Request for Proposals
Nisqually River Delta Integrated Restoration Design and Engineering
RFP No. LLTK-23-002

Request for Proposal Release (RFQ): 08/28/23
Proposals Due (SOQ): 09/25/23

Purpose of the Request

Long Live the Kings (LLTK) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to restore wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fishing in the Pacific Northwest. Since 1986, we have been advancing science, improving management, and implementing solutions that balance the needs of fish and people. LLTK envisions a sustainable Northwest with a growing human population, a thriving economy, and flourishing salmon runs.

LLTK received a grant award through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Underserved Communities program to support the Nisqually Indian Tribe (NIT) by creating a conceptual habitat restoration design capturing the tribe's vision for the Nisqually River Delta (NRD). The NIT is seeking this conceptual design now so that elements can be included in the ongoing Nisqually Interstate 5 (I5) Bridge Replacement Plan. The bridge replacement plan is occurring in response to a recently released U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) study which projected increasing flood risks facing I5, the NRD, and surrounding communities due to climate-driven weather changes and sea level rise as well as poor bridge design which exacerbates flood impacts.

The NIT welcomes the potential for this highway redesign to reduce local flooding impacts, but planning has yet to include more comprehensive nature-based solutions sought by the NIT. The tribe's vision for nature-based solutions reflects decades of research and ongoing habitat restoration aimed at improving floodplain processes and ecosystem function within and upstream of the NRD. These investments can better mitigate the risks and impacts of climate driven flooding and improve habitat for fish and wildlife, including the salmonids essential to the cultural and economic health of the NIT. To solidify their vision for habitat restoration, the NIT needs a conceptual design with enough detail (permitting, construction, cost estimates, modelling, etc.) for it to be integrated into the Nisqually Bridge Replacement Plan. LLTK is also working with NIT to secure funding for later design phases.

Project Background

As a co-manager and steward of the NRD whose people have called the region home since time immemorial, the NIT is heavily invested in the health of the delta and the fisheries it maintains. The NIT has invested millions of dollars in NRD habitat restoration (including the 2009 restoration of more than 700 acres in the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge) as well as opening two salmon hatcheries further upstream on the Nisqually River.

The NRD exists within the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge (NWR), which spans 7,415 acres and serves to protect the NRD for the benefit of wildlife and people. Because of this, the NIT has partnered with the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge on restoration projects for 15+ years and will continue to do so throughout this project.

Unfortunately, increasing climate impacts are threatening the health of the NRD and the fisheries it supports. While flooding along the Nisqually River and within the NRD is a natural phenomenon (including a destructive 100-year flooding event in 1996 and 10-year flood event in 2020), USGS research sponsored by the NIT and Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) forecasts that these flooding events are growing in both intensity and frequency due to climate-driven weather changes and sea level rise. Further, the study concluded that I5 is exacerbating flood impacts by restricting flow where it crosses the delta via the Nisqually Bridge.

This is a significant threat to the vital salmon habitat prized by the tribe, with flooding events impacting salinity levels and sediment delivery in ways that reduce habitat function and harm salmon. It also threatens NWR infrastructure and the tribe's homes and infrastructure, including the Nisqually Indian Reservation, and important NIT landmarks such as the Wa He Lut Indian School and Frank's Landing (Figure 1). The USGS study also predicts an extreme flood event overtaking I5 by 2040, posing enormous risks to a vital piece of regional infrastructure. This portion of I5 facilitates 121,000+ vehicle trips occur each day and is the only high-capacity and high-speed road connecting Pierce and Thurston counties (WSDOT, 2022).

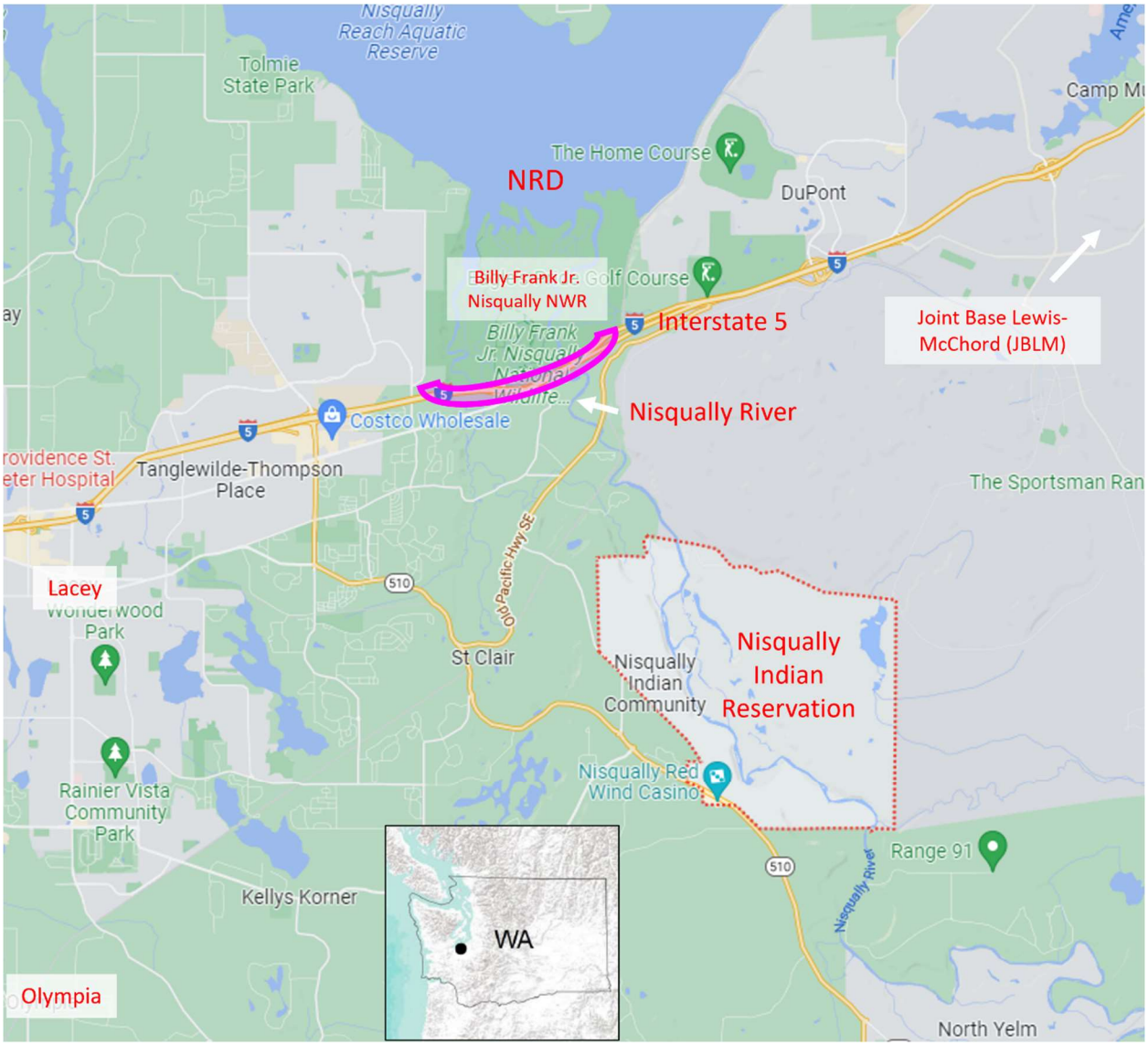

Figure 1: Location of the Nisqually River watershed in western Washington. The NRD is largely made up of the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge but also includes land owned by the NIT, Nisqually Land Trust, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and private residential and agricultural landowners. The pink polygon indicates the location of the Interstate 5 Nisqually River Bridge Redesign.

In response, WSDOT's has launched a Nisqually Bridge Replacement Plan process to protect the portion of I5 crossing the NRD from future flooding and SLR. WSDOT has finalized a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL, WSDOT 2023) and has a NEPA review scheduled to begin in Summer 2023. While the final PEL calls for solutions to "enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at the I-5 crossing of the Nisqually River Delta area," the preferred design alternative has yet to identify specific nature-based solutions to reduce flooding, increase climate resilience, and improve habitat. Based on the current preferred bridge alternative (Figure 2), which calls for not only a bridge replacement but also elevating 12,000 feet of roadway crossing the NRD, the project is estimated to cover a footprint of at least 300-400 acres. This will in turn benefit floodplain processes for the entire 7,400+ acre NRD.

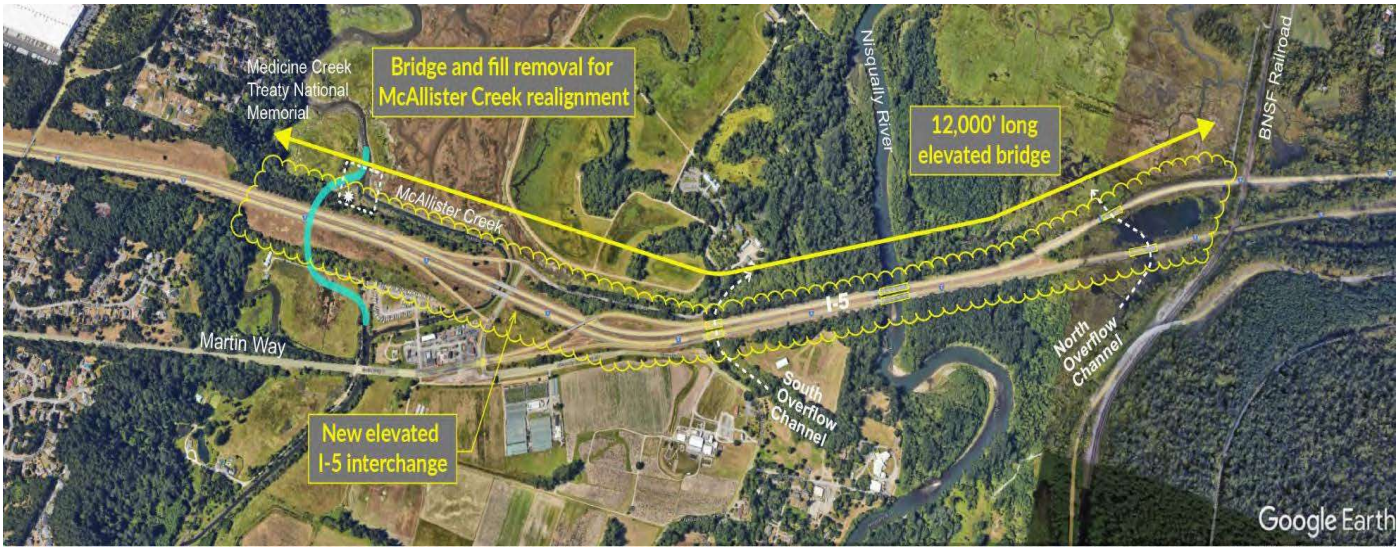

Figure 2: Option C Project Location Map within the Nisqually River Delta. The area encircled in yellow marks the preferred option location of the Interstate 5 Nisqually River Bridge Redesign.

This project will advance plans for habitat restoration within the NRD, using nature-based solutions to improve floodplain connectivity, sediment distribution, and ecological function. The constrained configuration of the Nisqually River mainstem, with flow likened to a "fire hose," does not allow for effective sediment delivery to the delta, limiting the development of adequate surge plane habitat. Potential solutions to be further detailed in the design include the use of woody debris within the river to reduce water speed and improve sediment delivery, the reconnection of historic creeks with the mainstem Nisqually River to improve water and sediment distribution, and the use of native plantings to create habitat for wildlife and reduce erosion. As highlighted in Figure 3, the scope of the restoration design should extend from the BNSF Railroad Trestle to the Nisqually Reach.

The nature-based solutions sought by the NIT present an opportunity to reduce future flooding impacts, increase climate resilience, and expand vital salmon habitat. By taking action now, the NIT has a once in a generation opportunity to ensure benefits from this planned bridge redesign flow back to the NIT and deliver a breadth of ecosystem and community resilience benefits which will serve the tribe for decades to come.

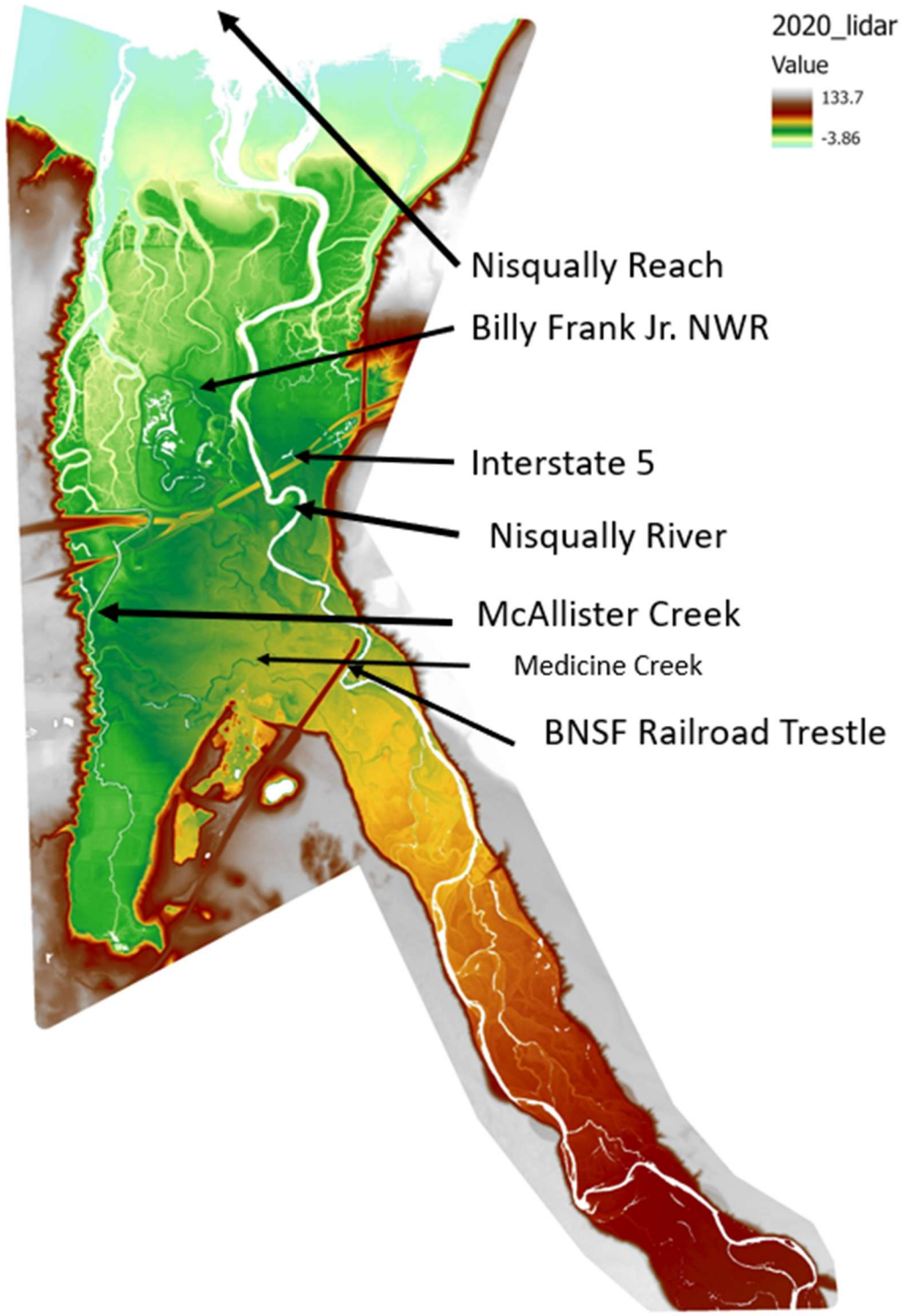

Figure 3: 2020 LiDAR map of the project area including labels of key landmarks. The scope of the restoration design is from the BNSF Railroad Trestle to the Nisqually Reach, including Medicine Creek, the small 'distributary' channel that historically connected the Nisqually River with McAllister Creek.

Supporting Documents

- I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Planning and Environmental Linkages Final Study (WSDOT 2023) - The study prioritizes enabling environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at the I-5 crossing of the NRD as well as restoring natural functions to improve the availability of and access to treaty resources. See Appendix A-8 for NIT MOU information. See Page 43-47 for proposed bridge options.

- Grossman, E.E., Crosby, S.C., Stevens, A.W., Nowacki, D.J., vanAredonk, N.R., and C.A. Curran. 2022. Assessment of vulnerabilities and opportunities to restore marsh sediment supply at Nisqually River Delta, west-central Washington: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2022–1088, 50p. https://doi.org/10.3133/ofr20221088.

- Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan (Nisqually River Council 2020): This plan priorities restoration efforts called for as part of this design to maximize habitat availability and reduce flood risks.

- Miller, I.M., Morgan, H., Mauger, G., Newton, T., Weldon, R., Schmidt, D., Welch, M., Grossman, E. 2018. Projected Sea Level Rise for Washington State – A 2018 Assessment. A collaboration of Washington Sea Grant, University of Washington Climate Impacts Group, University of Oregon, University of Washington, and US Geological Survey. Prepared for the Washington Coastal Resilience Project. Updated July 2019.

- 2020 LiDAR Study of the Nisqually River Basin funded by the NIT

- Extensive research related to fish and wildlife use, food web dynamics, habitat availability and function, and restoration planning and outcomes in the NRD (USFWS 2005, Ellings and Hodgson 2007, Ellings 2011, Woo et al. 2016, Davis et al. 2018, Woo et al. 2018)

- Hydrodynamic assessments, Indigenous or archeological resources assessments (available upon request)

Project Description

LLTK is seeking design and engineering services from a qualified firm to complete a conceptual design for NRD habitat restoration so that it can be included in the scheduled Nisqually Interstate 5 (I5) Bridge Replacement Plan taking place within the NRD. This design will be guided by NIT's vision with critical input from NWR staff and other members of the technical advisory group. Additionally, public input will be included throughout the design process.

Conceptual Design Objectives

1. Formalize NIT's vision for habitat restoration within the NRD by advancing designs that do the following:

    a. Promote long term environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency by improving floodplain connectivity, sediment delivery, and ecological function in the NRD.
    b. Proactively address flood risk facing the NRD and surrounding communities and infrastructure (NIT, NWR), including floods exacerbated by climate change and projected sea level rise.
    c. Maximize habitat availability and quality for NRD wildlife, including numerous ESA listed plant, bird, mammal marine mammal, and fish species.
    d. Ensure changes do not infringe on the treaty rights of the NIT, protect NWR Refuge infrastructure, and protect culturally significant landmarks like the Medicine Creek Treaty Tree
2. Complete preliminary review of permitting requirements and pathways.
3. Estimate the cost of fully implementing the project.
4. Ensure design flexibility and compatibility with I5 bridge replacement plans.
5. Complete all proposed work within LLTK's budget ($275,000).
6. Prioritize design that is reflective of community needs and delivers benefits to those most impacted by the health and resilience of the NRD.

Expected Tasks

The tasks below include items that we expect to be accomplished during the project period. The final scope of work will be mutually agreed upon.

1. **Project Management** (09/25/2023 – 04/31/2025): Manage internal resources, external meetings, any sub-contractors, and complete billings and reporting.
2. **Support First Round of Community Input** (10/01/2023 – 12/31/2023): Attend community engagement opportunities facilitated and organized by LLTK to secure input to help inform the draft initial design. Community engagement forums include the NIT Council, Nisqually River Council (NRC), Nisqually River Foundation, and Nisqually Salmon Habitat Work Group.
3. **Draft Initial Conceptual Design** (12/01/2023 - 5/31/2024): Create conceptual design alternative based on the technical needs of the project site, potential bridge re-design scenarios and timelines from WSDOT, and the input gathered from stakeholders and the public.
4. **Support Second Round of Community Input** (06/01/2024 - 08/31/2024): Attend community engagement opportunities facilitated and organized by LLTK to gather input from stakeholders engaged during Task 2 concerning the draft design alternative(s) (3-month review window).
5. **Complete Final Conceptual Design** (09/01/2024 - 12/31/2024): Considering community input, work with LLTK and NIT to select and define further design improvements. Conceptual design(s) should provide a sufficient level of detail to move forward with preliminary permitting and construction estimates.

6. **Support Communications and Outreach** (11/01/2024 - 04/31/2025) Attend community meetings to explain design features and process and assist LLTK with relevant images, diagrams, and renderings.
7. **Reporting** (01/01/2024 – 04/31/2025)**:** Produce a summary and responses to community input for task 2 and 4, deliver initial design package, deliver final design package, and produce a final report documenting the process, results (modeling, permitting assessment, etc.), cost estimates, and next steps.

Timeline

The period of performance is expected to be from 08/25/2023 – 04/31/2025.

Activity	**Start Date**	**End Date**
First Round of Community Input	10/01/2023	12/31/2023
Initial Conceptual Design	12/01/2023	05/31/2024
Second Round of Community Input	06/01/2024	08/31/2024
Complete Final Conceptual Design	09/01/2024	12/31/2024
Support Communication	11/01/2024	04/31/2025
Reporting	01/01/2024	04/31/2025

Submission and Selection

Schedule

Listed below are the important dates and times related to this solicitation. LLTK may find it necessary to change any of these dates or times. All dates are subject to change.

Action	**Estimate completion**
Advertise RFQ	08/28/23
SOQ Due Date	09/25/23
Evaluation Committee Meeting	09/27/23
Selection Announced	09/29/23

Evaluation

Representatives from LLTK, NIT, NWR, and potential other members of the technical advisory group will be included on the selection committee to review and evaluate the proposals (Statement of Qualifications, or SOQ) using the following criteria. LLTK, at its sole discretion, may contact the references and/or visit one or more of the projects listed in response to this solicitation as part of the evaluation process.

A shortlist of vendors may be interviewed for final ranking. If an interview is held, it will be less than one hour in length. The final evaluation will be made after interviews, if any. The presentation (if necessary) time and date will be assigned by LLTK.

Criteria

Evaluation of the criteria will be based on the information described above. The criteria below are not necessarily listed in order of importance. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criteria	**Maximum Points**
Proposed Project Approach	35
Experience and Qualifications of Firm, Sub-Firm(s)	35
Qualifications and Experience of Person(s) Assigned to the Project	10
Project Completion Schedule	10
Experience Meeting Federal, State, and Local Permit Requirements	10

Submittal Requirements

Qualified firms interested in providing Nisqually Estuary design services described in this request are invited to submit a proposal (SOQ) by 09/25/23. Minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to apply. Do not exceed 15 pages, excluding resumes. Place page numbers at the bottom of every page.

Submittals should address the criteria and include:

- **Cover Letter** – Summarize why LLTK should select your firm/team. Identify who will be the point of contact including their email address. Identify the Project Manager and in which office they are located.
- **Project Approach** – Provide your firm's unique and innovative approach to achieve the objectives outlined in this solicitation by proposing approaches based upon your firm's experience and recommendations for this specific project. Identify project opportunities and challenges and how you would recommend that challenges be addressed along with value added services your firm can provide. Identify any issues that LLTK might have omitted in its understanding of this project. Provide your firm's insight into the permitting process for this project.
- **Qualifications and Experience of Firm and Sub-Firms –** Describe and provide examples of how the firm and sub-firms qualifications and experience would lead to successful project outcomes. Specific examples regarding estuary restoration, habitat restoration nearby major roads, salmon restoration, and public engagement will be useful in evaluating the firm's qualifications. Experience working with the parties and locations relevant to this project may also be helpful.
- **Qualifications and Experience of Person(s) Assigned to the Project** – Identify key individuals involved on this project, their affiliation and office location. Provide a summary of their relevant experience and qualifications. Detailed resumes must be

submitted. The brief overview should identify the individual experience on similar projects and their availability to support this project.

- **Project Completion Schedule** – Using a table, Gantt chart, or similar tool provide a preliminary schedule activity that demonstrates the firm's ability to meet the timeline and objectives.
- **Experience Meeting Federal, State, and Local Permit Requirements** – Describe the firm's and key personal's history identifying and securing all necessary permits for similar projects. Highlight any unique permitting challenges for this project.

Contracting

LLTK intends to negotiate a contract with fair and reasonable compensation with the entity considered to be most qualified based on the above evaluation criteria.

All costs for preparation of the SOQ incurred by the proposer, regardless of whether they lead to execution of a contract with LLTK, must be borne entirely by the proposer.

Proposals and questions should be sent to Keith Estes, kestes@lltk.org.