

Request for Qualifications
Development of an Observational Monitoring Plan for Channel Maintenance Flows

Objective

The Upper Colorado River Wild & Scenic Stakeholder Group (SG) intends to develop an observational monitoring plan to better understand the effects that peak flows have on channel maintenance processes in Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Segments 4 through 6 of the Colorado River.¹

The SG is seeking responses to this Request for Qualifications from consultants with experience in developing river channel monitoring plans involving multiple stakeholders.

Background

The Amended and Restated Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Group Management Plan (SG Plan) was adopted by the SG and approved by the BLM and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in June 2020 to protect the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) identified for the Colorado River from its confluence with the Blue River to near Glenwood Springs, Colorado. The Plan is being implemented as a Wild and Scenic management alternative by the SG, which includes a broad range of interests, including east slope and west slope water users, land owners, local governments, state interests, float-boating interests, and conservation/environment/fishing interests. The SG's intention is to balance permanent protection of the ORVs described in the SG's Plan, certainty for the stakeholders, water project yield, and flexibility for water users.

The SG recognizes that channel maintenance flows (CMF) are important for maintaining healthy aquatic and riparian ecosystems that, in turn, support a healthy recreational fishery and fishing experience. The SG is committed to developing a better understanding of the effects that peak flows have on channel maintenance functions and processes throughout the life of the SG Plan.

The SG has committed to develop an observational monitoring plan to better understand the effects that peak flows have on channel maintenance processes in BLM Segments 4 through 6 of the Colorado River (See pages 25-26 of the SG Plan). This CMF monitoring plan, when completed, will be included in the SG's Long-Term Monitoring Plan (Appendix C of the SG Plan), and will be implemented as soon as practical.

Development and implementation of the CMF monitoring plan will be subject to the availability of funds on an annual basis.

¹ BLM Segment 4 begins at the Blue River confluence and Segment 6 terminates at Dotsero Landing, immediately upstream of the Eagle River confluence.

Study Area

CMF monitoring activities will focus on BLM Segments 4 through 6 of the Colorado River, beginning at the Blue River confluence above Gore Canyon and extending to Dotsero Landing, immediately above the Eagle River confluence.

Purpose & Goal

The SG has agreed that the purpose of the CMF monitoring plan is not to identify a target flow, or range of flows for CMF, but will monitor the effects that a given year's peak flows have on accomplishing general channel maintenance functions of mobilizing and transporting bedload substrate and channel maintenance processes of:

1. Maintaining amount and diversity of aquatic habitat.
2. Maintaining active channel geometry.
3. The creation and maintenance of non-vegetated sand and gravel features.
4. Preventing growth of new rooted vegetation and/or scouring rooted plants from active channel.

Once a consultant is selected, the following elements, at a minimum, should be considered in the CMF observational monitoring plan:

- Monitoring methods, protocols and types of data recommended to assess channel maintenance functions and processes.
- Number of sites and potential locations associated with each method.
- Monitoring frequency associated with each method.
- Cost estimates for a variety of options for elements 1 through 3.

Observational Monitoring:

Observational monitoring will provide data on observed physical conditions of the river channel, and does not involve model-based approaches or extensive multi-year research project levels of effort (such as determining a sediment budget throughout the system). As stated above, the monitoring plan is not intended to identify a target flow or range of desirable flows for CMF. Observational monitoring, as discussed by the SG, refers to the observation and documentation of on-the-ground conditions in select locations pertaining to the functions and processes listed above. These documented observations can be correlated with a given year's peak flows and this will inform, over time, a better understanding of the effect on channel maintenance functions and processes in Segments 4 through 6.

The monitoring plan should address the protocols for collection of observational data for these on-the-ground conditions in a systematic and cost-effective manner, potentially including but not limited to: (e.g. photography, visual assessments of vegetation or topography, observations of substrate conditions and aquatic habitat, lidar, etc.), the number of sites and their potential locations, and the frequency of such monitoring, with a range of options.

Additional Considerations

Several botanical species/communities in Segment 6 are ranked by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program as globally vulnerable. How these species and communities are directly connected to river flows is not well understood. Because the SG has not established an ORV Indicator for the Botanical ORV, BLM has requested the SG to consider the relationship of CMF to the Botanical ORV. Consequently, the SG will coordinate with BLM and other entities to periodically monitor specific plant species and communities identified within Segment 6 in conjunction with the CMF monitoring plan.

Requirements for the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)

The SOQ should be no longer than 5 pages (single spaced), not including project team resumes and rate sheets. The SOQ must include:

1. Company information including location, description of services (1 paragraph), years in business, and principal employees.
2. Personnel that will complete the CMF monitoring plan, their specific expertise, and their roles.
3. General description of project approach (up to 5 paragraphs).
4. Team experience including up to three projects with similar investigations or work products.
5. Up to 3 references, include email and phone numbers.
6. Insurance coverage.
7. Resumes of project personnel.
8. Rate sheet for project personnel and direct costs.

Deliverables and Schedule

Publish RFQ	10/2/2020
Submittal of SOQ.	10/23/2020
Develop details of Scope of Work	Sept-Oct
WG review of submittals/selection of consultant.	11/6/2020
Complete preliminary Scope of Work for Monitoring Plan design	11/13/2020
SG approval of recommended consultant and Scope of Work	12/4/2020
Completion of contract documents (confirm w/NWCCOG)	12/11/2020
<Scope of Work will specify milestones & dates to include here>	TBD
Submittal of draft CMF monitoring plan (Deliverable)	03/1/2021
Meeting to discuss CMF draft monitoring plan (SG and consultant)	TBD
Respond to SG comments of draft monitoring plan (Deliverable)	TBD
SG approval of CMF monitoring plan.	March 2021 SG meeting
Submittal of final CMF Monitoring Plan (Deliverable).	No later than 06/07/2021

Terms

The SOQ will be evaluated based on a combination of the strength of project team experience and applicability of the proposers' relevant projects to the SG's CMF monitoring goals. The SG will determine whether to move forward with any proposal, and contracting will be subject to available funding. The SG has approved \$20,000 for the preparation of a CMF monitoring plan in 2020/2021.

How to submit responses

Electronic format to info@upcowildandscenic.com: info@upcowildandscenic.com.

Existing Data Collection Efforts

The final SG Plan includes long-term collection of fish biosurvey data and macroinvertebrates data. In addition, the SG has conducted studies and collected recreational fishing and floatboating data since 2010 and produces annual monitoring reports summarizing results and data.² This information includes cross-sectional surveys, macroinvertebrate data, substrate assessments, and fish surveys.

² Annual reports are available for download at <https://www.upcowildandscenic.com/documents--links.html>