

**Sagebrush Ecosystem Program**

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BRIAN SANDOVAL  
Governor



*Tim Rubald*, Program Manager  
*John Copeland*, Forestry/Wildland Fire  
*Melissa Faigeles*, State Lands  
*Kelly McGowan*, Agriculture  
*Lara Niell*, Wildlife

**STATE OF NEVADA  
Sagebrush Ecosystem Program**

**SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL  
STAFF REPORT  
MEETING DATE: July 30, 2013**

**DATE:** July 24, 2013  
**TO:** Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Members  
**FROM:** Tim Rubald, Program Manager  
Telephone: 777-684-8600, Email: timrubald@sagebrusheco.nv.gov  
**SUBJECT:** Draft RFP for the Conservation Credit System

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**SUMMARY**

This item provides a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) Development Form, per State Purchasing requirements, to be used as the basis for RFP that is released for the development of the Conservation Credit System for greater sage-grouse habitat in Nevada.

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

At the June 17, 2013 Council meeting, the Council gave SETT direction to develop a RFP that requests the use of existing metrics being successfully implemented elsewhere; a (short) contract term within 6 months, and that would result in a federal agency accepted product. This item meets that request as well as the state's Purchasing Division requirements for an RFP.

**BACKGROUND**

The Council can review the draft RFP Development Form and provide to the SETT comments and revisions as determined.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

DCNR staff, and others, are looking to obtain adequate funds to cover the estimated costs of developing the Conservation Credit System. Currently this is estimated to be \$500,000.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the SEC discuss the draft Scope of Work for the RFP, provide any edits, and authorize the SETT to further work, as needed, with State Purchasing, to release the RFP to the public as soon as practicable and funding is available.

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the SEC agree with the staff recommendation, options would include adopting one or both of the following motions:

1. “Motion to correct the draft and approve the draft as discussed by the SEC”.
2. “Motion to authorize the SETT to further work, as needed, with State Purchasing, to release the RFP to the public as soon as practicable and funding is available.”

Should the SEC not agree with the staff recommendation, options would include:

1. A motion to not authorize further action by SETT.
2. No action.

**Attachments:**

- 1: Draft RFP for the Conservation Credit System



**NEVADA STATE PURCHASING DIVISION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) DEVELOPMENT FORM**

*Note: If you have questions regarding completion of this form, please contact the Procurement Staff Member that will be working with you on the RFP.*

<b>DEPARTMENT/AGENCY INFORMATION</b>			
Department:	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources		
Agency/Division/Bureau:	Director's Office		
Budget Account Number:	4150	Agency Number:	700
Program (if applicable):	Sagebrush Ecosystem Program		
Anticipated Contract Amount:	\$250,000 to \$500,000		
Anticipated Contract Term:	One year		
Contact Person:	Tim Rubald		
Title:	Program Manager		
Phone Number:	775-684-8600 or 790-0035	Fax Number:	775-684-8604
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:timrubald@sagebrusheco.nv.gov">timrubald@sagebrusheco.nv.gov</a>		
Mailing Address:	201 S Roop St., Ste 101 Carson City, Nevada 89701		
How many contract originals does your agency require for signature?	Five please		
Names and Titles of individuals that will sign the contract:	Name	Title	
	Leo Drozdoff	DCNR Director	
	Kay Scherer	DCNR Deputy Director	
	Cassandra Joseph	DAG	
RFP Title:	Nevada Sage-grouse Habitat Conservation Credit System		
Previous RFP Number, if applicable:	RFP #: N/A	Issued by:	N/A
Previous Purchasing Contact, if applicable:	Shannon Berry		
Previous RFP or Contract if done by agency:	Please attach a copy for reference N/A		
Anticipated BOE Date:	November 2013		
Is the project funded?	Yes:		No: XX
Is any portion federal funds?	Yes:	Unknown at this time	No:

**RFP DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION INSTRUCTIONS**

*Complete all information required in the following tables. If not applicable or required, please put "Not Applicable" in the appropriate section. The information provided below will be included in the appropriate sections within the RFP. Follow the numbering format in the RFP template to identify section headings, subheadings, etc. Attach additional information if applicable.*

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

*This section provides a brief introduction and background information regarding the project.*

On December 9, 2011, in response to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) finding for the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) of warranted but precluded from listing, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) began a process to amend their land use plans (LUP) affecting greater sage-grouse habitat to incorporate stronger conservation measures for the species. The purpose of the LUP amendments is to improve regulatory mechanisms that were found to be inadequate during the finding. (See 76 Fed. Reg. 77009 (Dec. 9, 2011); *see also* 77 Fed. Reg. 7178 (Feb. 10, 2012); 77 Fed. Reg. 12792 (Mar. 2, 2012).)

As a step in implementing a landscape level strategy to benefit the species while maintaining a robust economy in the West, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar invited the states impacted by a potential greater sage-grouse listing to develop state-specific regulatory mechanisms to conserve the species and preclude the need for listing that could be considered as an alternative in the BLM's and USFS' LUP amendment and Environmental Impact Statement process.

To this end, on March 30, 2012, Governor Brian Sandoval issued Executive Order 2012-09, which established the Governor's Greater Sage-grouse Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) with a directive to provide an updated strategy and recommended approach for sage-grouse conservation in Nevada. The Advisory Committee met over the summer of 2012, completing their charge on July 31, 2012. Their work resulted in the development of the STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CONSERVATION OF GREATER SAGE-GROUSE IN NEVADA (*the State Plan*). The State Plan was submitted to the Governor for his approval. Within the State Plan is the recommendation for the development of a Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Credit System to provide an additional regulatory mechanism for the conservation of greater sage-grouse. This Conservation Credit System is the basis for this RFP.

The Governor chose to assign the implementation of the State Plan to the state's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), along with a second executive order creating the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council (SEC). The structure, function, authority, and details of the SEC and their staff, the Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT), has now been placed in statute by the actions of the 2013 Legislature in AB461.

The SETT began work on February 11, 2013, and the SEC held their initial meeting on February 21, 2013.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

*This section should provide a brief synopsis of the project/requirements.*

*The section should include an overview to include such things as: anticipated project start and end dates, administering agency, specific licensing requirements, etc.*

The state's overriding objective for the conservation of greater sage-grouse to achieve "no net unmitigated loss of greater sage-grouse habitat due to anthropogenic disturbances". This shall be achieved through a policy of "avoid, minimize, mitigate". If impacts are not avoided, after required minimization measures are specified, residual adverse effects on designated greater sage-grouse habitat are required to be offset by implementing mitigation actions that will result in replacement or enhancement of the sage-grouse habitat to balance the loss of habitat from the disturbance activity. This will be accomplished through the Conservation Credit System.

The creation of the Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Credit System for the State of Nevada should include the following concepts:

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

*This section should provide a brief synopsis of the project/requirements. The section should include an overview to include such things as: anticipated project start and end dates, administering agency, specific licensing requirements, etc.*

1. Establish a centralized mechanism to coordinate mitigation across all jurisdictions and land ownerships through a Conservation Credit System that will validate, track, and monitor the success of those mitigation efforts on greater sage-grouse populations. By establishing this central credit system, the state of Nevada will have a system that provides for consistent evaluation, implementation, monitoring and reporting of progress.
2. In determining compensatory mitigation, the value of the lost or disturbed functional habitat must be established.
3. Mitigation should generally involve creation of new habitat or restoration, enhancement, or long-term preservation of existing habitat to compensate for the unavoidable adverse impacts to greater sage-grouse habitat caused by anthropogenic disturbance. The cost of these efforts should be paid for by those causing the anthropogenic disturbance.
4. To ensure that the investment in mitigation efforts to create, restore, enhance, or preserve habitat are maintained in perpetuity, long-term conservation easements or a record of restrictive covenant should be established over the property. If public lands are used for mitigation purposes, adequate long-term maintenance of mitigation efforts must be considered while recognizing existing uses.

It is anticipated that the creation of the Conservation Credit System will be accomplished in two phases. Phase I: develop metrics tailored to Nevada's needs based in part on existing metrics. It is anticipated that Phase I may take up to, but no longer than six months to complete. Phase II: develop a fully operational credit system. It is anticipated that Phase II may take up to, but no longer than one year to complete. The SETT will administer the contract on behalf of the SEC.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*If applicable, this section should provide high level goals and objectives of the project. This can be incorporated in the Project Overview Section. More specific goals and objectives should be included in the Scope of Work Section.*

The project goal is to establish a fully functional Conservation Credit System that includes a metric system that will determine the value of specific sites on the range and will determine the amount of funding needed to mitigate for anthropogenic disturbances on those sites, within all greater sage-grouse habitat in Nevada (an estimated 30 million acres). The metric system needs to be appropriate for valuation purposes on both public and private land and have complete transparency to the public in its development and use.

## ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS – TO BE ADDED

*Agency/project specific acronyms/definitions to be added to the listing in the RFP*

Acronym	Definition
SETT	Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team
SEC	Sagebrush Ecosystem Council
DCNR	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

**ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS – TO BE ADDED**

*Agency/project specific acronyms/definitions to be added to the listing in the RFP*

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USFS	United States Forest Service
TRG	Technical Review Group
GIS	Geographic Information System
LUP	Land Use Plan

**ACRONYMS – TO BE DELETED**

*Identify those acronyms that can be deleted from the listing in the RFP*

Acronym	Acronym	Acronym	Acronym	Acronym

**SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

*The project should be broken down into the following: Tasks (with a defined Objective), Activities (to meet the objective) and Deliverables (tied to each of the activities)*

***Phase I: Develop the Metrics***

*Task 1:* Identify and examine a range of metrics that have been established and are in use in existing local, state, or national efforts and then determine appropriate metrics for greater sage-grouse habitat in Nevada. The determination process will include informational and consensus building workshops that evaluate the range of options in context of the needs of the Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Credit System in Nevada. The metrics evaluated may include, but are not limited to, variables such as habitat quality disturbed, seasonal habitat type, value of the site within the greater landscape perspective, restoration potential, and should also factor in cost of restoration, cost of monitoring, and requirements for long-term, legal protection of projects such as conservation easements.

*Task 2:* Develop a set of metrics (the common currency of the credit and debit) that quantifies and qualifies greater sage-grouse habitat, and is applicable state-wide in all designated greater sage-grouse habitat. This will include economic modeling to establish a consistent valuation to the credit system across greater sage-grouse habitat in Nevada. The final metrics should be established through the development of objective and quantifiable variables and informed by the USGS habitat suitability model currently being developed for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program. The valuation system will need to be based on and directly include the concept of “no net unmitigated loss of greater sage-grouse habitat due to anthropogenic disturbances”. These values are not to include any leveraging of additional funding sources and should be sufficient to complete projects on a standalone basis.

*Deliverables:* Required deliverables for Phase 1 of the project are:

1. A functional valuation model, with well-defined and quantifiable metrics suitable for use on a pc and on the internet. This should be able to be used and updated by the SETT after completion.
2. A complete written set of instruction manuals for operation of the model. This will include five physical

**SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

*The project should be broken down into the following: Tasks (with a defined Objective), Activities (to meet the objective) and Deliverables (tied to each of the activities)*

copies of the document and one electronic copy.

The SETT will develop a Conservation Credit System Technical Review Group (TRG), with input from the consultant, that will provide technical review and input of the developed metric system to ensure the final product is scientifically defensible and sufficient in its operation to accomplish the goals stated above. It is anticipated that for Task 1, the TRG will engage in at least one meeting reviewing the options identified and the general direction anticipated, and for Task 2, The TRG will engage in several periodic meetings at key decision points and for review of interim and final deliverables.

***Phase II: Develop a Fully Operational Conservation Credit System***

*Task 1:* Develop a complete set of operating policies and required procedures for issuing credits and debits. These documents will be needed for both public and private lands, as well as anticipated projects that include both types of ownership. They will also include specifics on what types of activities will be considered to generate a credit, requirements of an easement to ensure durability for a credit, and monitoring of credit projects.

*Task 2:* Develop functional sample documents for all necessary forms, contracts, and guidance documents, to allow for the administration and function of the system.

*Task 3:* Develop a publically available website, incorporating a GIS based system, to view the location of credit and debit projects, as well as provide specific project details.

*Deliverables:* Required deliverables for Phase II of the project are:

1. All policies, forms, and operation documents required to successfully operate and administer the functional Greater Sage-grouse Habitat Conservation Credit System in Nevada. This should be easily administered by the SETT after completion.
2. A fully functional and operating GIS based website to provide information to the general public. This site should be easily maintained by the SETT. Any and all documentation for the operation of the website, as well as any necessary training, is included.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY**

*Please check what information you would like the evaluation committee to use when evaluating each vendor's financial stability.*

Section 4.1.11.3 – Profit and Loss Statements and Balance Statements?	Yes:	XX	No:	
Please provide information as to who will be reviewing financial statements on behalf of the evaluation committee for the committee's final determination of financial stability for each vendor.	Tim Rubald, Program Manager			
Dun and Bradstreet Report on successful vendor only?	Yes:		No:	XX

**BUSINESS REFERENCES**

Do you want more than three (3) business references?	Yes:		No:	XX
If so, how many do you want?				
How many years of experience do you want them to reference?	Three			

## BUSINESS REFERENCES

*Review the reference questionnaire embedded here, and provide any additional information, comments or specific questions that should be included in the questionnaire.*



Reference  
Questionnaire - 01-04

The standard reference questionnaire is suitable.

## VENDOR STAFF RESUMES

*Vendors must include resumes for key personnel to be responsible for performance of any contract resulting from the RFP.*

Do you want vendor staff resumes included?

Yes:

XX

No:

## VENDOR STAFF RESUMES

*Review the vendor staff resume format and provide any additions and/or deletions to be made here.*



Resume Format.doc

In addition to the standard resume format, please attach current *curriculum vitae* for all key personnel who will be responsible for assisting with, or completing assigned tasks.

## COST SCHEDULE

*How do you want the vendor to submit their proposed cost/pricing?*

*Provide the type of cost schedule to be utilized so that vendors submit cost/pricing in the same format in order to facilitate a good cost comparison. The cost schedule can be in an Excel spreadsheet or in a table format.*

Please break out costs by task, subtotaled by phase, per the scope of work.

## RFP SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to other requirements, all interested parties will be required to submit the following:

### **Consultant Statement of Qualifications**

- A *cover letter* setting forth the experience of all staff and sub-consultants assigned to the project, , description of work performed and role on similar projects, understanding of the project and the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program's needs, and commitment and ability to perform the project.
- An *organizational chart* detailing all personnel and sub-consultants who would work on the project.
- *Examples of previous work products, publications, and reports* as they relate to direct experience in developing credit systems.

### **Technical Approach**

Describe in detail the technical approach your firm would take to complete the tasks described above. This

**RFP SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

should include examples of methods you would propose to develop the metrics described in Phase I, as well as a schedule and flow chart of tasks to be completed.

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Do you want to allow for more than one (1) question and answer period?  
*Note: More than one (1) question and answer period will add additional time to the RFP process.*

Yes:

No:

XX

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

*Review the terms and conditions and identify by section number any that may not apply to the project/scope of work.*

Standard state of Nevada requirements are sufficient.

**AGENCY SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

*Are there any agency specific terms and conditions that need to be included in the RFP? If so, please provide them here.*

None.

**GENERAL INFORMATION/COMMENTS**

*Provide any additional information/comments that should be included in the RFP.  
Reference applicable RFP section where information should be included.*

None.

**AGENCY ATTACHMENTS**

*Does your agency have any specific attachments that should be included within the RFP?  
If so, please identify them below and attach them when submitting the RFP Development Form to Purchasing.*

None.

## RFP MAILING AND EVALUATION INFORMATION INSTRUCTIONS

*Complete the following tables for mailing list development, evaluation committee member information and evaluation criteria and weights.*

### PROVIDE THE SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS TO BE USED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO VENDORS

*The Service Level Classifications can be found by opening the following document:*



Service  
Classifications.doc

120 B						

### MAILING LIST DEVELOPMENT

*Identify entities who should receive direct notification of the RFP's release, include the following information*

Company Name	Contact Name	Email Address	Fax Number
HDR Engineering, Inc.	Melissa Sherman	<a href="mailto:Melissa.sherman@hdrinc.com">Melissa.sherman@hdrinc.com</a>	
Trout Unlimited	John Zablocki	<a href="mailto:jzablocki@tu.org">jzablocki@tu.org</a>	
Environmental Incentives, LLC	Eoin Doherty	<a href="mailto:edoherty@enviroincentives.com">edoherty@enviroincentives.com</a>	
Open Range Consulting	Gregg Simonds	<a href="mailto:greggsimonds@mwutah.com">greggsimonds@mwutah.com</a>	
7Q10, Inc.	Lori Carpenter	<a href="mailto:lcarpenter@7Q10.com">lcarpenter@7Q10.com</a>	775-828-2302
The Nature Conservancy	Michael Cameron	<a href="mailto:mcameron@tnc.org">mcameron@tnc.org</a>	
The Conservation Fund	Mike Ford	<a href="mailto:mikefordtcf@aol.com">mikefordtcf@aol.com</a>	
Resolve	Steven Courtney	<a href="mailto:scourtney@resolv.org">scourtney@resolv.org</a>	
Resource Concepts, Inc.	John McLain	<a href="mailto:john@rci-nv.com">john@rci-nv.com</a>	

### EVALUATION COMMITTEE

*Provide name and title; agency name and mailing address, phone number and email address  
Per NAC 333.162 – Each committee to evaluate proposals must contain members that represent at least two (2) using agencies and the chief will not appoint a member to a committee to evaluate proposals who possesses direct supervisory authority over a majority of the other members of the committee.*

**Note: Agency must provide a letter from their Administrator or Director approving the evaluation committee**

Name and Title	Agency and Mailing Address (for mailing proposals)	Phone Number	Email Address
Tim Rubald, Program Manager	SETT 201 S Roop Carson City 89701	775-684-8600	<a href="mailto:timrubald@sagebrushhco.nv.gov">timrubald@sagebrushhco.nv.gov</a>
Lara Niell, NDOW	SETT 201 S Roop Carson City 89701	775-684-8600	<a href="mailto:lniell@sagebrushhco.nv.gov">lniell@sagebrushhco.nv.gov</a>
John Copeland, NDF	SETT 201 S Roop Carson City 89701	775-684-8600	<a href="mailto:jcopeland@sagebrushhco.nv.gov">jcopeland@sagebrushhco.nv.gov</a>
Kelly McGowan, NDAg	SETT 201 S Roop Carson City 89701	775-684-8600	<a href="mailto:kmcgowan@sagebrushhco.nv.gov">kmcgowan@sagebrushhco.nv.gov</a>
Melissa Faigeles, DSLands	SETT 201 S Roop Carson City 89701	775-864-8600	<a href="mailto:mfaigeles@sagebrushhco.nv.gov">mfaigeles@sagebrushhco.nv.gov</a>

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Per NRS 333.335(3) - Proposals shall be consistently evaluated and scored based upon the following criteria.  
If you want additional criteria enter it in the "Other" section.*

Criteria	Weight
<p>1) Demonstrated Competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Did the vendor provide sufficient data to convince you that they will do a good job for the State?</li> <li>b. Was the proof compelling?</li> <li>c. Are you confident that this vendor has the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform all its tasks well?</li> <li>d. Will the vendor's resources be adequate to serve the State's needs?</li> <li>e. Does the vendor suggest new ways to enhance performance?</li> <li>f. Does the vendor have the flexible capacity to handle all the needs of the State as they continue to change?</li> <li>g. Did the vendor present sufficient performance history to convince you of their ability?</li> <li>h. Has the vendor been in business long enough to provide good stability?</li> <li>i. Has the vendor experienced ownership changes that would impact their services?</li> <li>j. Has there been any censure or litigation history?</li> </ul>	30%
<p>2) Experience in performance of comparable engagements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Does the vendor have prior experience that will ensure all the skills necessary to perform tasks well?</li> <li>b. Did the vendor have success in other work for a private or governmental entity?</li> <li>c. Does the vendor's previous work convince you of its successful completion of these duties?</li> <li>d. Has the vendor provided adequate references?</li> <li>e. Does the vendor have experience developing credit systems?</li> </ul>	30%
<p>3) Conformance with the terms of this RFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Did the vendor's proposal provide all the necessary information requested in the RFP in a professional manner?</li> <li>b. Did the proposal cause doubt regarding the vendor's ability to complete the necessary tasks?</li> <li>c. Was the proposal easy to understand and did it provide answers to questions, or create more questions?</li> </ul>	10%
<p>4) Expertise and availability of key personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Is the staff that will be assigned to this project by the vendor the best qualified to manage the process?</li> <li>b. Will they be available to insure completion of the project?</li> <li>c. Will they be available for follow-up issues?</li> <li>d. Is sufficient staff assigned to handle these duties?</li> <li>e. Is there a Nevada office or contact person?</li> <li>f. Will assigned staff respond to issues within a reasonable amount of time?</li> </ul>	20%
<p>5) Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Has the vendor established a cost that is reasonable for the project?</li> <li>b. Is the State of Nevada receiving good value for its dollars?</li> <li>c. Are the costs reasonable compared to the competition?</li> <li>d. Will there be any additional costs or other ongoing expenses?</li> </ul>	10%
<p>Other: None.</p>	

**VENDOR PRESENTATIONS**

*Note: Vendor presentations will add additional time to the RFP process.*

Do you want vendor presentations?	Yes:		No:	XX
If so, up to how many vendors?	N/A			

**VENDOR PRESENTATIONS EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*Vendor presentations may be scored based on the original evaluation criteria or new evaluation criteria and weights may be assigned.*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>
N/A	N/A