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*Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District Request for Proposals*

Date: July 20, 2020

The Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District (UNWNRD) is accepting proposals on the following project:

Project: Development of a WFPO Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment for Box Butte Creek Watershed Improvement Project; Box Butte and Sheridan Counties, Nebraska

Proposal Deadline: August 17, 2020

Contact Person: Upper Niobrara White NRD  
Attn: Patrick O'Brien  
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Alternate Contact Lynn Webster  
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**Background:**

The Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District (UNWNRD) is a local government entity with responsibilities that focus on the management of natural resources in Box Butte, Dawes, Sheridan Counties and the northern two-thirds of Sioux county, all located in northwest Nebraska.

Box Butte Creek is typically an ephemeral creek with reaches of intermittent and perennial baseflows. However; with increasing frequency – four major flooding events with watershed wide impacts in the last 10 years, including both 2018 and 2019, and several other events with isolated damages, intense rainfall events have resulted in substantial flooding along Box Butte Creek and its tributaries. These flooding events have caused crop damages, loss of land productivity, excessive bank and top soil erosion, loss of agricultural land, damage to private property and farmsteads, degradation to water quality, and extensive damage to local and county roads that are critical to producers and the local and regional economy.

The headwaters of Box Butte Creek originate in north-central Box Butte County and the creek proceeds easterly to the confluence with the Niobrara River in west-central Sheridan County. The watershed and planning area cover a total of 143,900 acres. Maps of the watershed and location within the UNWNRD are attached to this request. There are no communities within the planning area.

As well, the UNWNRD has been divided up into six groundwater management subareas. Within the district groundwater levels fluctuate due to pumping, precipitation and recharge. As a result of groundwater declines, the expansion of irrigated acres has been curtailed in three of the management subareas and allocations have been enacted on high capacity irrigation wells in two management subareas. The UNWNRD short term goal is to minimize groundwater depletion with the long-term goal of a sustained aquifer. A portion of the UNWNRD has been declared fully appropriated by the Department of Natural Resources and the required Integrated Management Plan has been developed and approved. A vast majority of the Box Butte Creek Watershed lies in groundwater management subarea 4, where allocations have been put in place to reduce the rate of groundwater decline.

### **Project Objective:**

The UNWNRD is seeking an engineering firm to develop an approved Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Box Butte Creek Watershed. The purpose of this Watershed Planning Effort is to address issues related to flood prevention, watershed protection and enhancing recharge to abate groundwater declines. The project's goal is to establish a recommended plan through an assessment of alternatives supported by public engagement and sponsor participation that follows the NEPA process.

This effort will result in an approved PL-566 Plan-EA that will guide the Sponsor on where to most effectively locate structural and non-structural projects to achieve flood prevention, watershed protection, and groundwater recharge goals for the watershed. Projects may include but are not limited to, small or large dams, multi-use facilities for recharge basins or retiming of flows, watershed BMPs, retention basins and levees. The plan will be created based upon NRCS's Title 390 National Watershed Program Manual.

### **Scope of Work**

The primary components of the plan will include the following tasks.

#### **Task 1: Identify Problems, Opportunities and Concerns**

This task will involve development of the Plan of Work and a public participation plan along with agency scoping meetings and two open house meetings to obtain public feedback on water resource concerns to be addressed in the plan.

#### **Task 2: Determine Objectives**

This task includes writing the purpose and need statement and establishing a plan outline. Includes correspondence and review with NRCS State Office staff. Ensuring the path forward is complete and compliant with Title 130 National Watershed Program Manual requirements.

#### **Task 3: Inventory Resources**

Includes data gathering, watershed site tour, formulation of feasible alternatives, economic and social assessment, cultural resource assessment, and geologic and engineering assessment. Preparing and sending letters/notifications to agencies and the public.

#### **Task 4: Analyze Resource Data**

This task includes an analysis of all collected resources through statistics, maps, hydrogeology, understanding of UNWNRD's Integrated Management Plan (IMP) goals and other similar water management objectives. Information will be used to support establishment of a list of initial alternatives.

#### **Task 5: Formulate Alternatives**

A list of initial alternatives, including no action, will be established and discussed with UNWNRD and other key stakeholders. Establishment (or updating existing) hydrology and hydraulics model and use of LiDAR to guide design.

### **Task 6: Evaluate Alternatives**

This task includes an alternatives assessment using an alternative screening assessment such as an evaluation matrix. A list of evaluation criteria will be used such as technical feasibility, social acceptance, financial, etc. to evaluate and score alternatives. Includes site selection, planning level design of preferred alternatives and initial benefit-cost assessment (BCA).

### **Task 7: Plan Development/Make Decisions**

Includes drafting the plan document and completing all reviews with the Nebraska State NRCS Office and other resource agencies participating in the NEPA process. Includes approximately 30% design of the preferred alternatives, cost estimating, summary of permitting needs, data gaps and completion of the BCA. Includes compiling and addressing all responses and input. Completing the final plan and working through the review process with the National Water Management Center. Printing and delivering appropriate hard and electronic copies after successful National Programmatic Review.

### **Submission Requirements:**

The following shall be included in the submission (Not to exceed 25 single sided pages):

- Cover letter,
- Relevant project experience and qualifications of the firm(s) and individuals involved in this project,
- List of similar completed projects,
- Project understanding and proposed approach,
- Proposed project schedule,
- At least two project references relating to relevant experience provided in submission,
- Statement of availability and ability to complete the proposed work,
- Outside consultants and/or associates that maybe involved,
- Conflict of interest statement addressing if any potential real or perceived conflict of interest exists between this project and other past or ongoing projects,
- Total cost of the project and breakdown of cost by task listed in the scope of work,
- Description of Insurance,
- Any other relevant experience.

### **Selection:**

Proposals will be reviewed, and the award made to the proposal that conforms to the minimum specifications outlined in this solicitation and provides the most value to the UNWNRD. The UNWNRD will interview the top candidates. The UNWNRD reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

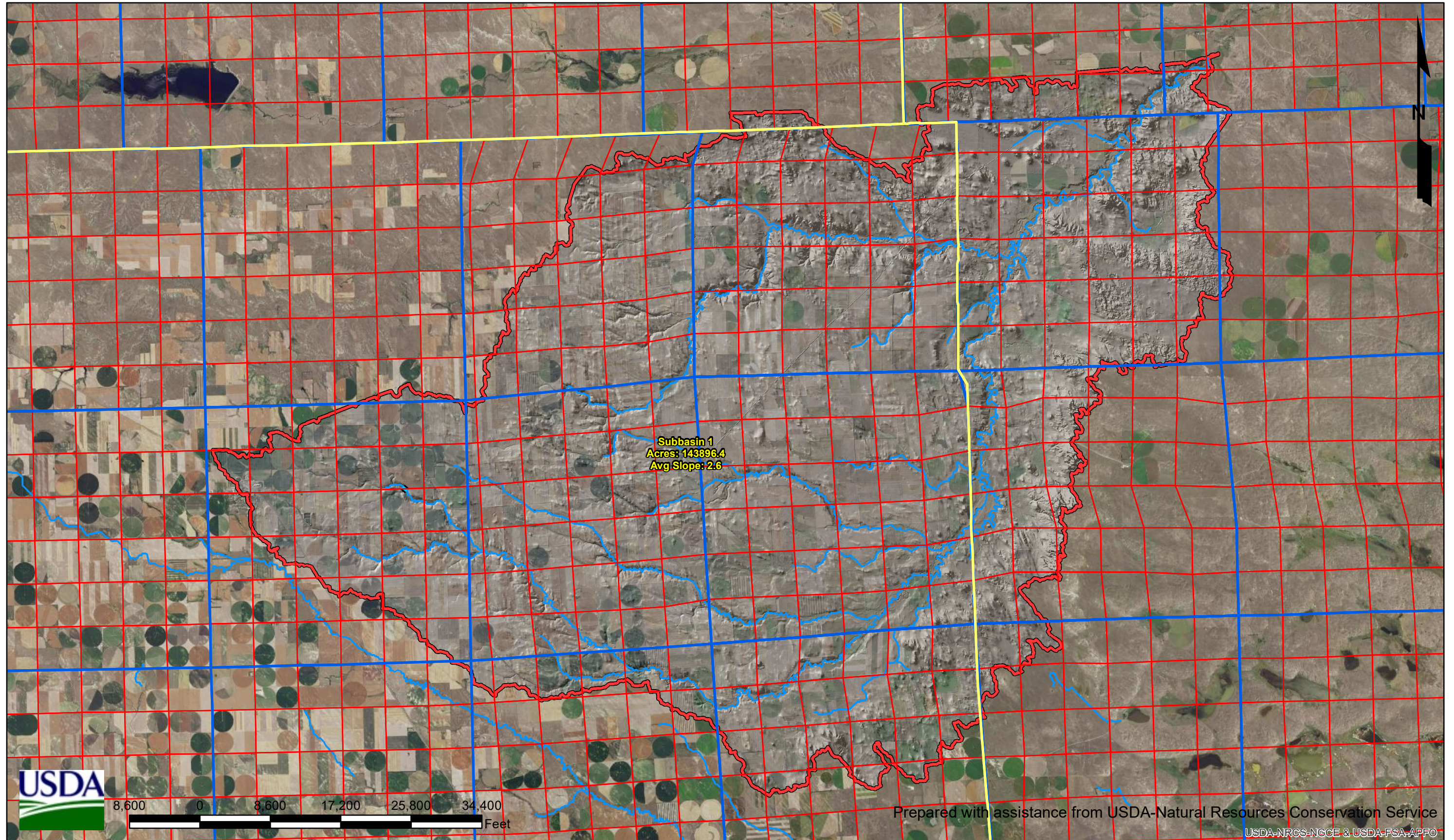
Questions regarding the information contained in this RFP must be submitted in writing (email is acceptable) by August 7, 2020 to Patrick O'Brien at [obrien@unwnrd.org](mailto:obrien@unwnrd.org).

An electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted in PDF format to Patrick O'Brien at [obrien@unwnrd.org](mailto:obrien@unwnrd.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time on Monday August 17, 2020. Proposals exceeding typical email size restrictions must provide an ftp link to obtain proposal. Two hard copy proposals postmarked no later than August 17, 2020 must also be mailed to UNWNRD. Late proposals will not be eligible for consideration.



# BOX BUTTE CREEK WATERSHED BOX BUTTE, SHERIDAN, AND DAWES COUNTIES

Agency: USDA - NRCS





# BOX BUTTE CREEK WATERSHED, NEBRASKA

