



**Request for Proposals to Provide National Environmental Policy Act Services
Caldor Fire Recovery Project Environmental Assessment**

Requesting Organization: Great Basin Institute

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IMPORTANT DATES & TIMES

Proposal Posting Date & Time: Monday, March 25, 2024 by 5:00 PM PST
Posting URL: <https://www.thegreatbasininstitute.org/employment/>

Proposal Questions: Any questions regarding this RFP must be submitted to
astrawn@thegreatbasininstitute.org by 5:00 PM PST Monday, April 1, 2024

In-person Virtual Meeting for Questions: Thursday April 11, 2024 10:00 AM PST
Posting URL: <https://www.thegreatbasininstitute.org/employment/>

Written Response to Questions Posting Date and Time: Monday, April 15, 2024 by
5:00 PM PST. Posting URL: <https://www.thegreatbasininstitute.org/employment/>

Proposal deadline: Friday, April 26, 2024 by 5:00 PM PST

Notice of Intent to Award Posting Date: Friday, May 3, 2024 (Award Date:
Wednesday, May 15, 2024 Posting URL:
<https://www.thegreatbasininstitute.org/employment/>)

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Overview

The Great Basin Institute (GBI), on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service (“Forest Service” or “FS”), Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), intends to contract a qualified Environmental Planning consultant (“the consultant”) to provide comprehensive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental planning services for its stewardship initiatives. GBI desires to establish one contract with a single consultant for all services requested in this RFP.

The successful consultant will work closely under the direction of GBI’s Project Manager to oversee the comprehensive work scope for this phase of project planning. The investment by the GBI and the LTBMU in this partnership is designed to better align the consultant early in the planning process with agency priorities and local land management needs, thereby resulting in completed NEPA documents that expedite implementation measures.

The NEPA analysis for the Caldor Fire Recovery Project EA will document existing conditions and potential effects / impacts specific enough to address issues associated with the emerging proposed actions to satisfy NEPA requirements. All of the options for treatment, as outlined in the proposed actions will be analyzed in the NEPA analysis. The LTBMU will provide a rough draft proposed action for the consultant to finalize.

One decision will be made for the entire project area, and that decision will allow for flexibility, depending on conditions within each treatment area.

The successful consultant will be selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The period of performance will not surpass September 27th, 2025 and the consultant will be expected to meet predetermined timelines for deliverables detailed in this RFP.

Background

The Caldor Fire started on August 14, 2021, about 2 miles east of Omo Ranch and 4 miles south of Grizzly Flat. The fire burned approximately 166,808 acres on the Eldorado National Forest (ENF), 9,885 acres on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (TMU), 2,076 acres on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 40,183 acres of private or state lands, and in three counties (Eldorado, Alpine, and Amador)—for a total of approximately 218,952 acres--the number of acres analyzed by the BAER team on September 18, 2021. The Caldor Fire burned at total of 221,835 acres.

The regional drought, combined with dry, hot weather and strong winds, resulted in very active fire behavior. Fire spread was a combination of flanking, backing, and sustained up-canyon/upslope runs. Fire spotting ahead of the head of the fire was a constant concern and threat with group torching and short duration crown fire runs. The fire spread through a combination of rapid-fire runs, long and short distance spotting, creeping and burnout operations resulting in a mosaic of fire severity on National Forest System (NFS) lands. For more detailed information on Caldor Fire burn severity, see [2021 Caldor Fire BAER Report](#).

The Caldor Fire Recovery Project EA will address the need to implement post fire recovery actions to restore watershed health, reduce ladder and surface fuels, and reforest areas impacted by the fire on LTBMU lands. The US Forest Service, the Institute, and subcontractors, will plan for the introduction of mixed treatments where post fire conditions manifest successional pioneer species in fire disturbed areas which resulted in dense ground-level fuels and an increased probability of a high severity reburn. Post-fuel treatment reforestation will also be needed to re-establish conifer cover where natural regeneration is predicted to be inadequate. Reforestation will re-establish the desired mixed conifer density and species while improving the recreational and aesthetic condition of this high value landscape.

Contract Scope

GBI intends to contract a qualified consulting team to establish an ID Team that will work in partnership with the LTBMU to complete third party NEPA to the standards and approvals required by the Forest Service. In addition to standard expectations for a qualified Environmental Planning Consulting Team, including specialized expertise to complete all required NEPA studies and assessments, the ideal candidate will be familiar with the central Sierra ecosystems and natural resource management, and have a working relationship with key partners and stakeholders – the LTBMU in particular and familiarity with the collaborative stakeholder community. The Environmental Planning Team shall also be responsible for facilitating public outreach and input, as is customary in the NEPA scoping process.

The desired qualifications for the Environmental Planning Team are described below:

- Demonstrated NEPA/CEQA planning knowledge and experience;
- Experience leading programs and teams to accomplish environmental planning;
- Strong knowledge of central Sierra Nevada ecosystems and natural resource management issues;
- Experience with landscape scale forest restoration projects;
- Proven commitment to building capacity in Sierra Nevada communities to improve natural resource management;
- Experience with forest / watershed restoration planning, and implementation;
- Strong working relationship with the Forest Service and the LTBMU;
- Public meeting facilitation;
- Ability to interpret scientific data to draft technical reports;
- Qualified specialist expertise in each of the following areas:
 - Botany (e.g., invasive plant management),
 - Archeology,
 - Wildlife Biology,
 - Aquatics and Fisheries,
 - Public Lands,
 - Recreation,
 - Fire and Fuels,
 - Silviculture,
 - Transportation,
 - Air Quality,
 - Wetland Delineation,
 - Hydrology,
 - Soil Science,
 - Scenery analysis
 - GIS mapping and data analysis, and
 - Monitoring plan development

Specialties in wildlife, archaeology, and forestry (silviculture / fire and fuels) may be provided by GBI. These services should be included in the Proposal but identified as discrete task expenditures for those disciplines from the consultant. However, the consultant will be required to work closely with LTBMU / GBI Staff to ensure timely completion of tasks associated with those specialties as they pertain to the NEPA planning process.

Activities and Project Deliverable

Surveys and Permits

The consultant will work under the Authority of the FS, LTBMU to schedule and design all necessary environmental surveys for NEPA compliance described in the Overview. The consultant will determine applicable 2016 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Resource Management Plan and Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction Plan components and review for compliance and development of project design features for all assessments and surveys to be conducted. The consultant will use the data and research gathered to recommend project design features or proposed action modifications or alternatives.

Task 1: Data Collection

The consultant shall collect data, by resource area, as described as: botany (including noxious weeds), heritage, wildlife & fisheries, recreation infrastructure, watershed-hydrology & soils, silviculture / fires and fuels, and any social / economics data needs. The LTBMU will provide initial GIS datasets and other documentation in a file structure that GBI and the consultant must maintain for the duration of this work. Reference materials, templates, guidance, and other pertinent material will be provided by the LTBMU to GBI / the consultant via the agreed upon location and will be maintained and indexed by the consultant as part of the project record. The LTBMU will review the quality and format of data provided by GBI / the consultant and request any corrections prior to approval of this task.

Task 1.1: Setup Tasks and Geodatabase Establishment

Deliverables include:

- Project Area Maps which meet 508 Accessibility requirements
- USFS corporate Natural Resource Information System Geodata
- HUC Watershed Project Map
- Terrestrial and Aquatic Critical Habitat Maps (USFWS T&E)
- Heritage Site Record Map
- Specialist Report Data of Prior Survey & Sightings (Aquatic Species & Wildlife)

Task 1.2: Biological Resources Assessment

The consultant shall review known information (as revised by FWS every 90 days) about at-risk species habitat in the Project Area, conduct habitat mapping, surveys, and habitat assessments to the level

necessary (see specific deliverables below). The consultant shall complete a botanical, fisheries, aquatic, wildlife, and invasive plant / noxious weed assessment for the Project Area, which will include but is not limited to:

- Review known information about at-risk species habitat
- Coordinate and perform vegetation mapping, biological surveys, and habitat assessments in priority areas
- Draft Analysis of Species of Conservation Concern, which will include habitat evaluation
- Draft Analysis of At-risk Plants including habitat evaluation
- Confirm Listing of Federally Listed Species to consider in the BA and EA
- Confirm Listing of USFS Sensitive Species to consider in the BE and EA

Anticipated level of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey needed. Please indicated your cost per acre by resource:

- Terrestrial Wildlife: Consultant will be able to complete a desktop review with some reconnaissance-level survey (RLS) (RLS acreage = **to be determined (TBD)** by the consultant; RLS day of survey = **TBD** by the consultant)
- Aquatics: Consultant will need to complete surveys next summer for data gaps not surveyed (Field survey acreage = **TBD** by the consultant)
- Botany: Consultant will need to complete surveys next summer for data gaps not surveyed (Field survey acreage = **TBD** by the consultant)

The consultant will prepare the following deliverables for submission for a Biological Resources Assessment which will include, but not limited to, the following:

- Botanical Resources Assessment
- Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Assessment
- Invasive Plant/Noxious Weed Risk Assessment
- Migratory Bird Evaluation Report
- Confirm Listing of Federally Listed Species to consider in the BA and EA or CE
- Confirm Listing of USFS Sensitive Species to consider in the BE and EA or CE
- Management Indicator Species Report

Task 1.3: Prepare Biological Evaluation and Biological Assessment

The consultant will support FS, LTBMU who will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to produce a Biological Opinion for species with Federal status.

Deliverables include: Update BE/BA upon FWS review.

- Draft Biological Assessment (BA) for species with Federal status, including threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered
- Draft Biological Evaluation (BE) for Forest Service Sensitive Species

- Revised Draft to USFWS
- Revisions per USFWS and Final to USFWS

Task 1.4: Vegetation/Weeds Specialist Report

The consultant will prepare a desktop weeds risk assessment within the Project areas (only) (see specific deliverables below).

Deliverables include:

- Framework Analysis
- Vegetation Specialist Report
- Weed Risk Assessment

Anticipated level of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey needed:

Vegetation/Weeds: Consultant will be able to complete a desktop review with some reconnaissance-level survey (RLS) (RLS acreage = **to be determined (TBD)** by the consultant; RLS day of survey = **TBD** by the consultant*)

Task 1.5: Hydrology & Soils Assessment

The consultant will identify and map waterways, wetlands, meadows, springs, and other water features using GIS, field verifications, air photos, or other methods as needed. This will include: Delineating water body buffer zones using Water Board definitions; Planning design features and proposed action mitigations or alternatives based on analysis findings. The consultant will submit the Hydrology & Soils Assessment which will include but not limited to:

- Delineate riparian conservation areas using GIS
- Review water bodies in the analysis area to record any special designations (303d list, special status, designated Wild and Scenic Rivers)
- Determine applicable management plans
- Complete Cumulative Watershed Effects analysis using the Equivalent Roaded Area method
- Anticipated level of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey needed:

Water quality sampling sites: Consultant will need to complete water quality sampling from data gap sites (Sites = **TBD** by the consultant)

Deliverables include:

- Maps of waterways from desktop review;
- Hydrology Assessment Report;
- Soils Report;

- Watershed Report that analyzes project effects to water quality, water temperature, stream morphology, soil erosion and productivity, incorporating the results of the previous identified items.

Task 1.6: Archaeological Assessment

The consultant shall complete an archaeological assessment for the Project Area, with permissions and permits from the Forest Service and other agencies as needed. All data and reports shall be protected and treated as sensitive data as outlined in the Region 5 Programmatic Agreement with the CA SHPO. Task will include but is not limited to:

- Directing Survey priority areas that do not have existing up-to-date records. Record sites utilizing “Historic Property Recording Specifications”;
- Recording all newly discovered prehistoric, ethnographic, and historical heritage resources encountered within and directly adjacent to the Project Area;
- Re-recording or supplementing existing site records as needed based on discrepancies, alterations and impacts observed;
- In-Situ Artifact Recording procedures will be followed during both inventory and site recording activities.
- Recording all heritage resource sites using Office of Historic Preservation DPR 523 site forms; and
- Using FS Region 5 standards to record all site boundaries (resource-grade Global Positioning System (GPS)).
- The consultant shall coordinate with the FS, UMP who will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for concurrence on eligibility and effects findings.
- The consultant shall assign CA State Trinomial numbers for all sites in project area for inclusion in the Final Report.

Anticipated level of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey needed:

Pedestrian-level survey: Consultant will need to complete surveys next summer for data gaps not surveyed (Field survey acreage = est. minimum **10,000** by the consultant)

Deliverables include:

- File Search
- Archaeological Assessment Report
- Archaeological Project Effects Analysis Report
- The consultant shall submit proof of the completion of the Archaeological Assessment and the Archaeological Project Effects Analysis Reports to the FS Heritage IDT Specialist.

Task 1.7: Recreation Assessment

The consultant shall provide an analysis of recreational facilities and activities within the Project Area using existing GIS and other information. The consultant shall identify facilities and/or activities that have the potential for beneficial or adverse effects from fuel loads as well as possible effects to the Project. A separate Scenic Assessment document will also be required.

Deliverables include:

- Recreation Assessment Report which will include but not be limited to the Recreational Effects Analysis for the Project, including impacts to Access, Recreation Opportunity, and Recreation Experience.

Task 1.8: Silviculture / Fires and Fuels

The consultant will prepare a desktop analysis of fire and fuels within the Project areas (only) (see specific deliverables below).

Deliverables include:

- Fire and Fuels Report
- Vegetation/Reforestation Report
- Supplemental Old Growth report

Task 1.9: Transportation

The consultant will provide an analysis of transportation resources, including a summary of existing roads using existing GIS and other information from the Forest Service (miles of NFS roads by maintenance level [Levels 1 to 5] and non-NFS roads [State, County, Local, Private] bordered by NFS lands within the Project Area).

Anticipated level of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey needed:

- Existing GIS Road Inventory will need to be field surveyed for effects (Road miles = **TBD** by the consultant) Assessment to include any temporary roads as needed. Deliverables include:

Transportation Assessment Report which will include but not be limited to the Transportation Effects Analysis for the Project.

Task 1.10: Climate Change Analysis

The consultant will analyze the effects of climate change on the Project Area. Analysis must be consistent with the existing LTBMU Climate White Paper and the National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of GHG Emissions and Climate Change (2003).

Deliverables include:

- Framework Analysis
- Climate Change Report

Task 1.11: Other Environmental Impact Categories and/or Resource Categories (and Resource Subcategories)

Although all resource impact categories may receive the same level of review and analysis, the level of detail of review and analysis for a particular resource is dependent upon the potential for impact. Sections above address those impact categories and/or resource categories (and resource sub-categories) that have been determined by the Forest Services to be required as part of the environmental review for the proposed action:

Environmental impact categories and/or resource categories (and resource sub-categories) to be included:

- biological resources (botanical, fisheries and aquatics, invasive plant / noxious weed, and wildlife)
- watershed-hydrology and soils resources
- cultural resources / heritage resources
- recreation resources
- silviculture / fires and fuels
- transportation resources
- Air Quality

The following impact categories and/or resource categories (and resource sub-categories) would not normally be affected by a proposed forest restoration related action because the resource either does not exist within the Project Area, or the types of activities associated with a proposed restoration related action would not affect them. These categories will be addressed, as appropriate in other section. These impact categories and/or resource categories (and resource sub-categories) MAY not be included in the EA for further analysis pending the consultant's coordination with the Forest Service in determining the final impact categories and/or resource.

- Noise
- Public Safety and Hazards
- Land use

Task 2: Data Summary

The consultant may need to provide a written summary of survey results and enter data collected into appropriate corporate databases. GBI will pursue accesses by being approved for a LincPass or eAuthorization to access corporate databases. FS may have the internal capacity to provide this service.

Deliverables include:

- Written summary of survey results and enter data collected into appropriate corporate databases (optional).

Task 3: Meeting Coordination, Attendance, and Participation

Required GBI, consultant, and Forest Service personnel will participate in an initial meeting to be hosted by the LTBMU, on a day, at a specific time and location (method) agreed upon. The project leaders from the LTBMU and the consultant who will be responsible for coordinating, organizing and leading the work described within this RFP SOW must be identified at, or prior to, the initial meeting. Coordination and scheduling of the initial meeting will be the responsibility of the LTBMU. A second field-based meeting may be scheduled upon the consultant's request to familiarize the consultant's staff with the Project Area. This field-based meeting will be coordinated by the LTBMU.

The consultant is responsible for establishing a meeting schedule on a reoccurring basis and locations (methods) with Forest Service personnel, as agreed to in writing. The consultant is responsible for scheduling checkpoint meetings and briefings with the Forest Supervisor and staff, as well as appropriate GBI, consultant, and Forest Service personnel to provide support. The LTBMU will provide draft agendas outlines expected discussion topics. The consultant should add agenda topics based on project specific issues, concerns, questions, or other topics.

A preliminary list of resource areas that have required tasks as a part of this description of work, and therefore require participation in meetings and/or calls, as necessary, will be provided by the Forest Service.

Deliverables include:

- Initial Meeting agendas, notes, and materials for checkpoint meetings and briefings with the Forest Supervisor and staff
- Meeting agendas, notes, and materials
- Field Meetings Notes from Lead & IDT meetings

Task 4: Project Record Management

GBI / the consultant shall establish one location with a specific file structure to house project records with working and final files. The consultant shall organize the information composing the project record by topic and include an index using a specific files structure provided by the LTBMU. The project record includes all information and analyses either generated or obtained from other sources, or used to support documentation and analyses. A complete project record is the entirety of the information relied upon within the consultant's possession. The geospatial data files and metadata must be included. The consultant shall prepare and assemble a project record and furnish one electronic copy (of electronic documents) on electronic media (e.g., thumb drive) to the LTBMU. The project record must be provided within one (1) week of

initiating the objection filing period (should an Emergency Declaration be unavailable) and completing Task 6 and all of Task 6 subtasks.

Deliverables include:

- Set up one electronic file location with team access using External Collaboration Box folder
- Establish project record folder structure and indexing system using FS protocols

Task 5: Document Management

GBI / the consultant and Forest Service shall work to identify a mutually acceptable location that GBI, the consultant, and Forest Service can utilize to share, edit, and transmit documents through the duration of this work. It is anticipated that the consultant will maintain and manage this site through the duration of the Project in cooperation with the LTBMU.

Deliverables include:

- Establish project record folder structure and indexing system using Forest Service protocols

Task 6 – Environmental Assessment, Conduct NEPA Scoping & Facilitate Decision Process

The consultant shall conduct all necessary actions to produce National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documents for review and finalization by the LTBMU Responsible Official. In collaboration with LTBMU, the consultant will provide facilitation and documentation of stakeholder group public engagement with regards to scoping and comments. The consultant will work closely with the LTBMU to complete the appropriate environmental studies and analyses for adequate environmental review and public scoping. It is expected that an Environmental Assessment will be adequate for this project, and the LTBMU will provide a template. However, the LTBMU Responsible Official will determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. If a FONSI cannot be completed under an Environmental Assessment, and an EIS is required, any necessary additional work will be procured outside the scope of this project. The consultant will work with the LTBMU to finalize all NEPA compliance documents and facilitate the public participation and notification process for the final decision.

Task 6.1: Public Involvement

The consultant should use a public involvement plan as a guide for implemented public involvement opportunities which will be developed collaboratively with GBI and FS. The consultant will be provided a standard mailing list created by the LTBMU and is expected to ensure the accuracy of the contact information for each entry. Additional contacts may be added to the mailing list as requested by the public or Forest Service. The consultant will use the provided GovDelivery List and maintain and update the mailing list throughout

the planning process. Each version of the mailing list used to distribute materials before initiating each public involvement phase will be saved in the project record.

The consultant will be responsible for coordinating field trips and public meetings including press releases, mailings, phone calls, announcements, and other related materials. The consultant is responsible for distributing these materials as appropriate and agreed to prior to the event. The consultant will develop an electronic presentation that walks through the proposed action, this will be posted on the project website during scoping for public access. The consultant will submit legal notices to the newspaper of record and ensure their online publication.

Task 6.2: Scoping

The LTBMU will provide a rough draft proposed action for the consultant to finalize. The consultant is responsible for developing the proposed action consistent with the 2016 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Resource Management Plan and post fire assessment information and Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction Plan. LTBMU will review before proposed action is finalized. Contractor will complete the Forest Plan consistency check list and identify any inconsistencies prior to finalizing the proposed action.

Deliverables include:

- Forest Plan Consistency Check-List
- Final Proposed Action
- Scoping notice and final website materials, including Emergency Authority.
- Scoping report or memo on outcome of scoping
- Agendas and meeting notes from meetings with agencies

Task 6.3: Content Analysis, Issues, and Alternative Development

The consultant will gather scoping comments, consider and document comments, complete any remaining content analysis, identify issues, and develop alternatives unless Emergency Authority is granted. Scoping comments will be sent to the agreed to shared site and provided to the consultant by the LTBMU. The consultant will review comments and complete remaining content analysis resulting in issue identification and measures. The issues identified will focus the environmental analysis, highlight effects and may require the development of alternatives as detailed in the comment analysis. If Emergency Authority is not granted, the consultant will also develop mitigation measures and monitoring requirements for each alternative as appropriate. Alternatives eliminated from detailed study will include rationale for elimination and may include associated effects analysis to support elimination. The consultant will compare action alternatives against the Forest Plan, as amended, for consistency.

Deliverables include:

- Key Issues and Alternative Report (The Contactor will prepare materials for Forest Service review and edits, and provide final materials to the LTBMU)
- Meeting materials for checkpoint meetings and briefings with the Forest Supervisor and staff

Task 6.4: Environmental Analysis

The consultant will gather past, present, and reasonably future foreseeable actions specific to the forest and associated with the Project's analysis areas. The consultant will complete direct, indirect, and cumulative effects analysis for required natural and cultural resources and those that are relevant to the action alternatives and issues, and complete required environmental effects and if decided, specialist reports. The consultant will complete all steps required for consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). All consultation steps would include support from the LTBMU and any inherently governmental responsibilities would properly lie with Forest Service personnel. The consultant will recommend the type of NEPA document needed or required based on environmental effects findings. The consultant needs to conduct a preliminary finding of effects prior to finalizing effects analysis and specialist reports. If the consultant believes that there will be a significant impact from the proposed project, then a meeting with the LTBMU will be required to discuss the consultant's preliminary determination and, if necessary, modify the proposed action to avoid significant impacts.

Deliverables include:

- Admin Draft EA
- Check Draft EA
- Public Review EA

Task 6.5: Formal Comment Period

The Contractor will prepare comment period materials for Forest Service review and edits, initiate the comment period, and provide final materials to the LTBMU. Final comment materials will be distributed to the updated mailing list and incorporate updates by the consultant.

Deliverables include:

- Materials to initiate the public comment period on the EA
- Meeting materials for checkpoint meetings and briefings with the Forest Supervisor and staff

Task 6.6: Objection Filing, Resolution Periods and Final EA/FONSI

The consultant will complete content analysis of comments received and document by considering and responding to comments. The consultant will edit and finalize environmental document and, if decided by the line officer, the specialist reports as

appropriate based on comments received. The consultant will write a draft decision notice and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) (assumes EA is environmental document). The consultant will prepare objection related materials and send to Forest Service for review, coordinate with forest and regional office prior to initiating the objection filing period, and initiate 45-day objection filing period, and provide the project record, including final objection materials. Note if Emergency Authority is approved, there will be no objection period. Final comment materials will be distributed to the updated mailing list and incorporate updates into PALS by the consultant.

Deliverables include:

- Response to Comments Report and final comment materials
- Final EA and FONSI
- Draft Decision Notice
- Meeting materials for checkpoint meetings and briefings with the Forest Supervisor and staff

Task 6.7: Decision

The consultant will update and finalize the decision notice and FONSI, and any related materials for Forest Service review, and coordinate Forest Supervisor's signature for decision notice.

Deliverables include:

- Final Decision Notice and FONSI
- Decision Notice signatures
- Meeting materials for checkpoint meetings and briefings with the Forest Supervisor and staff

Task 7 – Monitoring Plan

The consultant will cite baseline monitoring requirements, in addition to the already established monitoring as described in the 2016 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Resource Management Plan. The consultant will work with the LTBMU to determine what additional monitoring specific to the Project and any other requirements necessary for a complete Monitoring Plan.

Deliverables include:

- Citation of Baseline & FS Monitoring Plan, Protocols, and Guidance

Contract Deliverables and Timelines

The consultant shall provide the following deliverables in accordance with the desired timeline from the LTBMU. This timeline is subject to change according to USFS needs or speed of deliverable completion:

Task	Due Date
Project start date (internal)	05/15/2024
Internal Scoping and Project Development / Draft Proposed Action	06/30/2024
Contract review / Scope of Work Development / Finalization / Public Scoping	08/11/2024
Effects Analysis Timeline Update and Proposed Action (Issue and Alternative Development- if needed)	10/13/2024
Specialist Reports and Implementation Plan Draft	12/08/2024
Complete Analysis, Regulatory Concurrence	01/20/2025
Prepare EA/Draft DN/FONSI	06/23/2025
Legal Notice for Objection Filing Period	06/30/2025
Objection Period ends (if needed)	07/30/2025
Objection Response Period / Finalize DN (and edit EA as necessary) Expected Decision (if needed)	09/13/2025

Estimated Start Date & Contract Time (to complete the above Specific Work Requirements):

Start: May 15, 2024

End: September 27, 2025

Criteria for Competitive Applications

The evaluation criteria listed below will be used to evaluate Proposals for the purpose of ranking them based on how fully each Proposal meets the requirements of this RFP. The successful consultant may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award.

Understanding of the Scope of Work. A statement demonstrating a thorough understanding of the Project, team building, personnel management, field surveys and data analysis, and appropriate assessments as required by NEPA. Providing technical expertise in completing environmental effects analysis and drafting NEPA supporting documents for Federal Agency review and approval. Preference will be given to consultants who are capable of building an IDT team workforce based in the northern Sierra Nevada for future NEPA collaboration with the LTBMU in alignment with forest planning objectives. Additional credit will be given to applicants involved with active environmental work programs in the central Sierra Nevada. (25%)

Technical Approach. The proposed technical approach for fulfilling the scope of work must demonstrate familiarity with the Project, IDT team building in partnership with federal agencies, and proficiency in understanding the survey and analysis requirements of the NEPA process, and demonstration of successful management of complex projects with high levels of technical expertise required. (25%)

Qualifications of Proposed Personnel. The Proposal should describe relevant professional experience in the following areas: (a) experience dealing with federal, state, and local governmental agencies, as well as national and local organizations involved with NEPA, and experience completing surveys, analysis or other services in support of NEPA compliance for the Forest Service, if any; (b) an understanding of conducting NEPA generally, and preparing NEPA documents, specifically; (c) biographies including resumes and/or vitae of key staff and their potential role in your proposed work area. If consultant intends to hire these key staff as an outcome of this award, a succinct staffing plan complete with position descriptions seeking necessary specialists and/or letters of interest from prospective hires will be accepted in lieu of team resumes (20%)

Consultant's Past Performance. Preference will be given to those who have experience conducting NEPA compliance on Federal lands with experience writing resource reports for California forest ecosystems. The ideal applicant will be able to showcase its experience working cooperatively with the U.S. Forest Service and have examples of NEPA documentation that they have provided to previous clients. The Proposal should include: (a) information on the consultant's past performance related to the NEPA technical expertise you will be offering; (b) list recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments, events and previous services related to the NEPA technical expertise; (c) references including a list of three clients

who have received services from your organization that is similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, postal and email addresses, and telephone numbers. (15%)

Cost Proposal. The cost Proposal budget should be cost effective and should maximize the value for monies requested in the consultant's budget. Proposal costs should be presented in a 'time and materials, not to exceed' format quoted in United States dollars. Pricing for activities under this Proposal shall be on a time-and-materials basis for hours actually spent in performance of the work described within this RFP plus direct costs. Consultant shall provide unit (hourly) costs for key personnel expected to perform work under this Proposal. Proposal costs should be the minimum necessary to adequately achieve the stated scope of work. (15%)

Submission Requirements

Submission requirements will include two distinct and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal and 2) Cost Proposal.

Interested parties will submit Proposals via email to Jerry Keir, JKier@thegreatbasininstitute.org and Astrea Strawn astrawn@thegreatbasininstitute.org and provide the information as described below:

1. **Technical Proposal** (15-page limit for entire Technical Proposal):

Contact Information - Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, and website.

Narrative - Concise description of the work plan to include the following sections from the Criteria for Competitive Applications:

- Understanding of the Scope of Work;
- Technical Approach;
- Qualifications of Proposed Personnel;
- The consultant's Past Performance;

2. **Cost Proposal:**

The Cost Proposal includes the Proposal budget and budget justification with the following detail breakdown:

- The Cost Proposal shall be by task (Tasks 1-8 above); and
- Anticipated levels of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey for the following tasks (Task 1.2: Biological Resources Assessment; Task 1.4 Vegetation/Weeds; Task 1.5: Hydrology & Soils Assessment; Task 1.6: Cultural Resources / Archaeological Assessment; and Task 1.9: Transportation/Roads) shall be provided as **Option A through Option G** on the following table (or on the consultant's Cost Proposal spreadsheet) and are made part of consultant's Cost Proposal:

Anticipated levels of baseline data collection / fieldwork / survey Optional Costs

Instructions:	Consultant will provide: the number of field days of reconnaissance-level survey OR the number of acres of reconnaissance-level survey OR the number of acres of Field Survey as <u>proposed by the consultant</u> per resource.	Consultant will provide: the Consultant Cost(s) separate from any Subconsultant Cost(s) and a Total Option Cost (in dollars) per Option with a Cost per Unit (Field Days or Acres).
	Consultant will provide assumptions for the above.	

OPTION	TASK	RESOURCE	RLS	RLS	Field Survey	Consultant Costs	Subconsultant Costs	Total Option Cost	Cost per Unit (Field Days, Sites, or Acres)
Option A	1.2	Terrestrial Wildlife	Field days	Acres	Acres	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option A Assumptions:									
Option B	1.2	Aquatics	Field days	Acres	Acres	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option B Assumptions:									
Option C	1.2	Botany	Field days	Acres	Acres	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option C Assumptions:									

OPTION	TASK	RESOURCE	RLS	RLS	Field Survey	Consultant Costs	Subconsultant Costs	Total Option Cost	Cost per Unit (Field Days, Sites, or Acres)
Option D	1.4	Vegetation/Weeds	Field days	Sites	Sites	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option D Assumptions:									
Option E	1.5	Water quality sampling	Field days	Sites	Sites	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option E Assumptions:									
Option F	1.6	Pedestrian-level survey	Field days	Acres	Acres	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option F Assumptions:									
Option G	1.9	Transportation/Roads	Field days	Acres	Acres	\$	\$	\$	\$
Option G Assumptions:									

Late Proposal in response to this RFP will not be accepted.

All costs required for the preparation and submission of a Proposal in response to this RFP shall be borne by the consultant.

The Proposal in response to this RFP shall remain open to acceptance and is irrevocable for a period of 90 days, unless otherwise specified in the RFP documents.

The right is reserved to reject any or all Proposals, or to accept one part of a Proposal and reject the other, unless the consultant stipulates to the contrary.

GBI has the right to decline to award this contract or any part of it for any reason.

Respondents may indicate that they consider any part of their Proposal to be confidential and/or trade secret information by clearly stamping any pages that contain such information with the word "CONFIDENTIAL" in the header of that page. However, respondents must also be aware that, as a public agency, this project is subject to the California Public Records Act, and by submitting a Proposal to GBI, all parts of the Proposal may become a public record that is subject to disclosure to any member of the public. Should GBI receive a Public Records Act request to disclose a Proposal that contains allegedly confidential information, GBI will independently assess the respondent's assertion of a need for confidentiality to determine whether any part of the Proposal can be withheld from disclosure.

Protests

Protests must be in writing and received no later than 7 business days after GBI issues the Notice of Intent to Award, which is sent by electronic mail to all entities who submitted a Proposal. GBI will reject the protest as untimely if it is received after this specified time frame. Protests will be accepted from proposers only. If the protest is mailed and not received by GBI, the protesting party bears the burden of proof to submit documentation (e.g., certified mail receipt) that the protest was timely sent to be otherwise received by GBI within the RFP protest period.

Proposal protests must contain a detailed and complete written statement describing the reason(s) for protest. The protest must include the RFP title, the name of the firm protesting, and include a name, telephone number, email address and physical address of the protestor. If a firm is representing the protestor, they shall include their contact information in addition to that of the protesting firm.

Protests must be mailed or hand delivered to **Peter Woodruff, CEO, 16750 Mount Rose Highway, Reno, NV 89511**. Facsimile and electronic mail protests are sent to **Peter Woodruff at pwoodruff@thegreatbasininstitute.org** and must be followed by a mailed or hand delivered identical copy of the protest and must arrive within the 5-day time limit.

The GBI CEO, in consultation with the Forest Service and GBI Board of Directors, will investigate the protest and if determined to be valid the Institute may reject and re-propose or not re-propose the work, or recommend award to the remaining best qualified proposer. Affected proposers will be notified by electronic mail within 7 business days of the action taken.

GBI may transmit copies of the protest and any attached documentation to all other parties who may be affected by the outcome of the protest. The decision of GBI as to the validity of any protest is final. GBI's final decision will be transmitted to all affected parties in a timely manner. The procedure and time limit set forth are mandatory and are the proposer's sole and exclusive remedy in the event of a protest of the rating of its proposal or award of the contract. The failure to pursue said remedy shall constitute a waiver of any right to further pursue said protest, including filing a Government Code claim or legal proceedings.

Exhibit A: Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) Caldor Fire Recovery Project

Draft Purpose and Need

The Caldor Fire Recovery Project EA seeks to reduce risk to public health while restoring a healthy, resilient, and diverse ecosystem to lands impacted by the 2021 Caldor Fire while managing ecosystem functionality at a landscape-scale. Additionally, the project purpose includes reestablishing recreational opportunities diminished by fire activity.

The objectives of this project are as follows:

- Reduce risk to public health and safety, as well as improve conditions for fire fighter and other forest worker safety;
- Reduce the threat of uncharacteristic wildfires; increase ecosystem resilience to climate change and large-scale disturbances; restore fire return intervals in areas where fuel profiles allow; reduce hazardous fuel buildup; eradicate non-native invasive plant species;
- Develop and maintain desired ecological processes and habitat conditions; restore and improve watershed health;
- Restore existing recreation sites and features impacted by the Caldor Fire.

There is an immediate need to address risks to public health and safety, as well as to improve conditions for fire fighter and other forest worker safety within the project area:

- There is a need to provide safe ingress and egress for local communities, the recreating public, agency personnel, and emergency responders by reducing fuels adjacent to roads, recreation sites, and administrative sites.
- There is a need to create strategic areas of low fuels around wildland urban intermix (WUI) zones, to mitigate the threat of loss of life or property from wildfires, reduce uncharacteristic high-severity wildfires, and maintain conditions for low-severity fire impacts. There is a need to reduce fuel loading within and adjacent to administrative and recreation sites.
- There is a need to establish new and maintain existing fuel breaks for strategic fire suppression along PODs. There is a need to coordinate the boundaries of this network with adjacent property under other ownership.
- There is a need to reduce or eliminate risk from falling trees for public and forest worker safety and to protect roads, recreation sites, administrative sites, cultural resource sites and tribal gathering areas, range infrastructure, and other infrastructure. There is a need to address hazards in project areas, such as areas proposed for planting or other vegetation management activities.

- There is a need to update design elements and standards of roads to meet intended level of service and road management objectives. There is a need to reconstruct roads to standards that address road user safety and protection of resources that keep maintenance expenditures at costs relative to current and anticipated funding levels.

There is a need to reduce the threat of uncharacteristic wildfires, increase ecosystem resilience to climate change and large-scale disturbance, restore fire return intervals, reduce hazardous fuel buildup, and eradicate non-native plant species in the project area:

- There is a need to increase resilience of forests within low- and moderate-severity burn areas, as well as unburned areas, by restoring tree densities and species diversity, while reducing ladder and surface fuel composition consistent with natural range of variability.
- There is a need to maintain low fuel loads and flame lengths that meet desired conditions detailed the LTBMU Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 2016) by removing dead and down fuels. There is a need to restore and maintain fire return intervals consistent with forest types across the project area.
- There is a need to protect the isolated patches of live conifer habitat, to increase their resilience, and to provide connections among the wildlife refugia. There is a need to ensure the persistence of remaining resilient habitat and future seed sources in the face of potential high-severity wildfire, drought, and other stressors.
- There is a need to restore healthy forest consistent with desired conditions and natural range of variability, to establish ecologically resilient landscapes, and to be responsive to other public and tribal interests.
- There is a need to address non-native invasive plants in the project area. There is a need for well-planned, invasive weed management over the long-term, combining manual, mechanical, and chemical methods of control.
- There is a need to remove dead and down fuels and post-wildfire brush utilizing low impact methods within and adjacent to cultural resource sites to reduce severe fire risk and promote regeneration of conifer trees that provide protective cover to the sites and restore their integrity of setting.

There is a need to develop and maintain desired ecological processes and habitat conditions; to restore and improve watershed health within the project area:

- There is a need for physical stabilization of roads due to post-fire risk of debris flows, hyper-concentrated flows, and accelerated erosion.
- There is a need for stream crossing improvements on perennial and intermittent streams to meet aquatic organism passage requirements. This need is primarily in areas of high and moderate soil burn severity where stream or drainage crossings were undersized, poorly aligned, or in a degraded condition prior to the fire.

- There is a need to restore conifer forests on a large scale and to prevent ecosystem type conversion from forested to non-forested lands. There is a need to remove competing plants, dead or damaged trees, or woody debris to facilitate planting and to protect regenerating forest.
- There is a need to restore or improve the hydrologic condition and function of stream systems and the condition of riparian areas. There is a need to restore forested conditions near streams and other waterbodies to stabilize soils, provide shade in riparian conservation areas, provide future woody debris recruitment, and provide for nesting success. There is a need to re-establish hydrologic connectivity disrupted by past management and exacerbated by the increased flows resulting from the Caldor Fire.
- There is a need to retain snags and downed logs to provide and maintain soil productivity and wildlife habitat.
- There is a need to block vehicular access along restoration features, fuel breaks, unauthorized trails and roads, sensitive resource areas, and vegetation management units.

There is a need to restore existing recreation sites and features impacted by the Caldor Fire:

- There is a need to restore recreation features (e.g., trails, campgrounds) impacted by the Caldor Fire and post-fire restoration actions (e.g. hazard tree abatement, use of mechanical equipment on trails, etc.).
- There is a need to reestablish vegetation near and within developed recreation sites to improve visitor experience by reestablishing shade and providing separation between users or features. There is a need to prevent establishment of new concentrated use areas or unauthorized trails. There is also a need to consider where reforestation or other actions can improve scenic quality on trail systems.
- While this proposal focuses on areas where there is a need for change or active restoration, we would allow some areas to naturally recover. We also recognize fire may have maintained, enhanced, or not burned some areas and, therefore, those areas may not need active restoration or treatment. In addition, limited resources for implementation require prioritization of active management based on feasibility, public safety needs, and ecological needs. To support prioritization and to meet the agency's objective to increase pace and scale, we would evaluate all available tools to expeditiously and safely reduce fuel and meet other objectives within the project area.
- Finally, the Caldor Fire presents an opportunity and need to promote scientific research regarding the effects of large fires on the environment. There are abundant research opportunities to study the effects of large, high-intensity fires and restoration treatment effects on wildlife, conifer seed dispersal, tree recruitment, soil erosion, aquatic resources, and fuel accumulation. For example, there is a need to design a post-fire, climate focused, reforestation strategy to reduce overstocking where it is ecologically and economically viable, following current agency guidance and research direction. Research would increase understanding of the potential effects of management of

burned forests to achieve long-term resilience and the conservation of native plants and animal species associated with these habitats.

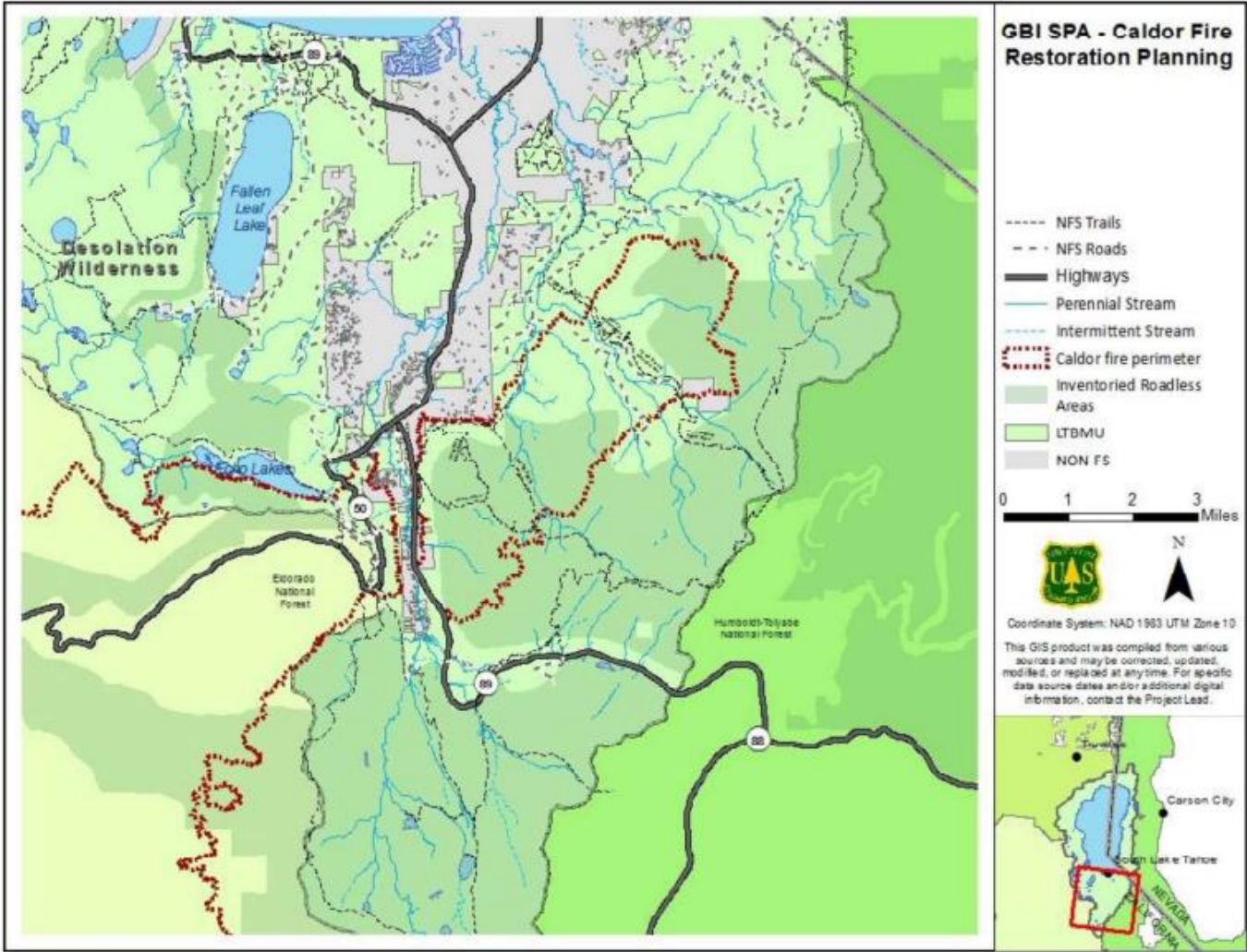


FIG. A.1. CALDOR FIRE PERIMETER AND PROJECT VICINITY MAP WITHIN LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT (SEPTEMBER 2023)