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TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



Spot-tailed Earless Lizards (*Holbrookia lacerata* and *Holbrookia subcaudalis*) and Co-occurring Species Detection

Anticipated Schedule of Events	Date
Call for Proposals Issued	November 19, 2020
Proposals Due	January 19, 2021
Contract Execution	February 2021
Commencement of Work	March 2021

**E-mail proposal to nat.res.research@cpa.texas.gov
by 5:00 p.m. on January 19, 2021.**

The selected Respondent will enter into an interagency contract (“Contract”) with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) pursuant to Chapters 403 and 771 of the Texas Government Code. The Contract is for services; it is not a grant and should not be processed as such. The Contract between CPA and selected Respondent will require itemized expenses accompanied by appropriate documentation, which will be reviewed in detail by CPA before payment. Expenses must be justifiable, reasonable and necessary, and directly relate to the research objectives. Potential respondents should consider the reimbursement requirement burden before submitting a proposal.

PART 1 Scope of Work

1.1 Species of Interest:

- Plateau spot-tailed earless lizard (*Holbrookia lacerata*)
- Tamaulipan spot-tailed earless lizard (*Holbrookia subcaudalis*) *

*formerly separate subspecies of the spot-tailed earless lizard (*Holbrookia lacerata*)

1.2 Geographic Area

- Historical range of the species of interest in Texas

1.3 Project Timeline:

- 24 months

1.4 Maximum Budget:

- \$350,000

1.5 Research Goals:

The purpose of this project is to inform the development of best practices to efficiently and effectively survey for the plateau spot-tailed earless lizard (*Holbrookia lacerata*) and Tamaulipan spot-tailed earless lizard (*Holbrookia subcaudalis*). This research will contribute information to fill knowledge gaps in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) Species Status Assessment (SSA) for spot-tailed earless lizards and any voluntary conservation actions.

1.6 Research Objectives:

This research will assess the efficacy and efficiency of multiple survey techniques to determine occupancy of the species of interest. The research will (1) conduct a pilot study of various survey techniques to determine occupancy of the species of interest, (2) collect and analyze co-occurring species and habitat data, and (3) collaborate with potential end-users to develop standard survey protocols to support long-term conservation of the species of interest and their habitats.

Suggested tasks to meet the objectives include:

1. Conduct a pilot study to evaluate the efficacy of various survey techniques to accurately detect the species of interest at sites representative of the historic species range in Texas.
 - A. Conduct surveys for the species of interest using various methods (*e.g.* pitfall traps, visual encounter surveys, detection dogs, cameras, etc.). Survey sites include areas where the species of interest is currently known to occur.
 - B. Provide statistical and practical comparison of efficacy of various survey techniques to accurately characterize site occupancy. Discuss potential biases and sources of error for each method.

- C. Review available literature on the species of interest to characterize baseline detection probability and occupancy where feasible. Compare the efficacy of the various survey techniques to baseline survey data.
2. Collect and evaluate co-occurring species and environmental data at survey sites to inform community and habitat associations of the species of interest.
 - A. Record co-occurring species encountered during species of interest surveys. Co-occurring species may include other herpetofauna as well as other wildlife taxa and vegetation.
 - B. Record habitat characteristics and environmental variables.
 - C. Evaluate community and habitat associations of the species of interest. Include observed behaviors such as interspecific or non-trophic interaction (*e.g.* thermoregulation).
3. Collaborate with potential end-users to develop standard survey protocols to support long-term conservation of species of interest.
 - A. Recommend efficient and effective survey methodologies to determine site occupancy of species of interest. Coordinate with potential end-users to incorporate practical considerations such as field conditions (including habitat and weather), cost, equipment, etc. Potential end-users include state and federal agencies, consultants, private landowners, and more.
 - B. Consult with Comptroller, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD), FWS, and other stakeholders to develop a coordination and outreach plan. Plan will include project deliverables, public meetings, interim reports, interactive website, Texas Natural Diversity Database submissions, etc.

PART 2
PROPOSAL FORMAT

2.1 Respondent Identifying Information

University Information	
University Name:	
Address:	
Tax ID Number:	

Identify all program and subcontractor personnel in the proposed research project. Subcontractors may include but are not limited to universities, state or federal agencies and private entities.

Provide the following summaries for principal investigators and key personnel, including subcontractors:

1. curriculum vitae;
2. list of accessible publications most closely related to the proposed research project; and
3. description of each person’s knowledge of and experience with:
 - A. the ESA, recovery plans, and five-year reviews;
 - B. conducting research on the species of interest.
 - C. their particular task on the project

Limit to 5 pages or less per person.

2.2 Project Description

Organize proposed project description by section, as shown below. Page limits for each section are maximum numbers, not suggested numbers.

Project Summary: Limit one page. Provide a summary/abstract of the proposed project. Include hypothesis, design, and impact of research.

Background Information: Limit 5 pages. Provide a summary of existing scientific literature and data regarding the species of interest throughout its entire historic range. Detail how information from this study would fill knowledge gaps for the species.

Questions/Hypotheses: Limit 2 pages. List hypotheses and specific research questions the project would answer.

Research Tasks and Methods: No page limit. Describe how each Research Objective would be addressed, including the following information:

1. Methods to address each objective, including survey methods, locations and format of data sets. Explain deviations from suggested tasks in Section 1.6;
2. Assumptions made in the proposed design;
3. Description of access to or plan to obtain permission to access privately owned property where necessary to perform research, including a contingency plan if the desired access cannot be obtained;
4. Description of expected challenges to the research and appropriate solutions to each challenge (including potential impacts and adaptations to SARS-CoV-2); and
5. Description of plan to disseminate publicly accessible data.

2.3 Project Management

The proposed project timeline is 24 months.

Respondent must provide a schedule of work for each of the research tasks and deliverables described in this section using a format similar to the table below.

	Year 1 Contract execution – Aug. 31, 2021			Year 2 Sept. 1, 2021 - Aug. 31, 2022				Year 3 Sept. 1, 2022 - Contract expiration
Task	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1

A Year begins Sept 1 and ends the following August 31. Quarters are as follows:

- Q1: Sept 1 – Nov 30
- Q2: Dec 1 – Feb 29
- Q3: Mar 1 – May 31
- Q4: June 1 – Aug 31

The proposed schedule should address the following:

1. submission of detailed Research Plan to Comptroller for review prior to commencement of work;
2. procurement of permissions necessary to access sites, and plan to allow scheduled and coordinated observation by stakeholders;
3. specific milestones for research tasks and project deliverables (*e.g.*, X number of sites sampled for species Y, data submitted to Comptroller);
4. meeting with Comptroller (in person or via conference call) prior to the commencement of work;
5. quarterly status updates with Comptroller and external experts (in person or via conference call);
6. annual public stakeholder meetings or webinars to present/discuss the research;
7. submission of annual and final reports and data sets; and
8. meeting with Comptroller and interested stakeholders following the completion of the Final Report to discuss findings and conclusions.

2.4 Budget, Justification and Explanation

Attachment A details the budget section of the proposal. The budget should demonstrate an efficient use of project funds. Costs, including personnel and subcontractors, must be justifiable, reasonable and necessary, and directly relate to the research objectives.

In the event Respondent is funded for other research projects related to the species of interest, Respondent must identify the funding source and percentage of salary, time, and other resources dedicated to the other project. Respondent must describe plans for leveraging the proposed funding such as collaborating with other researchers, institutions, and agencies to avoid duplication of effort and ensure funds are used efficiently.

ATTACHMENT A

Budget

The maximum budget allocated for this project is \$350,000, with the understanding that this amount is contingent upon the availability of legislated funds provided to the Comptroller for endangered species research.

Enter budget costs in the Excel spreadsheet attached to the Call for Proposals email (CPA-NR Project-Budget-By-Year). Green cells are fillable. In Attachment A to the proposal, include narratives for each Direct Cost category as noted below.

Contractual: Costs for services under contract with third parties. Proposals which subcontract a significant amount of work must include a detailed justification of why the work cannot be done in-house.

1. Excel "Contractual" tab: list each subcontractor name, contact information and cost per contract year.
2. Proposal narrative: Describe subcontractor work and include any clarifying comments.

Personnel: All individuals receiving pay for work on project from project budget. Budgeted amounts should be based on and clearly describe the amount of effort each individual contributes to the project.

1. Excel "Personnel" tab: list names (if known), roles, compensation rates (including benefits and tuition), months dedicated to project per year, and cost per contract year.
2. Proposal narrative: include clarifying comments on personnel roles and justify any tuition requested.
 - A. CPA will consider tuition reimbursement if a student's thesis or dissertation research directly addresses project goals and the student works at least 20 hours/week on the project during the semester for which reimbursement is sought.

Travel: Lodging, transportation, and meal reimbursement in accordance with State of Texas travel guidelines. Meals are reimbursed for actual expenses. The Comptroller does not pay a per diem amount and will not reimburse for tips or alcohol.

1. Excel "Travel" tab: list trip type and annual costs per trip type.
2. Proposal narrative: justification for any conferences and other clarifying comments.

Supplies: Routine costs for items needing replenishment throughout project.

1. Excel "Supplies" tab: list supply type and cost per contract year.
2. Proposal narrative: include any clarifying comments.

Equipment: Capital expenses for equipment costing over \$1,000 per item.

1. Excel "Equipment" tab: include name of item, make and model, and cost per contract year.
2. Proposal narrative: include item purpose, direct benefit to the project and other clarifying comments.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs must be capped at ten percent (10%) of Direct Costs. A proposal will be disqualified if indirect costs are not capped at ten percent (10%). The Comptroller does not reimburse for indirect costs calculated on subcontractor-billed indirect costs.

Note: Expenses generally not eligible for reimbursement by the Comptroller are computers, software, vehicles, vehicle maintenance or repairs, journal publications, laundry services, registration or cancellation fees, out-of-state conferences or in-state conferences unless personnel are presenters. If requesting any of these items, include a detailed explanation of the item's value to the project.