County of San Luis Obispo
GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY
Janette D. Pell, Director

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PS- #1184
CALIFORNIA VALLEY LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Last Updated: July 9, 2012

1. Can you tell me what the expectation is for when the work is to be completed?

   ANSWER: Proposals are due by the deadline included in the RFP. There is no set timeframe included in the RFP for the development of the California Valley Land Acquisition Program (Phase 1). Proposals should include a timeframe for performing the anticipated work and production of the plan/program. This is a high priority to the County, so we anticipate the timeframe for completion of the work to be a factor given strong consideration during the proposal evaluation. The Program Implementation (Phase 2) itself is expected to be long term, ideally existing for as long as is necessary to complete the program goals. Factors would include additional funding sources, market property values, and the ability to complete successful negotiations with willing sellers.

Added 06/07/12:

2. Our firm is currently working for one of the solar project developers on another solar project, but not the project described in the RFP. Would this relationship conflict our firm out of being able to propose on this RFP?

   ANSWER: The County understands that the two solar facilities under construction in San Luis Obispo County involve an extensive list of companies and consultants that have (or have had) a part in the development, permitting and operation of the facilities. This includes: First Solar, Mid American Energy, Sunpower, NRG and Bechtel (and legions of consultants, contractors and sub-contractors). A firm's past (or current) involvement with one of these companies does not automatically constitute a conflict, but we do feel it is appropriate to disclose any current or past relationships with these companies. Whether there is a "conflict" would depend on if there is an ability for a firm to gain an advantage from their client relationship, or somehow allow an outside client relationship to influence their performance or work product (if chosen to provide services to the County). Given the scope of work anticipated in the RFP, and the established funding for the program, it is unlikely that past work, or current work on another project outside the county would be considered a conflict. However, it is a factor that will be considered in evaluating proposals.

Added 06/22/12:

3. It looks like the CVLAP will occur in phases. How much of a land management component is the County expecting in Phase 1 versus Phase 2?

   ANSWER: It is anticipated that the CVLAP will occur in phases. This is outlined in the Project Description (PD) and PD Attachment 8 portion of the RFP. The RFP addresses Phase 1 which is anticipated to be the planning document for the CVLAP. Phase 2 would include implementation and management of acquired properties. Phase 1 is anticipated to identify target properties, provide a process/procedure for acquisition, and would provide an outline for future management of the properties.

4. Do we anticipate a biological component in Phase 1, or primarily associated with Phase 2?

   ANSWER: A biological component is anticipated for Phase 1. The CVLAP is intended to provide mitigation for impacts to biological resources as a result of cumulative impacts of the two large solar projects under development at the Carrizo Plains and thus it is expected to be a focus of the Plan. We would expect that various biological factors would be considered in preparation of Phase 1 including: target species of concern, distribution of habitat and known wildlife movement corridors, and location of other mitigation or protected lands (and the habitat of those lands). These factors would be expected to be considered along with other factors including: existing permitted and unpermitted development, road and other infrastructure locations, development constraints (e.g. water/wastewater), and property costs. The biological component expected with Phase 2 would most likely entail management of acquired properties to preserve, enhance or establish habitat or conditions conducive to wildlife use or movement.

Added 06/28/12:

5. Can we assume that the SLO Clerk Recorder's Office will cooperate by providing current vestings of the subject properties in a spreadsheet format? Or will the selected consultant have to search out and list each property individually?

   ANSWER: We will work with other County Departments to provide information, such as lot ownership, as expeditious as possible. The exact method would depend on the information needed and how that information is recorded by the County. We will assist with any discussions with other County Departments at the time we know what information is needed and what format would be most useful.

Added 07/03/12:

6. The title of the RFP is the California Valley Land Acquisition Program and the first task in the work program is to identify undeveloped properties "…in the California Valley Subdivision…". This wording suggests that the acquisition program is aimed primarily (exclusively?) at the Cal Valley subdivision lots. If so, the habitat value assessment would be focused on these lots, only, which would simplify things somewhat. This would seem somewhat odd since there are plenty of "undeveloped lots" outside the Cal Valley subdivision whose acquisition would be a better fit for the program objectives (bang for the buck, connectivity with existing preserved areas and higher habitat value). Does the

acquisition program only apply to the properties within the CA Valley Subdivision? Or, are you anticipating properties outside that subdivision would also be identified? For example there are some large parcels outside of the Subdivision that may have advantages for acquisition in terms of resources and costs. ANSWER: The focus of the program is intended to be the California Valley subdivision. The EIRs for the two solar projects identified that the Cal Valley subdivision, if developed, has the potential to present a substantial obstacle for wildlife movement between the Carrizo Plains National Monument, and the large habitat areas in the northern area of the plains. As an offset to the (development) barriers to wildlife movement presented by the solar projects, it was suggested that a program to acquire/should be preserve blocks or corridors of habitat through the Cal Valley subdivision would have area wide benefit to sensitive wildlife species. The primary goal of the program is to maintain wildlife and habitat connectivity through the Cal Valley subdivision.

While it is not anticipated that the initial phases (funded by the solar companies as required by their development conditions) of the program would identify, acquire or manage large parcels outside the Cal Valley subdivision, the program could be expanded to other properties in the area. As noted in the RFP, we hope that the program would continue beyond the initial phases and will be looking towards this goal in evaluating proposals.

7. You talk about biological resources in the RFP. Do you also want more identification of other resources such as cultural?

   ANSWER: The focus of the program is biological, however, we recognize that other resources could be protected/affected as well. These should be addressed, but it should also recognize that preservation or protection of these resources would be secondary to the primary biological/habitat goals.

   Habitat connectivity for certain species on the Carrizo Plain (tule elk, kit fox, and pronghorn) was addressed in April 2010 by Habitat Connectivity Planning for Selected Species in the Carrizo Plain. This was prepared with the solar projects in mind and identifies the preferred habitat for these particular species, including extensive GIS mapping of vegetation and habitat suitability. Bob Stafford was one of the authors. This looks like a great resource for the mobile species that were studied, but does not address the habitat needs of other listed species, such as K-rats, burrowing owls, or listed plants. So it looks like a fair amount of the resource/habitat (biology) has been collected. Did you anticipate us using that data because the budget does not appear to accommodate an extensive new field work? ANSWER: We would encourage and anticipate using as much existing data (the study you cited as well as data prepared in support of the solar projects construction)as possible.

   Or is field work anticipated?

   A reconnaissance level of field study is anticipated. Generalized mapping of habitat and vegetation may be available, but should be verified in the field. Field survey level observations may also identify locations of sensitive resources. The Cal Valley subdivision is made up of thousands or individual properties with (almost) as many ownerships. Access to individual private properties should not be expected, however numerous roads bisect the area provide visual access to most areas.

So if we are using existing data, the role of the biologist would be to simply use that data to set priorities among the properties to be acquired?

Yes....as well as possible reconnaissance level surveys mentioned above.

8. Do you have an anticipated timeline for this project?

   ANSWER: Proposals are due by the deadline included in the RFP. There is no set timeframe included in the RFP for the development of the California Valley Land Acquisition Program (Phase 1). Proposals should include a timeframe for performing the anticipated work and production of the plan/program. This is a high priority to the County, so we anticipate the timeframe for completion of the work to be a factor given strong consideration during the proposal evaluation. The Program Implementation (Phase 2) itself is expected to be long term, ideally existing for as long as is necessary to complete the program goals. Factors would include additional funding sources, market property values, and the ability to complete successful negotiations with willing sellers.

9. We are having a hard time obtaining someone from a Land Conservancy. Some of the groups from your list no longer exist. Any suggestions if no one from a land conservancy is interested?

   ANSWER: Given the goals and purpose of the program (acquisition of land to preserve habitat), it seemed that a conservancy or land trust would be ideally suited as the entity to operate/manage the program. However, if the long term management entity is not identified at this stage in the program, we would be willing to consider options for identifying or determining an appropriate entity to operate and manage the program long term.

Added 07/09/12:

10. It appears that there is approximately $1.5 million ($500,000 from each 1st Solar and SunPower required by the permit(s) plus $250,000 from each company resultant from the legal settlement.) Of this $1.5 million - is it for only administrative and acquisition costs? Or is any of this earmarked for long term costs (IE a management endowment)? If so, approximately how much? or what percentage? If this current money is for administrative and acquisition costs, is the task item 'Outline acceptable financial mechanism to fund the program' the aspect of the plan intended to address provision of an endowment?

    ANSWER: Currently, $1.5 million (from the sources you note below) is available to develop, implement and manage the program. We have not identified an "earmark" for long term costs/management endowment, but absent additional funding sources, a portion of the $1.5 million should be committed for that purpose. We would like to see the $1.5 million as the "seed" funding for the program, and that additional funding could/will be attracted to the Program long term. The development of the Program (Phase 1) should include identification of long term (management) costs, and potential sources for additional funding.