



Request for Proposals (RFP) – Marbled Murrelet Impact Study

Project Name: Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy
Economic Impact Study

Company Name: Washington State Association of Counties

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1. Background/Introduction

Created in 1906, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) is a voluntary, non-profit association serving all of Washington's 39 counties. WSAC members include elected county commissioners, council members and executives.

The Association provides a variety of services to its member counties including advocacy, training, workshops and a forum to network and share best practices. The Association also serves as an umbrella for affiliate organizations representing county road engineers, local public health officials, county administrators, emergency managers, county human service administrators, solid waste managers, clerks of county boards and others.

WSAC and several member counties work closely with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on issues regarding the management of State forestlands¹. Most State forestlands were originally privately-owned forestlands forfeited to counties in the 1920s and 1930s due to unpaid property taxes. These lands were subsequently turned over to the state and today DNR manages State forestlands in trust for the benefit of county taxing jurisdictions where the lands are located. Almost all State forestlands are in western Washington.

Counties also have a significant interest in overall timber harvest on all DNR-managed forestlands, not just State forestlands. In 1971, the Legislature replaced the annual property tax on timber with an excise tax based on the value of the timber at the time of harvest. The 5 percent timber excise tax is collected by the Department of Revenue for timber harvested from all public and private lands and is composed of a 4 percent county tax and a 1 percent state tax. The county portion is distributed to the county where the timber was harvested.

DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are in the process of amending DNR's 1997 State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) by replacing the marbled

¹ RCW 79.02.010

murrelet interim conservation strategy described in the HCP with a long-term conservation strategy (LTCS). An HCP is a voluntary plan which leads to the issuance of an incidental take permit. An incidental take permit is required when otherwise legal activities conducted as part of normal business practices on non-federal lands, such as timber harvests, have the potential to result in incidental take of a threatened or endangered species. The marbled murrelet, a small seabird that nests in mature forests within 55 miles of marine waters, is listed as a federally “threatened” species in Washington State.

According to the DNR and USFWS, approximately 14% of estimated marbled murrelet habitat in Washington State occurs on DNR-managed lands. The proposed HCP amendment includes several thousand acres of habitat set asides on State forestlands that will be encumbered in various ways, including prohibiting all future timber harvest and therefore reduced revenue to the county trust beneficiaries.

DNR has conducted analysis on the impacts associated with implementation of the proposed HCP amendment (see Losses and Gains Report and Taxing District Analysis²). Specifically, the analysis determined whether the number of operable acres (defined as those acres which represent long-term revenue generation potential and determined through a weighted average volume analysis³) within a jurisdiction will increase, decrease or remain the same.

2. Project Goals and Scope of Services

This project involves performing a study of the economic impacts in counties resulting from the proposed amendment to the HCP, including any changes in expected revenues to various county taxing districts at a minimum of 10-year intervals presented in future dollars and net present value. Using existing data, it will include valuing timber harvest losses and gains on a variety of landscapes considering elevation, soil productivity, precipitation, marketable tree species, stand ages, and all other relevant factors. This value should describe changes both in dollars, board foot volume (MBF), and operable acres by county and junior taxing district. The project will also include understanding, considering, and valuing timber market conditions and trends, both current and future as well as the values associated with other markets related to timber lands. These include recreation and tourism and ecosystem services that such lands provide.

The expected deliverable at the end of the project is a written report, including all appendices (which must include a written summary of all assumptions used in the analysis and all data utilized and organized into relevant table formats). The report must be delivered in a variety of ways, including a minimum of 20 hard copies and a copy of the entire document in electronic format as well as no less than four in-person, two-hour presentations on the findings. At least two of the presentations are likely to take place in or near Olympia, while two may occur elsewhere in western Washington.

The marbled murrelet long-term conservation strategy economic impact study aims to provide a greater understanding for county leaders, local service providers, state

² Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). 2019. Long-Term Conservation Strategy for the Marbled Murrelet Final Environmental Impact Statement September 2019. Available at:

https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_sepa_nonpro_mmltcs_feis_entire.pdf?zv2cfv

³ https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_sepa_nonpro_mmltcs_app_r.pdf

agencies, and other stakeholders as to the potential and likely financial implications upon local communities and county services resulting from the implementation of the proposed HCP amendment. Such an analysis should consider both the impacts related to the proposed amendment as compared to Alternative A (the no action alternative), as well as the proposed amendment as compared to forest practices for marbled murrelets (take avoidance). It will also be used to inform the members of the “Solutions Table” and the ongoing process currently being undertaken by that group as required by Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2285, Chapter 255, Laws of 2018.

There are three major outcome goals for the project:

A. Measure the economic impact of the proposed amendment, including all DNR-managed trust lands, on various taxing districts within counties (general fund, road fund, schools, fire, libraries, hospital, etc.) in terms of all direct revenue gains/losses over time, including those resulting from new/ongoing encumbrances on State forestlands;

B. Measure the direct, indirect and induced economic impacts to counties from the proposed amendment, including all DNR-managed trust lands. Include impacts on the local timber industry in terms of job gains/losses over time and overall financial gains/losses over time, as well as other related industry impacts. Also include any measurable non-timber industry related impacts including, but not limited to, recreation and tourism, open space, waterway and wetland protections and ecosystem services;

C. Develop a tool (financial model) that will allow future proposals to be measured in a consistent and predictable manner and on the same terms as defined in goals 1 and 2. Future proposals will include any acres of DNR-managed trust lands beyond those in the proposed HCP amendment. The preferred, but not required, software platform for development of the financial model is Microsoft Excel.

The selected firm will work collaboratively with a stakeholder committee which will oversee and assist in designing and directing the project, including developing the project scope of work and schedule. The detailed project scope of work will be finalized by WSAC after the stakeholder committee and the selected firm have an opportunity to consider the project goals, the contractor’s proposal for meeting the goals and any reasonable limitations that may exist or assumptions that must be made. The stakeholder committee may include elected county officials, WSAC staff, representatives of other taxing districts (schools, fire, hospitals, etc.), the DNR, tribal, industry and conservation interests. The selected firm will meet with the committee at regular intervals as necessary to provide direction and oversight and to receive information. The final scope of work and schedule will be negotiated between WSAC and the selected firm.

The consultant may outline other items deemed necessary to successfully complete the project.

3. Pre-Proposal Meeting and Questions

A pre-proposal webinar meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 13th at 2:00 PM. To facilitate a timely response to questions at the pre-proposal meeting, prospective contractors are requested to submit any questions in writing no later than

Tuesday, November 5th. All questions and requests for an invitation to the webinar may be submitted to the following email address:

pjewell@wsac.org

Subject Line: MM Economic Impact Study Pre-Proposal Meeting

4. Anticipated Selection Schedule

A diverse stakeholder committee will be formed to oversee and direct the project, including the contractor selection process.

Within 45 days of the submittal deadline, the stakeholder committee will review the proposals and schedule one-hour, in-person interviews with each qualified responding firm. After the initial interviews, the stakeholder committee may recommend selection of a firm or may schedule subsequent interviews.

Final selection is anticipated no later than December 31, 2019.

5. Time and Place of Submission of Proposals

All submissions related to this RFP must be submitted by Friday, November 22, 2019 at 2:00 PM.

Submissions must be sent via email in .pdf format to the following email address:

pjewell@wsac.org

Subject Line: MM Economic Impact Study Submittal

All submissions must be received no later than the date and time listed above in this section in order to be considered responsive.

6. Timeline

The anticipated completion date for this project is September 30, 2020 or sooner. However, we are open to negotiation for the right candidate firm. WSAC and the selected firm will agree to a schedule prior to commencement of the work.

7. Elements of Proposal

All submissions must meet the requirements of this section to be considered. The response to this RFP must be complete. Partial or incomplete responses will not be considered. Responses should be concise, clear and relevant. Submittals must be on standard letter size paper and pages must be numbered.

A submission must, at a minimum, include the following elements in the following order:

A. A letter of interest summarizing the proposer's relevant qualifications and experience, or similar experience, in conducting economic impact analyses related to the timber industry, government revenues, and ecosystem services.

B. A detailed description of the proposer's relevant experience and qualifications or similar experience and qualifications. Provide a narrative of projects (including project size and complexity) that demonstrate the proposer's experience in analyzing

economic impacts related to the timber industry, government revenues and ecosystem services as well as the ability to design tools/models that are easily utilized to measure economic impacts from related proposals.

C. Resumes of key personnel.

D. Describe the research methodology and model to be used and anticipated deliverables.

E. Describe the type of model you propose to measure the direct, indirect and induced economic impact gains/losses from the marbled murrelet LTCS preferred alternative and the data sources to be included.

F. Explain why this model provides the most accurate and reliable estimates of economic impact.

G. Provide details on how you will include input and data from the stakeholder committee, including any needs or expectations. The DNR is a stakeholder and participant in this project. Any data needs that can be provided specifically by the DNR should also be included.

H. Provide any other information you believe is relevant to this project.

I. Provide information on any outstanding characteristics or qualifications that highlight your abilities.

J. Provide a sample list of at least three (3) projects that demonstrate your experience producing the economic studies, analysis and tools as described in Section 2 of this RFP. Include a detailed outline of each project as Attachment A. Attachment A must be submitted with a proposal to be further considered. A detailed outline of the following information shall be provided:

1. Description of the project scope.
2. Contacts/reference for the project, including name, organization, address, phone number and email address.
3. Provide a statement of the project's relevance to goals and scope of services being requested in this RFP.

K. Additional information and backup detail should be included as appropriate with your proposal.

L. Proposed schedule for project completion.

M. Detailed fee proposal to include specific line items and the related cost.

A table of contents with corresponding tabs should be included to identify each section. WSAC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and/or to waive technicalities and informalities at the sole discretion of WSAC.

8. Evaluation Criteria

The successful firm will (in no particular order):

- Have been operating continuously as an economics or related consulting agency for a minimum of 36 months;
- Possess the education, experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications necessary to complete the project goals;
- Demonstrate expertise and experience in the timber industry;
- Demonstrate expertise and experience in assessing the market value of timber based on relevant factors including environmental and market conditions;
- Demonstrate expertise and experience in assessing the value of ecosystem services as they relate to local communities;
- Possess the ability to work productively with a diverse group of stakeholders;
- Provide a competitive cost of services.

9. Miscellaneous

This RFP is not in itself an offer of work, it does not commit WSAC to fund any proposals submitted, nor is WSAC liable for any costs incurred in preparation or research of proposals. Submittal of a proposal does not constitute a contract with WSAC. The contract award will not be final until WSAC and the successful proposer have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. WSAC reserves the right to offer an award to the next highest rated proposal if a contract cannot be successfully negotiated, or to renegotiate or reissue an RFP.

Responders to the RFP will be notified via email upon successful selection of a proposal. Any concerns or appeals of the decision must be made in writing within 7 days of notification of selection to the procurement contact person.

10. Budget

The anticipated budget for this project is not to exceed \$100,000.00 (one-hundred thousand dollars and no cents).