



**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Joint Powers Authority**

**Request for Proposals for Conceptual Recreation Planning Services
for the
Buttermilk Infrastructure and Planning Initiative**

Proposal deadline: February 1, 2023 at 5:00 pm

Requesting Organization: Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

Contact: Elaine Kabala, Executive Director, ekabala@escog.ca.gov

Overview

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is seeking proposals from qualified consulting agencies to provide public facilitation and recreation planning services for the development of the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Planning Initiative (BIRPI). The Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative (BIRPI) will address the need for immediate recreation planning and infrastructure improvements in the Buttermilk Bouldering Area as well as long-term conceptual recreation planning in the Buttermilk Project Area (see Attachment A: Project Area). The BIRPI Plan was nominated as a regional priority for sustainable recreation projects in the Eastern Sierra through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy funding Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative. The BIRPI is funded through a National Fish and Wildfire Foundation grant.

The Buttermilk Project Area has emerged as an iconic destination in the Eastern Sierra Region and has seen increasing numbers of visitors in recent years, straining existing recreation infrastructure while presenting opportunities to improve the visitor experience and conserve natural resource assets through engaged recreation management. The initiation of reliable commercial air service into the Eastern Sierra via the Bishop Airport and Inyo County in the Fall of 2021 will add additional visitors and additional pressures onto existing recreation infrastructure and most certainly onto the natural resources of the Owens watershed. Inspired by guidebooks with 5-star reviews and a compelling presence on social media, bouldering in the Buttermilk and the Bishop region has earned a well-deserved reputation as "...some of the best bouldering in the world." The unrelenting popularity of similar recreation activities in the Buttermilk Project Area that surround the Buttermilk Bouldering Area - Pine Creek, the Tungsten Hills, the Happy and Sad Boulders, and the spectacular yet fragile natural resources that compel such enthusiastic visitation - will benefit from the recreation infrastructure improvements and conceptual recreation planning work proposed in this application.

Conceptual recreation planning in the Buttermilk Project Area – which includes the Buttermilk Bouldering Area, Horton Lakes trailhead, the Tungsten Hills, the Happy and Sad boulders, Pine Creek Canyon, two Bureau of Land Management campgrounds, and two Inyo County campgrounds – will focus on the interconnected nature of recreation activities in the Project Area and the documentation of needs and gaps for future recreation infrastructure improvements.

The conceptual planning effort will be a stakeholder driven collaborative effort. GIS and data collection will be used to document informal or unofficial recreation impacts. Such impacts related to use trails, roads, unofficial parking, and dispersed camping sites will be documented and mapped for the inclusion of corporate GIS datasets. Data relevant to the land management agencies and authorities, recreation infrastructure and GIS mapping will be used to inform the stakeholder collaborative planning process. The contractor is responsible for convening the stakeholders at professionally facilitated public meetings and including participation by relevant land management agencies. The selected contractor will document the conceptual recommendations, provide a draft and final report both as a document and a GIS Storymap.

The successful consultant will be selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The period of performance will be through September 30, 2023.

Scope of Work

Conceptual Recreation Plan Development

The selected consultant will document current conditions (official and unofficial), convene stakeholders, facilitate, and then document the results of a conceptual recreation planning effort that identify projects to mitigate and support recreation activities that protect valuable watersheds and resources.

Tasks include:

1. Data collection of informal and unofficial recreation impacts using GIS systems (use trails, unofficial parking, dispersed camping sites, etc).
2. Inclusion of watershed and recreation infrastructure into GIS data relevant to the appropriate land management agencies and/or authorities.
3. Mapping of all data to inform stakeholder engagement.
4. Facilitation of stakeholders and relevant land management agencies. Stakeholder list shall be approved by ESCOG and relevant land management agencies.
5. Consultant shall provide a public engagement. Consultant shall include no less than three public meetings for initial input and feedback on the draft and final conceptual plans.
6. Consultant shall maintain project records, including synthesis of all virtual engagements, surveys, public meetings / responses and all meetings with land management agencies.
7. Conceptual recommendations shall be presented to the ESCOG and land management agencies, documented in a final report available both as a PDF document/ GIS story map and accessible in a digital format. Cost estimate for this work is \$75,000.

Trail Implementation

The selected consultant will implement trail delineation projects to mitigate unofficial human activities as recommended by the Conceptual Recreation Plan and supported by land management agencies. Ground work cannot be done without approval from land management agencies and any ground disturbance may require a subsequent environmental decision which is not funded as a component of this project. Cost estimate of \$5,000. Substantial volunteer participation in this effort is anticipated.

Signage Implementation

The selected consultant will install signage and/or kiosks to educate and mitigate unofficial human activities as recommended by the Conceptual Recreation Plan and supported by appropriate land management agencies. Ground work cannot be done without approval from land management agencies and any ground disturbance may require a subsequent environmental decision which is not funded as a component of this project. Cost estimate of \$15,000. Substantial volunteer participation in this effort is anticipated.

Parking and Dispersed Camping Implementation

The selected consultant will mitigate unofficial activities by implementing soft surface parking solutions as recommended by the Conceptual Buttermilk Area Recreation Plan and supported by appropriate by the relevant land management agencies. Cost estimate of \$25,000 is based on analogous regional efforts.

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

The field studies may be required by the relevant decision makers for environmental decisions (NEPA or CEQA) to implement actions based on the documented results of the "Conceptual Planning: Trails, Signage, Parking" effort identified in this application. Cost estimate of \$7,500 is a placeholder based on assumptions that the "Conceptual Planning: Trails, Signage, Parking" will not identify any actions requiring additional environmental analysis.

Criteria for Competitive Applications

The evaluation criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals for the purpose of ranking them based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP. Consultants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award.

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** A statement demonstrating a thorough understanding of the BIRPI plan requirements, as well as ability to comply with all reporting outreach requirements of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant award. The proposal should demonstrate the Consultant's qualifications in recreation and trails planning, collaborative planning and stakeholder outreach, GIS mapping, and familiarity with the operations of federal and other public land managers with jurisdiction over the project. In the project overview, describe the general project approach and process to be employed, describe the proposed project schedule including timeline of major milestones, deliverables, and completion. The proposal must demonstrate the capacity of the consultant to ensure the successful completion of all tasks described in the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant agreement.
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for fulfilling the scope of work must demonstrate familiarity with the desired outcomes of the BIRPI plan.
3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** The proposal should describe relevant professional experience in the following areas: (a) Trails and recreation planning, (b) Collaborative meeting facilitation and stakeholder driving planning processes, (c) familiarity with inter-jurisdictional planning efforts, including familiarity with the operations and procedures of the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, (d) implementation of soft surface infrastructure delineation, (e) management of complex, multidisciplinary projects, including coordination with local volunteer organizations.
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should: (a) Identify individuals from the firm's professionals and any sub-contractors who will work on the project along with a brief summary of the individual(s) and their experience; (b) Include a description of the firm's prior work relevant to this RFP including the name, address, and phone number of client references and the primary contact persons.
5. **Timeframe Flow Chart.** Submit a flow chart with estimated project timeframe for meeting important project targets.
6. **Cost Proposal.** The cost proposal budget should be cost effective and should maximize the value for monies requested in the contractor's budget. Proposal costs should be the minimum necessary to adequately achieve the stated scope of work.

Submission Requirements

Submission requirements will include two distinct and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, and 2) Cost Proposal.

Interested parties will submit proposals via email to Elaine Kabala (ekabala@escog.ca.gov) and provide the information as described below:

1. Technical Proposal:
 - a. Narrative - Concise description of the work plan to include the following sections from the Criteria for Competitive Applications:
 - Understanding of the Scope of Work,
 - Technical Approach,
 - Qualifications of Proposed Personnel,
 - The Contractor's Past Performance.
 - Timeframe Flowchart.
 - Contact Information - Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, and website.
2. Cost Proposal: The Cost Proposal includes the proposal budget and budget justification.