Contractor	07/01/2025

## VI. Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

### **Registration and Clarifications**

All interested firms must register with IERCD by filling out [this form](https://airtable.com/appufqIye0rcD9U1V/pagMPsHXurWFmRoN8/form) (direct link: <https://airtable.com/appufqIye0rcD9U1V/pagMPsHXurWFmRoN8/form>) by **5:00 p.m. on October 4, 2024**.

Direct all questions regarding this RFP to [rfp@iercd.org](mailto:rfp@iercd.org) by **5:00 p.m. on October 4, 2024**. Clarifications will be emailed to all registered firms and published electronically on <https://www.iercd.org/> under the Publications and Disclosures tab by **5:00 p.m. on October 10, 2024**. Interested firms must be registered with IERCD in order to receive RFP clarifications.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals must include the following information:

- Cover Sheet
  - Title of proposal
  - Name and address of firm
  - Contact name, email address, and phone number
- Project Approach
  - Provide a clear statement of project understanding.
  - Describe the proposed team's approach to work, including communication process, project management, and quality control.
  - Provide a detailed description of project approach, including description of all tasks needed for successful project completion. This shall follow the general outline provided in the Scope of Services sections above. Recommended optional tasks may be listed for consideration.
  - Provide members of the proposed project team and define their role in the project.
- Qualifications and Experience
  - Provide resumes for all key project personnel. Indicate number of years each person has been employed by the firm. Resumes should highlight relevant qualifications for this project.
  - Provide concise descriptions of at least three (3) comparable projects in progress or completed within the last five (5) years for which members of the proposed team provided similar services. These descriptions should demonstrate the team's experience relevant to the project described in this RFP. List members of the proposed team who worked on the project(s) and their role. Include contact information for client references.
- Proposed Budget and Fees

- Provide a proposed budget for the Scope of Services described in this RFP. The proposed budget must include hourly rates and hours to complete the project, including sub-Contractors, and any other costs for project completion. The level of effort and associated costs are to be easily understood by IERCD. The proposal must include a complete and fixed price. If the Scope of Services requires modification during the course of work, IERCD will determine whether to amend the current agreement or to issue a subsequent RFP for additional services. Organize the proposed budget by task as outlined in the Scope of Services section:
  - Task 1
  - Task 2 – please provide cost per subtask specified in the Scope of Services (2.1 Vegetation and Fuels Specialty; 2.2 Biology Specialty; 2.3 Hydrology Specialty)
  - Task 3 – please provide cost per survey area as specified in the Scope of Services (FC-1, FC-2, FC-3, MT-1, MT-2, MT-3, SJ-1, SJ-2, and SJ-3) and further described in **Attachment 2**.
  - Task 4
  - Task 5
- IERCD accepts no responsibility for costs incurred by any individual or firm submitting a proposal pursuant to this RFP.
- Proposed Project Timeline
  - Submit a project schedule incorporating milestones with completion of each task required, subdivided as necessary. See the proposed schedule included above. Tasks 1 and 2 shall be complete by July 1, 2025. Tasks 3, 4, and 5 shall be complete by November 1, 2025.

### **Proposal Submission**

Submit the proposal as a single electronic PDF file by **5:00 p.m. on October 24, 2024** via email to [rfp@iercd.org](mailto:rfp@iercd.org) with the subject “Community Defense NEPA RFP.” Any proposals received after the due date and time will not be considered. There is no proposal page limit, however, please keep it to a minimum and include only the necessary information. No paper submittals will be accepted, and IERCD’s office is not open for deliveries. The offer in each proposal shall remain open for ninety (90) days after the submission deadline. There will be no public opening of proposals.

### **Proposal Acceptance**

IERCD reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, or any item or part thereof, or to waive any informalities or irregularities in proposals.

IERCD reserves the right to withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice, and IERCD makes no representations that any contract will be awarded to any proposer responding to this RFP.

IERCD reserves the right to postpone proposal review for its own convenience.

IERCD reserves the right to require confirmation of information furnished by proposer, or to ask the proposer for additional evidence of qualifications to perform the work, or to obtain information from any source that has the potential to improve the understanding and evaluation of the proposals.

Issuance of this RFP and receipt of proposals does not commit IERCD to award a contract. IERCD expressly reserves the right to postpone the RFP process for its own convenience, to accept or reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, to negotiate with more than one proposer concurrently, or to cancel all or any part of this RFP.

IERCD reserves the right to negotiate any price or provision, task order or service, accept any part or all of any proposals, waive any irregularities, and to reject any and all, or parts of any and all proposals, whenever, in the sole opinion of IERCD, such action shall serve its best interests and those of the tax-paying public. The proposers are encouraged to submit their best prices in their proposals, and IERCD intends to negotiate only with the proposer(s) whose proposal most closely meets IERCD's requirements at the lowest estimated cost. The contract award, if any is awarded, will go to the Proposer whose proposal best meets IERCD's requirements.

Proposals received by IERCD become public information and will be made available to the public upon request after award.

Proposals submitted are not to be copyrighted.

In submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer is certifying that it takes no exceptions to this RFP including, but not limited to, IERCD's Professional Services Agreement ("Agreement"), which is included here as **Attachment 5** and made a part hereof by this reference. If any exceptions are taken, such exceptions must be clearly noted in the proposal and may be reason for rejection of the proposal. As such, the proposer is directed to carefully review the attached Agreement and, in particular, the insurance and indemnification provisions therein.

## VII. Proposal Evaluation and Selection

### **Evaluation and Selection**

Selection will be based on demonstrated competence and qualifications for the services to be performed at fair and reasonable prices. Proposed deviations from the RFP requirements will be noted and taken into consideration. The information provided in response to the RFP requirements will be the basis for evaluation. Failure to provide this information or the inclusion of any conditions, limitations, or misrepresentations may adversely affect the evaluation of your proposal.

IERCD reserves the right not to award any contract or to award multiple contracts.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience of the Contractor team in relation to the services required.
- Demonstrated experience, technical competence and availability of key personnel in relation to the services required.
- Recommendations of prior clients.
- Capability of the project team to provide the services desired in a timely manner.
- Value offered considering capabilities and experience of the project team.

#### **Cancellation of RFP**

IERCD reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to contract award without obligation in any manner for proposal preparation, interview, fee negotiation or other marketing costs associated with this RFP.

#### **Notification of Contract Award**

All entities submitting responses to this RFP will tentatively be notified of final decision award of contract by **5:00 p.m. on November 1, 2024.**

IERCD may request interviews at their convenience. Every effort will be made to adhere to the stated schedule, but it may be modified as needed without prior notice.

## **VIII. Attachments**

**Attachment 1** – Project Map

**Attachment 2** – Draft Purpose and Need and Proposed Actions

**Attachment 3** – Cultural Resources Surveys Scope of Work

**Attachment 4** – BDF GIS Standards and Best Practices

**Attachment 5** – IERCD Professional Services Agreement Template