

# **Nebraska Department of Natural Resources**

## **Request for Consultant Proposals for Engineering Services**

### **To Provide: Evaluation of the South Platte Compact Canal (Perkins County Canal)**

**Nebraska Department of Natural Resources  
245 Fallbrook Blvd., Suite 201  
Box C  
Attn: Jesse Bradley  
Lincoln, NE 68521-6729**

## **Introduction**

The Nebraska Legislature adopted LB1015 during the 2022 legislative session finding that it is essential to the economic prosperity, health, and welfare of the people of the State of Nebraska, and to the environmental health of the entire Platte River Basin, to protect Nebraska's full entitlement to the flows of the South Platte River as provided for in the South Platte River Compact. The South Platte River Compact is the law of Nebraska and of the United States that specifically authorizes Nebraska to develop a canal and associated storage facilities for the diversion of water from the South Platte River for beneficial use in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) has been provided the authority and funding to begin designing, engineering, and permitting activities, which are being solicited for through a process independent of this request. NeDNR is requesting proposals from qualified engineering firms licensed in the state of Nebraska to conduct engineering evaluations and develop costs estimates to fulfill the scope of work as outlined below. To ensure an independent review of the project, the Consultant selected under this solicitation ***will be disqualified from eligibility*** to perform future design, engineering, and permitting services for the project.

## **Scope of Work**

The scope of work for this contract consists of evaluating elements of the South Platte Canal Project (Perkins County Canal) to be located in Northeast Colorado and Western Nebraska, near Big Springs, NE (Project). The Project will consist of four primary tasks:

1. ***Estimation of the costs of completion of a canal and adjoining reservoirs as outlined in the South Platte River Compact:***

The United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) conducted an evaluation of design elements of a canal and reservoir system to make use of Nebraska's water rights established in the South Platte Compact. The canal system evaluated by USBR began near Ovid, CO and continued to Lake Maloney in Nebraska. The design elements also included six reservoir sites with varying capacities, locations, and design requirements.

The Consultant shall update the costs of the design elements included in the USBR study to 2022 dollars, identify design elements that must be modified to account for current design and engineering standards and the associated costs of those modifications, and working in conjunction with NeDNR propose one or more alternatives that would use those design elements to meet the operational objectives of the project. The Consultant may also recommend additional design elements that could improve project performance and/or reduce project costs.

2. ***Development of a timeline for completion of a canal and adjoining reservoirs as outlined in the South Platte River Compact:***

The Consultant shall develop a schedule of implementation for the project that outlines the probable timeframes for design, permitting, land acquisition, and construction. The timeline shall consider reasonable timeframes for such activities given experience with similar projects.

3. ***Examination of the cost-effectiveness of alternatives, including alternatives that may reduce environmental or financial impacts:***

The Consultant shall evaluate the cost-effectiveness of any proposed alternative to determine its feasibility using standard engineering benefit/cost principles. The Consultant shall also identify potential approaches that work to reduce environmental impacts and project costs. Alternative approaches must maintain the same or improved operational outcomes for the project.

4. ***Evaluation of the impacts of the canal on Nebraska water users throughout the Platte River Basin, including the drinking water supplies for the cities of Lincoln and Omaha:***

The Consultant shall quantify the impacts on Nebraska water users throughout the Platte River Basin using readily available economic, project operations, and water supply data. The Consultant shall specifically evaluate the impacts that project operations may have on drinking water supplies for the cities of Omaha and Lincoln. Such evaluations shall consider alternative future water supply conditions should the Project not be constructed.

**Documents and Information that will be Provided to the Selected Consultant**

NeDNR will provide the Consultant with the following initial information:

- United States Bureau of Reclamation Study provided to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission in 1982 – describes potential infrastructure components and costs (in 1982 dollars) of each component and general layout options;
- Operational requirements for the Project;
- Locations and descriptions of Platte River Basin water uses that may be impacted by Project operations, including the locations of Lincoln and Omaha water supply sources and available summaries describing those well-field operations; and
- Economic evaluations summarizing per unit benefits for various water use categories to be included in the examination of cost-effectiveness; and
- Water supply reports and other available information maintained by NeDNR.

These materials are available at the following link:

<https://dnr.nebraska.gov/perkins-county-canal>

### **Meetings and Presentations**

The Consultant shall conduct progress meetings every two weeks to discuss project status and obtain input from NeDNR. The Consultant shall prepare brief meeting minutes summarizing the progress meeting discussions. The Consultant shall conduct a presentation of the draft findings to NeDNR upon completion of all tasks. The progress meetings may be conducted virtually with the presentation of draft findings from all completed tasks to be conducted at NeDNR's offices in Lincoln, NE or other agreed upon location.

### **Schedule and Deliverables**

The Consultant shall prepare and submit a draft memo (electronic copies marked draft) to NeDNR after completion of each task. Each draft memo shall be accompanied by a complete copy of all data sources and materials relied upon for completion of the tasks. NeDNR shall review draft memos and provide comments to the Consultant for resolution prior to finalizing tasks memos. Final task memos may be submitted in an electronic format.

An executive summary report and power point presentation will be developed by the Consultant that summarizes the findings of each task. A draft of the executive summary report and power point presentation, marked as draft, will be provided to NeDNR no later than November 1, 2022. NeDNR will provide comments to the Consultant so that final copies can be completed prior to December 1, 2022. Final copies of the executive report summary and power point will be printed (20 copies) and made available electronically to NeDNR.

The completed work products will be presented by NeDNR and the Consultant to the Appropriations Committee of the Nebraska Legislature at a public hearing held on or before December 30, 2022.

### **Proposal Requirements**

If your firm is interested in being considered for this project, please provide a brief written proposal including the following sections:

- 1. Cover:** Qualified Firms shall clearly identify the name of the project, name of the firm, and named subconsultants. *Section may not exceed 1 page in length.*
- 2. Cover Letter:** Cover letter shall be on company letterhead, shall identify the primary point of contact, and shall be signed by an authorized representative of the firm who has authority to act in this regard. *Section may not exceed 1 page in length.*
- 3. Technical Understanding and Approach:** Firms shall provide a qualitative description of their proposed methodology, deliverables, and project schedule. *Section may not exceed 5 pages in length.*
- 4. Qualifications of Project Team:** Firms shall clearly identify their proposed project team, including the prime firm and any subconsultants, key individuals (with prime or subconsultant firm identified), and an organizational chart showing roles and lines of communication. Qualifications for key individuals regarding similar projects shall be

summarized. Resumes shall be included in a separate section (Section 7). *Section may not exceed 3 pages in length.*

5. **Firm Experience:** Firms shall describe their knowledge and experience with similar projects. Firms are requested to submit no more than three (3) projects of similar scope and size that demonstrate their team's knowledge and experience. Sufficient contact information should be included to allow NeDNR to contact the entities served to obtain feedback on quality and performance. *Section may not exceed 3 pages in length.*
6. **Fee Schedule:** Firms shall provide a fee schedule for team members participating on the project. *Section may not exceed 1 page in length.*
7. **Resumes:** Firms shall provide resumes for no more than four (4) key staff. Each resume shall be no longer than 2 pages. *Section may not exceed 8 pages in length.*
8. **Conflict of Interest:** Firms shall submit a signed Conflict of Interest Statement. The Conflict of Interest Statement form will be provided by NeDNR.

Lengthy or elaborate proposals are not desired. Proposals shall be organized according to the sections described above for ease of review by the NeDNR. Information provided beyond the page limits listed above will be discarded and not evaluated.

### **Proposal Submission**

NeDNR will hold a **required** pre-proposal meeting on May 26, 2022 at 10:00 am central. The meeting will be conducted using a virtual meeting platform. Those firms wishing to attend the pre-proposal meeting shall send an email request to Jesse Bradley ([jesse.bradley@nebraska.gov](mailto:jesse.bradley@nebraska.gov)) no later than May 25, 2022 at 5:00 pm if they wish to receive the link to the required pre-proposal meeting.

The deadline for receipt of final proposals is **1:00 p.m., Thursday June 9, 2022**. Proposals may be mailed or dropped off in person. Proposals (5 printed copies and one electronic copy) should be submitted to:

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources  
Attn: Jesse Bradley  
245 Fallbrook Blvd., Suite 201  
Box C  
Lincoln, NE 68521-6729

Proposals received after the submission deadline will not be considered.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

NeDNR will evaluate the proposals based the following evaluation criteria, listed in order of importance:

- Proposed approach to the scope of work for meeting the needs of the project and deliverable timeframes.
- Expertise and technical understanding of current design standards and cost-estimation techniques.

- Demonstrated understanding of Platte River Basin water uses, return flows, and water supply interconnections.
- Demonstrated expertise and technical understanding of similar Projects.
- Project team experience in conducting such evaluations.

NeDNR will plan to conduct interviews of up to three firms. NeDNR will use the above evaluation criteria in its selection of a firm. Interviews will be held at NeDNR's offices in Lincoln, NE or virtually upon request by the firm. Firms will be notified no less than seven days prior to the interview.

**\*Special note:** No firm will be eligible to contract for these engineering services unless they are licensed to practice engineering in the state of Nebraska and are able to demonstrate that all members of the project team have **NO** conflicts of interest including project affiliations with the state of Colorado or water projects that affect flows of the South Platte River.

Questions and requests for additional information should be directed in writing to:

Jesse Bradley, Deputy Director, Nebraska

Jesse.bradley@nebraska.gov