

# Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

### Integrated Pest Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians ("Rincon Tribe") is a federally recognized Indian tribe that occupies a 5,240-acre (8.19 square mile) reservation located approximately 12 miles northeast of Escondido and 42 miles north of the City of San Diego, California. Approximately one-third of the Rincon Reservation is located within a valley running roughly north-south through the middle of the Reservation. The Rincon Reservation contains habitat for the federally endangered Arroyo Toad, and two endangered birds; the Least Bell's Vireo and the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. The habitat of these endangered species is impacted by invasive species.

The natural environment of the Reservation and surrounding areas historically contained large numbers of oak trees and other native plants, all of which played an important role in the culture and diet of the Native American people of this region. Many of the oaks and other native trees which once were found in the valley have been removed or have died off. The Rincon Reservation contains Coast Live Oak forests, a sacred tree to Luiseño People, and the dominant oak tree species on the Rincon Reservation. Coast Live Oak are directly threatened by the introduction and spread of two invasive beetles: the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB) and Invasive Shot-Hole Borer (ISHB) beetles. In 2020 a survey for these beetles was completed in the accessible areas of the reservation and several areas of GSOB infestation were found. ISHB was not found on the reservation in 2020, but live trapping activities conducted just outside of the Rincon Reservation boundary in 2019 resulted in a live ISHB being found. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that populations of ISHB do exist within the immediate vicinity of the Rincon Reservation and could potentially infest Coast Live Oak trees located on Rincon Reservation land.

Three endangered species exist on the Rincon Reservation. A Preserve has been established which contains suitable habitat for the federally endangered arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax trailii extimus*), and the federally endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). In 2004, Rincon established the Rincon Tribal Resource Conservation and Management Plan (TRCMP). The TRCMP specifies a variety of management and monitoring measures for the conservation of these endangered species and the habitats upon which they depend. In particular, the TRCMP provides a comprehensive program for the control and elimination of exotic species that pose a threat to the survival of the arroyo toad. The TRCMP further established a 139.5-acre Preserve for the protection and management of arroyo toad, least Bell's vireo, and southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. In 2018 the Preserve was expanded to 1,588.45 acres. The 2018 TRCMP and a corresponding MOU with BIA are in effect for a period of 25 years from the effective date, with the option for renewal for an additional 25 years. The TRCMP lists the control of the following invasive plant species to be a priority: giant reed, salt cedar, pampas grass, and cardoon and states the

monitoring and control of these invasive species are to be conducted using methods compatible with biological goals and objectives, and that invasive species removal be accomplished by hand, utilizing the application of chemical herbicides if necessary. The implementation of a coordinated eradication program for invasive plants such as arundo and tamarisk will expedite the implementation of individual eradication projects. Eradication projects will not only produce improvements in riparian habitat but will also increase surface and subsurface water flow.

The presence of invasive predatory animal threats (African-clawed frogs (*Xenopus laevis*) and Bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*) are also addressed in the TRCMP. Because these species are a threat to Arroyo Toad, these predatory species are to be regularly evaluated and removed. Argentine ants are aggressive and pose a threat to the arroyo toad's main sub-adult and adult preferred food source, the Harvester ant (*Pogonomyrmex spp.*), by taking over their territory. Argentine Ants are to be regularly monitored and if found, destroyed using ant bait kits.

The spread of invasive plants is one of the most significant threats to native plant species and vegetation communities, second only to habitat destruction. Invasive species are any species that are non-native and harm the local ecosystem. When these non-native plants and animals establish themselves in our local ecosystems, they outcompete and dislodge species that have evolved specifically to live there. The Rincon Cultural Resources Department has identified approximately 30 species of priority native plants including grass species, deergrass, yucca species, sumac species, willow species, cottonwood species, dogbanes, asters, cacti, heaths, sages, plane trees, roses, nightshades, moschatels, montiaceaes, and broomrapes. There are several measures that can be taken to promote the continued presence of the target species that occur at the Reservation. These primarily include addressing different weed infestations using a combination of removal/treatment and native species plantings. For instance, eliminating Tamarisk will encourage native willows and mulefat expansion. Addressing invasive annual grasses will provide an opportunity for enhancement of native grasses, herbaceous, and woody species.

In the 2023 Rincon Master Plan the Environmental Department was tasked with the preparation of an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP) that would provide an overview and holistic detail of all actions to be taken to monitor and control significant plant, insect, and animal invasive pests on the Reservation. The IPMP would include the following components:

- 1) Methods for preserving the health and longevity of the existing mature oaks on the Reservation. The planting of new oak tree seedlings at various locations on the Reservation would also be included.
- 2) The treatment of invasive weed infestations of species such as salt cedar/tamarisk (*Tamarix spp.*) and giant reed/Arundo (*Arundo donax*). These two invasive vegetation species in particular have high transpiration rates and large leaf surface area, which results in two to ten times greater water loss than that of native species. This impacts oak trees and the endangered Arroyo toad, and several native species, as the invasive weeds remove valuable water/habitat.
- 3) To protect the endangered Arroyo Toad, the Plan would contain a component on the monitoring, treatment, and removal of amphibian species such as Bullfrogs and African Clawed Toad, and Argentine Ants, that outcompete the Arroyo Toads' primary food source.

- 4) The IPMP would also include a native plant component and provide basic information needed for an expanded plan to restore other varieties of native vegetation to the valley, particularly in areas visible from the Valley Center Road corridor and in the vicinity of tribal facilities.

The Rincon Tribe was recently awarded a grant from the Resource Conservation District of San Diego County (RCD) to develop an IPMP as described in the paragraph above and an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the treatment of lightly infested oak trees, removal of medium to heavily infested oak trees, and planting of oak tree seedlings on the Reservation. Invasive species such as tamarisk and arundo shall be treated or removed as necessary to prolong the health and life of the oak trees. The ISMP and EA documents will allow Rincon to guide and implement invasive species management projects on the Rincon Reservation to control the spread of invasive oak borer beetles, control and remove invasive plants that threaten culturally significant plant species, and revegetate native and culturally significant plant species. The Rincon Environmental Department will act as the lead agency for the Rincon Reservation with oversight and responsibility for managing grant funds and coordinating activities and deliverables. The IPMP and EA will be focused on the valley areas within the Rincon Reservation where the oaks and endangered species are present.

## **2 PROJECT DEADLINES**

- 1) Preparation of an IPMP for the Rincon Reservation providing an overview and holistic detail of all actions to be taken to monitor and control significant plant, insect, and animal invasive pests on the Reservation. **(document due March 30, 2024).**
- 2) Preparation of an Environmental Assessment for the actions and projects outlined in the IPMP **(document due June 30, 2024)**

## **3 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for the preparation of the IPMP are to focus specifically on non-human health related pest management, and include:

- 1) Identifying environmentally significant invasive pests on the reservation and best means for monitoring progress
- 2) Describing methods for preventing those identified pests
- 3) Providing an overview and holistic detail of all actions to be taken to survey and control those significant plant, insect, and animal invasive pests on the Reservation, including employing cultural practices, mechanical methods (trapping, heat/cold treatment, physical removal), biological controls, and pesticides (judicious use, only as necessary).
- 4) Describing the best pesticides and application practices that should be used specifically for controlling invasive beetles in oak trees.
- 5) Describing best practices for physical removal of oak trees that are highly infested with invasive beetles.
- 6) Describing best practices for replanting native plant species to replace removed invasive species.
- 7) Setting any relevant action thresholds

- 8) Summarizing existing efforts and providing recommendations to better protect the local environment in the future.

The following paragraphs outline the components of the Management Plan and EA.

### **3.1 IPMP:**

The IPMP will serve as a guide with best practices for treatment of invasive beetles in oak trees, including pesticide injection or tree removal in cases of severe infestation, and the removal and treatment of invasive plants, including application of herbicides where needed, and revegetation. Rincon would like the IPMP to cover the management of competing invasive species for Arroyo Toad, invasive species competing with native or culturally significant plants, and a detailed section on pesticide use (spray and injectable) for oak borer beetles in the oak trees.

The IPMP will also include a background on existing conditions of invasive plants and animals on the Reservation impacting endangered species, habitat types, and other pertinent information. A prioritized list of projects will include maps and detailed mitigation actions. For example, maps of the highest priority beetle-infested trees would be provided, along with a description of the pesticide injection used to treat the trees and which trees should be targeted, and finally the areas where oak seedlings should be planted. Rincon has some ideas for proposed projects but is looking for recommendations from the consultant. The IPMP will provide guidelines and a list of prioritized projects that the Tribe could use over multiple years to control invasive species and mitigate their damage to forests and ecosystems.

### **3.2 EA:**

The EA will assess ground moving or other significant actions outlined in the IPMP to determine whether there are potential impacts on the environment. Such activities include surveys, heavily infested tree removal, and pesticide applications. The area covered by the EA will include the Arroyo Toad Preserve, areas with forest or planned forests, and any other locations where invasive species management may occur. Sensitive biological resources include the endangered toad and birds and their habitats, as well as Southern Californian riparian and chaparral habitat. The Rincon Reservation relies entirely on groundwater for drinking water; activities with the potential to impact groundwater water quality must be carefully assessed. The EA will ensure that activities taken to remove and manage invasive species are protective of the environment and ecosystems on the Rincon Reservation.

## **4 FORMAT OF PROPOSAL**

Succinct proposals that are easy to follow with clear, concise information are highly desired. The total page count should not exceed 25 pages. Please frame the proposal in the form of a Project Work Plan following the Scope of Services outlined in Section 4.3 with an effective project management approach. Within each task listed in the Scope of Services (Section 4.3), demonstrate elements 1, 2, 3, & 4 from the **Selection Criteria (Section 5.3)**. Element 3 from the Selection Criteria may be summarized in a separate section from the Project Work Plan.

Proposals shall contain all of the required content areas listed below. Organize the proposal in this format and sequence with clearly identified section breaks for each content area. The section breaks

shall not count in the total number of pages of your proposal. Any subcontracted work must be specified in the proposal.

Proposals shall contain all the required content areas listed below. Proposals shall be organized in this format and sequence with clearly identified section breaks for each content area. The section breaks shall not count in the total number of pages of the proposal (25 pages maximum total). **The total cost of the proposal should not exceed \$86,000.**

1. Cover Page – detailed in Section 4.1 (*does not count towards the proposal page limit*)
2. Introduction – detailed in Section 4.2
3. Consultant experience and qualifications
4. Project Workplan - covering Tasks 1 through 6 as described in the Scope of Services in Section 4.3
5. Timeline & Assurances to Meet Stated Deadlines. A statement confirming the consultant's capacity and ability to complete the Management Plan by the March 30, 2024 deadline and the EA by the June 30, 2024 deadline, assuming the contract is finalized by December 15, 2023.
6. An itemized budget with cost breakdowns for Tasks 1 through 6 outlined in the Scope of Services (Section 4.3). The budget should include a "Not-To-Exceed" total cost to complete the Management Plan, and EA. The cost information requested in this section is required to support the reasonableness of the proposal and is for internal use only. Specifically, the cost proposal should include the job titles of positions that will complete the work, including hours and hourly rates. Cost should be presented by task at a level of detail corresponding to the PCAP, CCAP, and QAPP Template sections. **Proposals containing hourly rates without a not-to-exceed total cost for the project will not be considered.** The Tribe is not responsible for any costs incurred by proposers, including proposal preparation and expense associated with proposal interviews/presentations prior to execution of a contract. The total cost of the proposal should not exceed \$86,000.
7. Three (3) References and a list of comparable projects the consultant has completed or is currently working on (*does not count towards the proposal page limit*).
8. W-9 and Certificate of Insurance (*does not count towards the proposal page limit*)
9. Company Statement of Qualifications (*does not count towards the proposal page limit*)
10. Resumes of the primary staff who will be working on the project (*does not count towards the proposal page limit*).

#### **4.1 Cover Page:**

Proposals must include a contact person's name, email address, and telephone number, EIN, and sam.gov UEI number on the cover page. The cover page must be a single page. The cover page does not count towards the 25 maximum page limit.

#### **4.2 Introduction:**

Open the proposal with the vision for this project that includes your capacity to complete the scope within the project schedule. The opening vision and introduction should be limited to one (1) page. This introduction should include descriptions about:

- Visions for the final deliverables

- Understanding of requirements
- Consultant staff or partner capacity to support this level of work
- Experience completing similar documents
- Elements that set your team apart to successfully accomplish the project goals and deliverables

#### **4.3 Scope of Services:**

The following general tasks guide the scope of work that the chosen consultant will use to complete the Management Plan and EA. Note on deliverables: the listed deliverables represent Rincon's best estimate on the types of information required for the Management Plan and EA. We look forward to consultants sharing ideas on how these deliverables and associated items may be fine-tuned.

##### Task 1: Project Management

This task represents overall project management and coordination with the Project Team. Following contract approval, the Consultant, with input from Rincon, will refine and finalize the proposed work plan and schedule for the project. The work plan will include a schedule of proposed project meetings, project timeline, and deliverables. The proposal should also include the Consultant's communication strategy for effective project management. At a minimum, a project kickoff meeting and monthly check-ins with the Environmental Department are expected.

Expected Deliverables:

- *A work plan outlining the project scope, general methodology, and the project timeline for the project.*
- *Monthly (Zoom or Teams) project check-in meetings, work progress summaries, and next steps.*

##### Task 2: Background Review, and Data Collection

There are existing environmental assessments, documents, and resources that the Rincon Tribe can provide that will help provide the foundation for the Management Plan and EA. Rincon has had monitoring completed for GSOB and ISHB, invasive species, and endangered species from 2021 to 2023; these maps, reports, and data will be shared with the selected contractor to be used in the development of the Management Plan. Rincon can also share completed . The consultant will coordinate with the Rincon Environmental Department to ensure the transfer of needed information and data. The consultant will work with Rincon to understand past monitoring efforts, and ongoing and future planned projects that may impact biological resources.

Expected Deliverables:

- *Summary of documents, plans, and data collected to support the IPMP and EA.*

##### Task 3: Jurisdictional Delineations and Focused Surveys

Any jurisdictional delineations needed to support the EA should be included. Rincon has had monitoring completed for GSOB and ISHB, invasive plant species (such as tamarisk, Arundo, and castor bean), invasive and competing animals of endangered species (such as Argentine ant and bullfrog), and endangered species from 2021 to 2023. GIS maps and data were created to record survey data. These survey reports, maps, and data will be shared with the selected contractor to be used in the development of the IPMP. Rincon has examples of Environmental Assessments for projects on the

Reservation that can be shared with the selected consultant to provide needed background information for the EA.

Required Deliverables:

- *Summary of focused survey findings*

#### Task 4: IPMP Development

The Management Plan will include the following sections: executive summary, background, list of prioritized invasive species, goals and strategies, prioritized list of invasive species management projects and revegetation projects, and oak replanting sites.

Required Deliverables:

- *Complete Rough Draft of IPMP.*
- *Second Draft of IPMP, with Rincon's edits and comments incorporated.*
- *Final Draft of IPMP, with Rincon's edits and comments incorporated.*

#### Task 5: EA Development

An EA meeting both California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements is needed. This can be provided in either a single document or two separate documents.

Required Deliverables:

- *Complete Rough Draft of EA(s).*
- *Second Draft of EA(s), with Rincon's edits and comments incorporated.*
- *Final Draft of EA(s), with Rincon's edits and comments incorporated.*

#### Task 6: Additional Support and Analysis:

If there are elements of this RFP that you are not able to meet, you are still encouraged to apply. Use this section to reiterate those elements that aren't included in your proposal.

## **5 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL**

Interested consultants must email their proposals in digital form to [environmental@rincon-nsn.gov](mailto:environmental@rincon-nsn.gov) no later than 4:00 PM, Friday, October 20, 2023 for consideration. Extensions of time will not be granted. Incomplete submissions will not be considered. Proposals that do not include costs for the PCAP, CCAP, and QAPP will not be considered. Selection of a consultant will be based on a combination of cost and consultant qualifications. The proposal with the lowest cost will not necessarily be chosen. Preference will be given to tribally owned businesses if qualifications with competing businesses are comparable. All proposals become the property of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians and will not be returned. The Rincon Tribe has the right to use all information presented in any proposal.

### **5.1 Estimated Schedule:**

Due Date and Time: 4:00 PM October 20, 2023

Evaluations of RFPs Begins: October 23, 2023

Consultant Selected and Notified: October 24, 2023

Completion of Process: October 27, 2023

The listed dates in the above schedule are tentative. The Rincon Band reserves the right to change or extend any and all dates including the due date for proposal for any reason at any time including after the due date for proposals.

### **5.2 Selection Process:**

The Rincon Tribe has a fiduciary responsibility to consider cost when deciding on a consultant; however, the lowest bidder may not always be considered the most qualified winner. The contract shall be awarded to the consultant whose proposal offers the Rincon Tribe the greatest overall value for the project. Reputation, capability, compliance, physical location, appropriate experience, quality control, and past performance are some additional criteria that may also be taken into consideration in addition to cost. The Rincon Tribe reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or parts thereof. The Rincon Tribe may, under certain conditions, negotiate with the proposer to address specific weaknesses in a submitted proposal.

Indian preference: At minimum 10% of the evaluation points shall be granted to bidders who demonstrate entitlement to Indian Preference, which points shall not be available to non-Indian bidders when using the below indicated method of scoring.

The Rincon Tribe encourages participation by disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE), including women business enterprises (WBE), and minority business enterprises (MBE). Please include certification(s) in proposal.

### **5.3 Selection Criteria:**

1. Demonstrated understanding of the project, Tribal expectations, and clarity of the proposal 35%
2. Project work plan, approach, and schedule 35%
3. Experience in relevant biological projects 20%
4. Cost consideration 10%

### **5.4 Project Contact:**

Rincon Environmental Department

1 Government Center Ln.

Valley Center, CA 92082

(760)749-1051 [environmental@rincon-nsn.gov](mailto:environmental@rincon-nsn.gov)