



**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY (Audubon Mid-Atlantic)**

**Public Notice - Request For Qualifications**

**Title: Marshes for Tomorrow**

**Release Date: March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**

**1. Purpose**

The National Audubon Society is seeking environmental science and engineering consulting services to supplement Audubon staff in project implementation. Therefore, Audubon is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from qualified engineering companies (Respondents) interested in entering into Master Services Agreements (MSAs) for a variety of environmental science and coastal engineering services as described in the Scope of Services below. Required services include but are not limited to: wetland, civil, water resources, and hydraulics engineering, geotechnical engineering, data analysis, project management, permitting and regulatory compliance services, construction administration, monitoring and inspection.

The purpose of this RFQ is to solicit SOQs that will enable Audubon to determine which Respondents are willing to enter into an MSA with Audubon and that are most qualified to provide services to Audubon under an MSA for advancing priority projects. The MSAs do not impose any financial obligations on Audubon or any performance obligations on Respondents for any specific project until such a time as a specific task order is issued by Audubon and accepted by Respondent.

**2. Term of Contract**

The proposed MSAs and rate schedules will be negotiated with the Proposer(s) selected by the National Audubon Society. The term of contracts is anticipated to begin on or around April 30, 2026, with some having staggered start dates and end on July 1, 2029, with staggered end dates.

**3. Organization Background and Mission**

For more than a century, the National Audubon Society (Audubon) has built a legacy of conservation success by mobilizing the strength of its network of members, chapters, education

centers and sanctuaries, state offices and dedicated professional staff to connect people with nature and the power to protect it. A powerful combination of science, education and policy expertise combine in efforts ranging from protection and restoration of local habitats to the implementation of policies that safeguard birds, other wildlife and the resources that sustain us all--in the U.S. and across the Americas. In short, Audubon protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation.

#### **4. Program Description**

The services procured under this RFQ include the implementation of tidal marsh restoration across the lower eastern shore of Maryland, under the [Marshes for Tomorrow](#) initiative. Marshes for Tomorrow (MfT) is an initiative led by Audubon with the overall goal of creating and implementing a plan for salt marsh restoration at a landscape scale in Maryland. The [MfT plan](#), which was completed in 2025, identified 29,140 acres of **Priority Marsh Areas** - tidal salt marsh intended to be maintained over the long term as high marsh habitat for the imperiled Saltmarsh Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudacuta*). The MfT plan was compiled using a collaborative process, including consultations with federal, state, and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic researchers, and consultants, totaling 32 partner organizations.

Marshes for Tomorrow is now entering the implementation phase, with new marsh restoration projects being developed within the MfT Priority Marsh Areas. Projects covered under awarded MSAs will take place in Dorchester County and Somerset County, Maryland. Project sites are being selected by Audubon and partners using spatial models which were developed by the MfT planning process and can be viewed publicly on the MfT [GIS Experience Builder](#).

Funding for the restoration projects covered by this RFQ is already in hand through Federally-sourced awards, and the terms and conditions of these awards will apply to any awarded MSAs. Additional funding sources including private, local, state and federal funding may be added in the future, for which the applicable terms and conditions will apply.

Examples of implementation activities include combinations of thin layer application of dredged material, runnels, strategic ditch filling, restoration of natural hydrology, and invasive species control, both in historical tidal marshes and in sea level rise wetland migration corridors;

#### **5. Scope of Services**

All projects implemented under awarded MSAs will involve professional engineering services, however, the project types for which task orders will be issued under the MSAs will have a variability both in terms of design/engineering and construction oversight and will be determined by individual project efforts and specifications.

For the purposes of this RFQ, and the Respondent's SOQ, responses and information provided should be focused on work in Coastal Ecosystems.

For the purposes of this RFQ, **Coastal Ecosystems** include primarily tidal salt marsh and brackish marsh, but also coastal zone, estuarine, and seagrass environments.

All Respondents must also provide information on their ability to perform work in the "Other" category; however, this category cannot be a focal point of the SOQ. Examples of the project types for which Task Orders may be issued could include, but are not limited to the following:

**1. Coastal Ecosystem Project Types:**

- Tidal marsh restoration, with a focus on hydrological repair and sediment placement. Hydrological repair includes:
  - Runnels
  - Ditch remediation
  - Tidal restriction mitigation
  - Tidal creek extension
- Sediment placement (marsh nourishment) includes:
  - Beneficial use of dredged material
  - Placement of material dredged specifically for conservation.
- Survey and assessment of tidal restrictions and prioritization of tidal reconnection project opportunities
- Tidal marsh migration facilitation
- Endangered species conservation/restoration (principally Saltmarsh Sparrow)

**2. Other:**

- Invasive species management (principally *Phragmites*)
- Coastal and/or near-shore habitat restoration
- Shoreline protection
- Risk reduction to coastal hazards
- Submerged aquatic vegetation restoration
- Public and private landholder liaison and coordination.

Audubon's implementation of the Marshes for Tomorrow plan is taking a strategic approach that prioritizes widespread hydrological repair in order to maintain the health of high-elevation marsh. This approach recognizes the lower cost of hydrological repair than sediment placement methods and the fact that widespread sediment placement is not feasible due to the scarcity of sources of sediment.

Applying hydrological methods of marsh restoration successfully in the microtidal environment of the Chesapeake Bay presents challenges, and practices such as runnels are relatively new to the Chesapeake region. Audubon is committed to improving and adapting the runneling

practice in this region through innovation and experimental approaches, and to this end, is implementing projects in partnership with academic researchers. Companies entering into MSAs under this RFQ may be working in close collaboration with Audubon and its research partners in a research setting.

## **6. Project Tasks**

Examples of the tasks and deliverables that may be included within task orders issued under the MSAs for different projects could include but are not limited to:

### **A. Wetland, Civil, Water Resources, and Hydraulics Engineering: Provide personnel and equipment needed to perform engineering services such as, but not limited to:**

- Engineering assistance with the design of coastal restoration projects with a specific emphasis on marsh restoration.
- Preparation of design packages at 10%, 30%, 60%, 90%, 100%, etc.
- Engineer's opinion of probable construction cost; development of construction cost estimates.
- Creation and utilization of data driven models to predict designed approaches and natural physical, biological, chemical, and environmental processes and systems.
- Review and development of technical memos and modeling reports.
- Analysis and manipulation of data sets and GIS software.
- Preparation of construction documents including plans, specifications and bid packages.
- Technical presentations.
- Interfacing with all engineering and scientific disciplines.
- Other engineering tasks as assigned.

### **B. Geotechnical Engineering: Respondent shall provide personnel and equipment to conduct field investigations including, but not limited to:**

- Groundwater and surface water hydrology, including flow analysis and tidal regimes.
- Ground-based elevation using RTK.
- Drone-based aerial imagery and LiDAR data.
- Survey of tidal restrictions in tidal marshes in Dorchester and Somerset Counties.
- Bathymetric investigations
- Nekton sampling.
- Water chemistry.
- Sampling (grab samples and vibracores).

- Geophysical and Geological Investigations including reconnaissance level and detailed geophysical investigations of sediment.
- Laboratory Testing: Testing services deliverables shall follow Geotechnical Document Standards. Respondent shall provide personnel and equipment to conduct laboratory testing including, but not limited to:
  - Soil classification testing (e.g., moisture content, organic content, unit weight, Atterberg limits, grain size distribution, and pH testing, etc.).
  - Soil strength testing (e.g., triaxial – UU).
  - Settlement testing (e.g., 1-D consolidation test, settling column test, low stress consolidation test, etc.).

**C. Analyses, Studies, Plans: Respondent shall provide personnel and equipment to conduct geotechnical and/or scientific analyses as components of the underlying engineering services to be provided, including, but not limited to:**

- Spatial analysis.
- Assessment of tidal restrictions and prioritization of tidal reconnection project opportunities.
- Hydrodynamic modeling of system inputs and boundary conditions associated with flow.
- Analysis of aerial imagery to map and measure extent of cover types, including vegetation classification.
- Analysis of wetland cover type trends using historical aerial imagery.
- Consolidation settlement analysis of both underlying soils and self-weight consolidation of dredge material, estimated settlement curves, construction sequencing, etc.
- Subsurface soil profiles (e.g., strength profiles, geologic profiles, etc.).
- Detailed engineering reports with analyses and recommendations.
- LiDAR landscape change analysis

**D. Project Management: Provide personnel and data-capturing tools, to manage a wide array of restoration land protection projects, where Respondent has performed the associated engineering services, or for those projects which otherwise require professional engineering services. These services may consist of:**

- Managing and developing scopes of work, budgets, and schedules.
- Scoping and administering tasks for sub-consultants.
- Hosting reoccurring team meetings, managing tasks, reports and deliverables, and proper project recordkeeping.
- Coordination with other consultants working on projects.

**E. Environmental and Permitting Services: Provide personnel to perform all environmental and permitting services necessary to obtain project permits. Required permits may include, but are not limited to:**

- Cultural Resources clearances.
- NEPA documentation.
- Special Use permits.
- Wetland permits (Section 404 and Nationwide) and Section 10 permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- State permits and authorizations.
- Other permits as necessary.

**F. Construction Administration, Monitoring and Inspection: Provide personnel and data capturing tools support to Audubon to perform construction administration, monitoring and inspection services on projects for which Respondent has performed the engineering services. Duties may include, but are not limited to:**

- Instrumentation and inspection.
- Contractor supervision and representation of owner.
- Resident inspection in remote locations.
- Review of daily work logs, shop drawings, samples and submittals, including requested field and/or change orders.
- Technical document development and review.
- Verification of pay requests.
- Construction Contract Administration and Development.
- Post-Construction Phase Services.
- Field Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) of construction activities.
- Fill sampling.
- Pre-and-post implementation survey management, implementation, and review.
- Short- and long-term scientific performance monitoring.

Task orders entered into under awarded MSAs will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis or program-by-program basis and the terms for each specific project will inevitably differ among Audubon's operating units, efforts, and funding requirements. Respondents may need to engage the assistance of local subcontractors for certain deliverables or aspects of task orders depending on the specifics of the projects.

## **7. General Information Regarding Statements of Qualifications**

The SOQ phase of the selection process is intended to enable Respondents to demonstrate their qualifications to perform all or some of the Project Types and Tasks set forth in Section 6, as well as their willingness to enter into an MSA to assist Audubon with

advancing priority projects from concept to implementation, including required pre-and-post-implementation monitoring/surveying. Respondents are advised that responsive SOQs should include specific information that will demonstrate the qualifications and experience required by this RFQ. Respondents should note that it is not the intent of Audubon to receive project-specific design or engineering recommendations as part of this RFQ. As part of Audubon's review and evaluation process for SOQs, Audubon reserves the right to conduct an independent investigation of any information, including prior experience, identified in an SOQ by contacting project references, accessing public information, contacting independent parties, or any other means. Audubon also reserves the right to request additional information from a Respondent during the evaluation of that Respondent's SOQ or after interviewing short-listed candidates.

## **8. Qualifications**

Firms should demonstrate that their team meets the following qualifications:

- A minimum of 5 years' experience in restoration project planning and engineering design.
- Deep knowledge of the coastal marsh ecosystem and its natural processes in the Maryland region.
- Expertise in water level and flow monitoring, salinity monitoring, marsh elevation monitoring, and vegetation assessments.
- Expertise in hydrologic management design, marsh creation design, and sea level rise forecasting.
- Knowledge of federal procurement 2CFR 200 guidelines.
- Ability to use drones that are not prohibited by the American Security Drone Act (2025). See list of approved UAS platforms [here](#).
- Experience with 404 Coastal Use Permit applications and Maryland state wetland license applications.
- Expertise in coastal geomorphology, coastal wetland ecosystem processes, and coastal wildlife and fisheries habitat management.
- Knowledge and expertise with designing and implementing a variety of nature-based resiliency projects
- Experience working with underserved communities, private landowners, community advocacy groups, municipal and county decision-makers and Maryland state agencies.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in internal corporate practices, workforce equity in the selection of subcontractors and procurement, and in working with partners, stakeholders, and underserved communities.

## 9. SOQ Package Submittal and Schedule

Proposers submitting an SOQ package as a prime contractor may be listed as a subcontractor on an unlimited number of other Proposers' SOQ packages. Contractors may only be the prime contractor on one SOQ.

It is the sole responsibility of the entity submitting a statement of qualification in response to this RFQ to ensure actual delivery of submittal prior to the deadline. Submissions must be received prior to the deadline by email. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. SOQ packages shall consist of one electronic copy in PDF format with the subject line "Marshes for Tomorrow Audubon Project." Packages < 20 MB may be transmitted as an email attachment sent to David Curson at [david.curson@audubon.org](mailto:david.curson@audubon.org).

Responses to this RFQ must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Questions must be provided by email to [david.curson@audubon.org](mailto:david.curson@audubon.org) no later than March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Proposals may be modified or withdrawn in writing prior to the proposal deadline. Proposals may not be modified or withdrawn after that time and will not be returned. If a proposer no longer wishes to have its proposal considered after the proposal deadline, notice must be submitted in writing to [david.curson@audubon.org](mailto:david.curson@audubon.org).

The SOQ package (not including a cover page and conflict of interest form) shall be no more than thirty (30) one-sided standard letter size pages, with text size no smaller than size 12 font in Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri type.

Statements submitted in response to this RFQ shall include a complete response to the requirements and should be in the order presented below. Statements should provide a straightforward delineation of the Firm's capability to satisfy the intent and requirements of this RFQ and should not contain redundancies or conflicting statements. An officer authorized to make a binding commitment for the Firm making the Statement shall sign the Cover Letter. Contents of the submitted Statements must include the following to be deemed responsive for evaluation:

- a. **Cover Letter.** This should indicate the name, title, email address and telephone number of the submitting firm's primary contact, and include an executive summary of the firm's expertise, resources, and advantages they would bring to the project. This cover letter shall be no more than one one-sided standard letter size page, text size no smaller than size 12 font, and be single spaced.
- b. **SOQ Narrative.** The SOQ narrative should address the evaluation criteria in the order in which they appear in Section 9 Evaluation Criteria (12 pages maximum).
- c. **Additional Information.** Responses to requests in this Section are for purposes of confirming whether Respondent is a responsible offeror and is not scored as part of the evaluation phase. Respondents should address the request for additional information in the following order (3 pages maximum):

- i. **Government Funding:** Please describe your experience and abilities in receiving Federal or other government funds and ensuring compliance with 2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements and other award-specific conditions, reporting financial and programmatic information regarding a project on a periodic basis, and segregating Federal or other government funds in your accounting records.
  - ii. **Insurance:** Please describe the insurance coverage and limits under your existing insurance policies, carrier(s), and whether Audubon and other parties required by funding or other sources (e.g. government agencies, private foundations) can be named as an additional insured.
  - iii. **Legal Actions Summary:** A statement as to whether there are any outstanding legal actions or potential claims against Respondent and a brief description of any action taken. Include a brief description of any settled or closed legal actions or claims against Respondent over the past five (5) years. This should include the court, case name, complaint number, and a brief description of the final ruling or determination; and in instances where litigation is ongoing and the Respondent has been directed not to disclose information by the court, provide the name of the judge, court, and the location of the court.
  - iv. **Federal Contracting:** A statement as to whether Respondent, its subsidiaries, principals, and beneficial owners, if any, are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for the award of contracts by any government agency.
- d. **Resumes.** Respondents shall attach one-page resumes for up to six professionals (Up to 6 pages).
- e. **Signed Conflict of Interest form** (attached to this RFQ)

## 10. Evaluation Criteria

**20% - Experience, Qualifications, and Background.** Respondents must establish that their team members possess the necessary professional qualifications (including at least one full-time, qualified Professional Engineer), must demonstrate the ability to meet deadlines in a responsible manner and have the capacity to work simultaneously on multiple projects. Respondents shall provide information on staff education, certifications and training in general as well as how roles and responsibilities are assigned commensurate with staff experience, training and education. Respondents must also describe their project planning/management, and tracking processes, including delegation, task management, team communication, and external collaboration. Respondents must also describe the processes and/or systems used to address risk management, while maintaining adaptability and flexibility.

**40% - Experience with the Coastal Ecosystem Projects.** Respondents shall provide a minimum of three (3) high-level project summaries that demonstrate experience and the degree of complexity of the work performed within coastal ecosystems.

**15% - Experience with permitting and coordinating with Local, State and Federal Agencies, and coordination and completion of Environmental Assessments and associated surveys.** Respondents should demonstrate their track record and ability to successfully navigate complex permitting processes for coastal ecosystem projects.

**20% - Innovative Approaches to Projects** to reduce costs or increase effectiveness and efficiency. This should include specifics on how cost-effective methods are used and cost projections determined in feasibility and design phases of a project, and how project alternative analysis are developed and evaluated.

**5% - Facilitation & Engagement with Stakeholders, Citizen Groups or Parties of Interest** as part of design and planning process. Respondents should demonstrate their track record and ability to facilitate and engage stakeholders in meaningful ways, and in collaboration with partners.

## **11. Selection Process**

**Step 1.** On Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 1:00-2:00pm Audubon will conduct a virtual workshop for those interested in submitting SOQs—attendance is optional but highly encouraged.

The workshop will include a short presentation of the key points of the RFQ, followed by a question-and-answer period. Answers for all the questions may not be available at the time of the call, however Audubon may elect to answer questions after the call (including, combining questions as appropriate or applicable) and post responses via email by March 20<sup>th</sup>. The invitation link to the Zoom Webinar can be found below:

<https://audubon.zoom.us/j/91836089627?pwd=pTBZDznmkz0fZ4EbeGblTegpc0vPkW.1>

**Step 2.** The second phase of the selection process will entail the ranking and scoring of all responsive SOQs received. An internal Audubon Selection Team will score the SOQs based on the evaluation criteria set forth above. In addition to the Selection Team, Audubon may use additional technical resources (including outside parties) to aid in evaluating submittals. Each evaluation criterion has been assigned a rating percentage that demonstrates its relative importance of the selection phase. The total score will be determined as follows:

(a) For each criterion, reviewing members of the Selection Team will score the SOQs on a scale of 1-to-10, with 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest score.

(b) The score for each criterion will be multiplied by the associated weight percentage as labeled in Section 3.2 and rounded to the nearest hundredth of a percent.

(c) The scores for each Section in (b) above will be added together. This sum will be the total score of the Respondents' Statement of Qualifications.

The Selection Team will then select a short-list, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) candidates, or less, as determined in its discretion, of the top-ranked Respondents to move on to Phase Three's interview process.

**Step 3.** The third phase of the selection process entails a mandatory interview process with the short-listed candidates and any follow-up to such interviews desired by the Selection Team. Each short-listed Respondent shall be required to attend the interview via Zoom video conference.

## **12. Basis for Contract Award**

Execution of one or more definitive MSA agreements pursuant to this RFQ shall be subject at all times to the application of, and compliance with, Audubon's internal policies and procedures. Audubon may elect, at its sole discretion, to enter into MSAs with more than one Respondent. Conversely, Audubon retains the discretion to select a single Respondent to enter into an MSA pursuant to this RFQ, or to engage none of the Respondents if the qualification criteria established in this document are not met, as determined by Audubon. The services to be provided to Audubon pursuant to any MSA entered into under this RFQ are non-exclusive; Audubon retains the right to, and will, enter into agreements and contracts for the provision of the engineering services to Audubon (including, without limitation, the project types and tasks described in this RFQ) separate and apart from the procurement, if any, made hereunder.

If Audubon enters into a professional services contract with your firm, compensation for the services rendered will be based upon percentage of completion with an agreed maximum not to exceed value.

Audubon reserves the right to accept or dismiss the RFQ package proposal received, to negotiate with your firm, or to cancel this request, if it is in the best interest of Audubon and/or involved parties to do so. This request does not commit Audubon to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in preparation of a response to this request, or to procure or contract for further services or supplies. Audubon also reserves the right to waive any irregularity, informality, or technicality in the proposal in its best interest, and is not obligated to award a contract.

These proposals are being requested in accordance with 2 CFR 200.320 (d) (5), as issued by the Office of Management and Budget. The firm that is selected will be notified and a contract negotiated. The contract will be for a period coinciding with the completion and closeout of the project for which services are being requested. The contract will include provisions required by 2 CFR 200, Appendix II.

### **13. Commitment to Diversity**

Audubon values diversity in its staff, in the communities we serve, and in our business partners. Therefore, among the factors Audubon will take into account as it looks to hire the most qualified business for the job is whether the vendor itself has diversity goals in hiring, retention, and promotion. We also welcome the opportunity to diversify our vendor base to include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals with disabilities wherever possible. We welcome any information you can provide about your diversity practices.

### **14. Enclosures**

- Conflict of Interest Form