

Longleaf Ecosystem Occurrence Database—Field Data Collection

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) seeks proposals for oversight and coordination to ensure successful field data collection for development of the [Longleaf Ecosystem Occurrence Database \(LEO\)](#). LEO is being designed by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) to support America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI); FNAI’s work is funded by USDA’S Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with active support from ALRI partners. LEO is a central repository for longleaf pine ecosystem locations and their condition that can be used to track longleaf pine status over time and throughout its range. Successful applicants will use NFAl survey protocols and work closely with and communicate frequently with FNAI on all aspects of this field data collection project.

This opportunity closes March 18, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern. Funding for this project is provided by NRCS (federal funds).

Applicants should contact Peter Stangel (peter@usendowment.org; 404-915-2763) with questions about the application process. Please contact Amy Knight, FNAI, with technical questions associated with field survey protocols (aknight@fnai.fsu.edu).

Successful applicants will enter into a contract for services with the Endowment, making them Endowment subcontractors. As a subcontractor of federal funds, subcontractors must comply with all federal regulations as described in [2CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirement, and Cost Principles](#).

2018 Process Schedule

Request for Proposals (RFP) Issued:	February 14, 2019
Proposal Deadline:	March 18, 2019 (5 p.m. Eastern)
Applicants notified:	No later than week of March 25, 2019

Contractual agreements between the Endowment and subcontractors should be completed within two to four weeks after notification unless otherwise informed. It is anticipated that the subcontractor will begin field data collection as soon as possible.

Project Timeline

Work for this project should commence as soon as possible once the subcontract is in place. Work should conclude, and final reports submitted, no later than November 1, 2021. The surveys are to begin in the Desoto-Camp Shelby LIT (MS & AL) in early 2019, followed by the GCPEP (AL), Chattahoochee Fall Line (GA & AL), and SoLo/ACE Basin (SC) LITS, with all field work for these four initial sites to be completed in 2019 if possible. Twelve additional LIT geographies are to be surveyed following completion of these initial four sites (Appendix 1). All surveys should be completed and reports submitted no later than November 1, 2021. Early completion of surveys is desirable.

Background

The primary role of the field data collection contractor is to identify and coordinate survey crews, plan and manage logistics, and ensure efficient completion of rapid assessment surveys, largely via roadside, for longleaf pine occurrence and condition in designated areas. Priority is to be given to longleaf

ecosystems with known or potential gopher tortoise habitat. Four priority landscapes in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina are to be surveyed first, followed by 12 additional sites across the longleaf range (Appendix 1).

The contractor will use a rapid assessment survey protocol, mobile data collection app, and set of prescribed survey sites developed by FNAI. The contractor will work closely with FNAI, including participation in a training workshop, to ensure data quality and to facilitate transfer of field data to the LEO database.

The contractor should have experience with ecological systems of the Southeastern U.S., particularly those supporting longleaf pine, and be familiar with field data collection techniques. Location and assessment data will be collected through a mobile data collection app on a smartphone or tablet. Applicant budgets should include costs for necessary smartphones or tablets if they don't already have this equipment available. Smartphones and tablets purchased with grant funds will remain the property of the Endowment at the conclusion of the project so that they may be used for future data collection projects. Basic Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills, including working knowledge of desktop GIS software, ability to edit polygons, and ability to interpret aerial imagery, are required.

The field surveys will consist of driving prescribed routes at mapped locations of potential longleaf pine habitat provided by FNAI. In addition to assessing these prescribed sites, the contractor will also assess sites opportunistically discovered as travel occurs. Individual(s) must have a good driving record, insurance, and be willing to travel frequently, often to remote locations.

The contractor will coordinate with Longleaf Implementation Team (LIT) leaders, state forestry agencies, forestry associations, and others to plan and facilitate surveys. The contractor is encouraged to engage local partners and volunteers where possible to keep costs low and increase coverage of areas of interest. Innovative approaches for maximizing data collection while keeping costs low, such as use of satellite or aerial imagery, are encouraged, provided these approaches conform to the FNAI protocol. Contractors are welcome to consult with FNAI on additional strategies to produce information of value to LEO.

The surveys are to begin in the Desoto-Camp Shelby LIT (MS & AL) in early 2019, followed by the GCPEP (AL), Chattahoochee Fall Line (GA & AL), and SoLo/ACE Basin (SC) LITS, with all field work for these four initial sites to be completed in fall 2019. Twelve additional LIT geographies are to be surveyed following completion of these initial four sites (Appendix 1). Applicants should provide a timeline for completion of surveys at these additional sites on the application form.

Contractor expectations:

- Recognize longleaf systems and understand field data collection techniques;
- Work independently;
- Manage time and meet deadline and budget commitments;

- Coordinate with LIT survey leads, state forestry agencies, and others, who may be able to help refine priority survey areas, provide accommodations or other logistical support, and/or provide volunteers to assist with data collection;
- Where needed, help train volunteers (associated with LITs or otherwise) on longleaf surveys for consistent results;
- Coordinate with FNAI for survey methods, data input, and data downloads;
- Survey a required minimum number of acres/polygons (to be determined);
- Collect the maximum amount of data in the most cost- and time-efficient manner possible.

Survey Planning, Costs, and Budget

We recognize that planning effort and cost for this project will be challenging. There are many variables to be considered, including:

- Percent of survey polygons that will actually be longleaf vs other pine types; only longleaf will be fully assessed;
- Accessibility of survey polygons by public roads;
- Degree to which ‘desktop’ assessment of polygons may be accomplished by knowledgeable LIT partners, state forest agency personnel, and others. These partners should be given the opportunity to review the field survey polygons and may be able to confirm absence of longleaf pine from personal knowledge, precluding the need for field surveys;
- Contractor skill level/salary;
- 1-person versus 2-person survey teams;
- Time needed for additional GIS work by field teams (e.g. addition of new polygons);
- The degree to which partner agencies and NGOs will contribute volunteer staff to collect data for this joint project.

The acreages presented in Appendix 1 are large. It is anticipated that the contractor will work closely with local LIT partners, state forestry agencies, and others to determine areas most appropriate to survey *before* going into the field.

Budget

Applicants are requested to submit as detailed a budget as possible given the information provided in this RFP. In the Budget narrative, please provide cost rates on a daily or other “unit” basis so that if less or more field work is required, cost-savings or additional expenses may be calculated. The Endowment recognizes that there are many variables to consider when planning this project and will work with the successful applicant to accommodate budget adjustments during the course of the project.

Payment

Subcontractors will invoice the Endowment monthly or quarterly on a reimbursable basis. If required, an advance payment may be requested.

Roles of the Parties

Successful project implementation will involve significant collaboration with FNAI and LITs. Subcontractors assume all risks and liabilities. The following roles from each of the parties are expected:

Endowment

- Assist with questions from potential applicants;
- Contract with successful applicants;
- Pay subcontractor invoices; and
- Report to NRCS on overall project progress and finances.

Subcontractor

- Work hand-in-hand with FNAI, LIT contacts and state forestry agencies;
- Engage qualified personnel to conduct field surveys;
- Recruit volunteers to help with surveys;
- Maximize data collected and geography surveyed;
- Economize on data collection expenses;
- Submit data to FNAI
- Submit periodic reports and invoices to the Endowment.

FNAI

- Provide overall project guidance to the contractor;
- Receive data from contractor and enter into LEO system.

LITs

- Provide a primary point of contact to help oversee the process on the ground;
- Assist contractor with training and other activities at the each individual LIT;
- If possible, provide housing or other support for the contractor and field workers.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to accurately and cost-effectively complete surveys in a timely fashion.

Eligible Applicants

Not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organizations, for-profit companies, tribes, intertribal consortia, interstates, state and local government agencies, and colleges and universities are eligible for funding.

Unincorporated individuals are not eligible. The Endowment does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in any of its programs or activities.

Applicants should have demonstrated experience:

- Conducting and training others to conduct field surveys of longleaf ecosystem or similar habitats;
- Managing schedules and workloads across multiple properties in large geographies;
- Effectively adjusting to unforeseen circumstances that may affect schedules and budgets;
- Adaptively managing to new conditions and circumstances;
- Working collaboratively with local partners, such as LITs and FNAI.

DUNS and SAM

Subcontractors must provide a current Duns and Bradstreet (DUNS) number and be registered and up-to-date in the SAM.gov grantee registration system. Applicants should start this registration process as early as possible to avoid delays in contracting.

Funding Restrictions

Awards may not be used for lobbying, political advocacy, or litigation. Other limitations on allowable costs may be found at [2 CFR Part 200](#).

The purchase of equipment under this funding announcement must comply with the NRCS General Terms and Conditions as well as OMB Cost Principles. Subcontractors purchasing equipment or products with funds provided under this award are encouraged to use such funds to purchase only American-made equipment and products.

Tablets or smartphones purchased through this award will become the Endowment's property at the conclusion of the project. Other, nonexpendable equipment purchased with award funds will vest in the subcontractor upon completion of the award project and acceptance by NRCS of required final reports. When equipment other than tablets or smartphones is no longer needed by the recipient and the per-unit fair market value is less than \$5,000, the recipient may retain, sell, or dispose of the equipment with no further obligation to NRCS. However, if the per-unit fair market value is \$5,000 or more, the recipient must submit a written request to the NRCS administrative contact for disposition instructions. Applicants considering equipment purchases greater than \$5,000 should call Peter Stangel to discuss; we do not anticipate any per-unit equipment expenses greater than \$5,000 for this project.

Indirect Rates

For information about the Endowment's policy on Indirect Cost Policy, please contact Aleta Rogers (Aleta@usendowment.org), Grants and Contract Specialist.

Matching Fund Requirements

Matching funds are not required but desirable. Match may include cash donations or in-kind contributions from third-parties and allowable costs incurred by the applicant in the course of the project.

Matching funds should meet these criteria: verifiable from applicant records; not already considered as match to another federal award; necessary to complete project objectives; committed directly to the project and used within the project period (begins one year prior to the date your application was submitted); and [Allowable under OMB 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles](#).

Proposed match must be for projects directly related to the purposes of this RFP.

Proposal Submission

Proposal Assistance

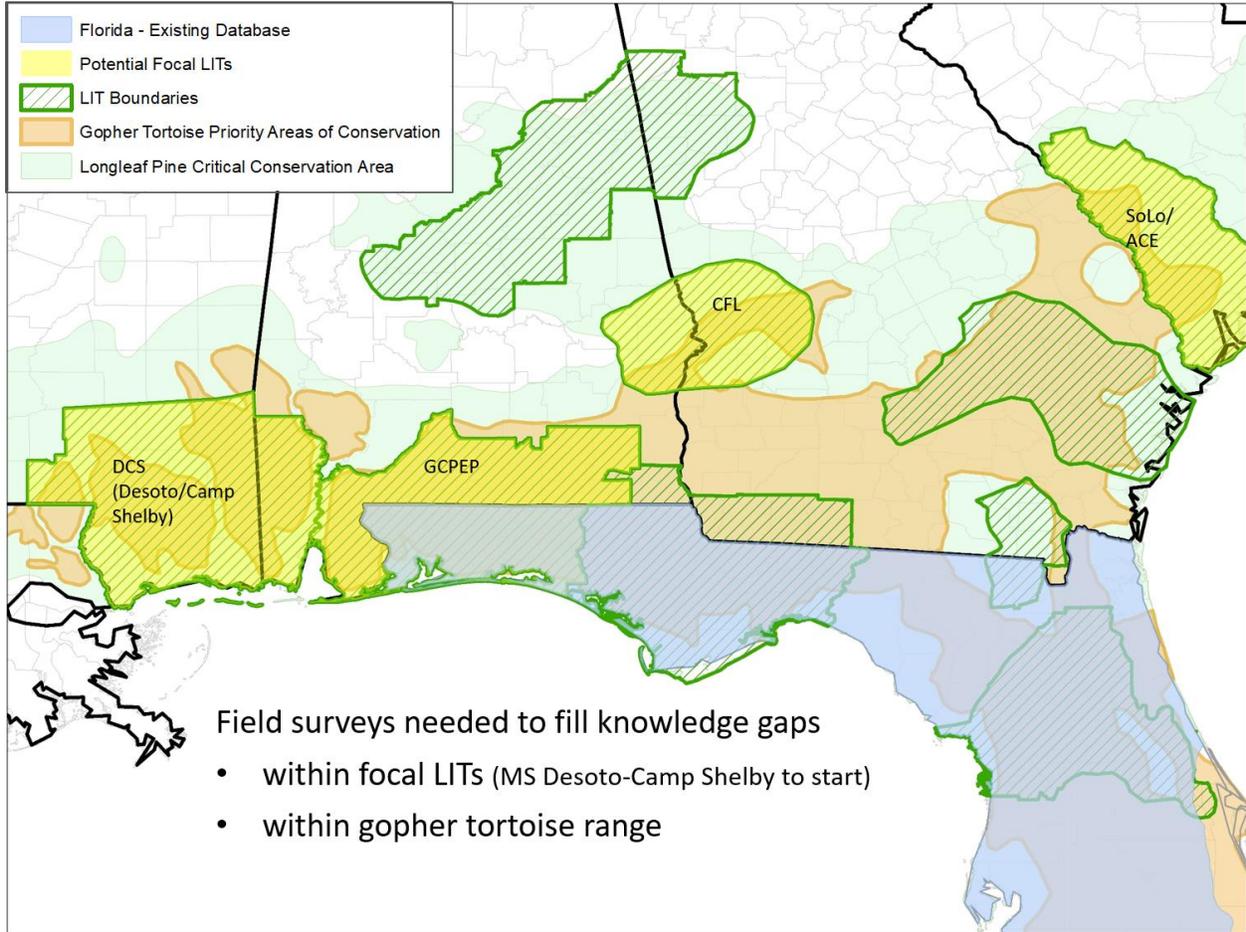
Peter Stangel (peter@usendowment.org; 404-915-2763)

Electronic Proposal Submission

Please use this application form. Submit completed proposal via email to aleta@usendowment.org by March 18, 2019, at 5 p.m. Receipt of your application will be acknowledged within two business days.

Appendix follows

Appendix 1: Geographies to be surveyed. PCA=Priority Conservation Area



LIT	Tortoise PCA	Outside Tortoise PCA	Grand Total
Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership	1,184,052	2,071,276	3,255,329
Desoto-Camp Shelby LIT*	4,109,138	3,273,034	7,382,172
Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership - Non FL*	3,709,454	327,835	4,037,289
SoLo ACE Longleaf Partnership	1,031,112	3,109,007	4,140,119
Altamaha/Ft. Stewart Longleaf Restoration Partnership	3,909,898	1,074,226	4,984,124

Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance - Non FL	1,581,819	235,327	1,817,146
Cape Fear Arch Conservation Collaboration		2,995,183	2,995,183
North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership		1,090,968	1,090,968
Okefenokee and Osceola LIT- Non FL	112,840	725,987	838,827
Onslow Bight Conservation Forum		3,727,277	3,727,277
Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership		468,609	468,609
Sewee Longleaf Conservation Cooperative		1,830,178	1,830,178
Talladega-Mountain Longleaf Conservation Partnership		7,010,672	7,010,672
Texas Longleaf Implementation Team		1,178,786	1,178,786
Virginia Longleaf Pine Cooperators Group		3,586,521	3,586,521
West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Project		4,445,306	4,445,306