



Southern Mississippi Planning & Development District

BUILDING A STRONGER MISSISSIPPI

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Coastal Waterways Inventory Project

Request for Proposals Issued: August 7, 2026
Proposal Due: September 10, 2026 at 11:00AM CST

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Coastal Waterways Inventory Project

Issued by: SMPDD

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District, Inc. (SMPDD) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from qualified firms to provide professional services for a comprehensive coastal waterways inventory and dredging needs assessment for non-federal waterways along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. For the purposes of this RFP, non-federal waterways refer to any historically maintained tidally-influenced, coastal channels, bayous, canals, and other navigation corridors that are not federally maintained. The selected proposer will evaluate existing channel conditions, identify maintenance dredging needs, develop a geospatial inventory of coastal waterways, and assist the counties in obtaining maintenance dredging permits, and authorization for submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) mitigation sites.

Mississippi's coastal waterways provide critical access for commercial fishing, recreational boating, tourism, and emergency response. Many non-federal channels, bayous, and navigation corridors experience recurring sedimentation that restricts navigation and requires periodic maintenance dredging. However, a comprehensive inventory of these waterways, their existing conditions, maintenance history, and long-term dredging needs has not been developed.

SMPDD is seeking a multidisciplinary consultant team with demonstrated expertise in hydrographic surveying, geographic information systems (GIS), environmental permitting, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) assessment and management, and project management. The selected consultant team will evaluate sediment accumulation and shoaling, assess maintenance dredging requirements, perform SAV assessments, compile data into a GIS-based waterways inventory, and develop recommendations for future dredging priorities.

Key objectives of this project are to establish a coordinated maintenance dredging program by assisting Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties in obtaining county-wide, ten-year maintenance dredging permits, as well as the necessary authorizations for at least three (3) SAV mitigation sites across the Coast.

The completed inventory, assessment, and permitting documentation will provide local governments with a long-term planning tool for prioritizing maintenance dredging.

SECTION 2: PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project goal is to assess current navigation conditions in coastal Mississippi waterways to identify areas where sediment accumulation compromises vessel access and infrastructure safety, develop a comprehensive coastal waterways inventory that catalogs rivers, bayous, channels, and harbor access points, including their depths, widths, and dredging history, evaluate submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) presence and health to ensure dredging and sediment management practices support ecological integrity, provide data-driven recommendations for prioritizing maintenance dredging, sediment placement and SAV mitigation that balances navigation needs, coastal restoration, and wetland protection, and enhance coastal resilience by linking navigation infrastructure planning to wetland and estuarine ecosystem health supporting storm surge mitigation and hurricane protection.

The selected team will collaborate with SMPDD and the coastal communities to create a comprehensive coastal waterways inventory and dredging needs assessment for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties. A prime consultant will lead a multidisciplinary team that may include, but not be limited to: engineers, surveyors, GIS specialists, environmental scientists, and permitting specialists. The team should include a minimum of four (4) firms (including the prime and subcontractors) of substantial contribution, demonstrate local area knowledge and expertise coupled with regional scale and depth necessary to complete the project in a timely and effective manner.

The project will compile existing information, perform hydrographic and SAV assessments, evaluate shoreline shoaling, estimate maintenance dredging needs, and prioritize waterway dredging based on navigation importance, public safety, economic value, and maintenance frequency. The project will also develop a long-term permitting strategy. The consultant team will prepare permit application packages and coordinate with federal and state resource agencies to obtain ten-year maintenance dredging permits for each coastal county, and SAV mitigation site authorization for at least three (3) sites.

Scope of Work

1. **Project Management and Coordination:** The prime consultant shall provide overall project management, quality assurance/quality control, schedule management, and administration of all subcontractors. The prime consultant shall serve as the primary point of contact and be responsible for coordinating all project activities and deliverables.
2. **Dredging Needs Assessment:** The team shall conduct field investigations, as necessary, to evaluate existing channel conditions of non-federal navigation waterways throughout Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties. The team shall analyze bathymetric survey data, historic dredging records, existing channel conditions, and other available information to identify current and future maintenance dredging needs. The assessment shall identify critical shoaling areas, estimate maintenance dredging requirements, evaluate maintenance frequency, and prioritize waterways requiring immediate or periodic maintenance based on navigation importance, public safety, and operational needs. Please discuss in your proposal any additional investigations required to determine the dredging needs.
3. **Coastal Waterways Inventory:** The consultant shall develop a comprehensive geospatial inventory of non-federal waterways throughout Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties. For each waterway, the inventory must include existing channel depths, sediment accumulation rates, historic dredging records, existing permits, municipal maintenance data, estimated dredging needs, and maintenance priority rankings. The inventory shall be delivered in a fully editable GIS format compatible with ESRI software.
4. **SAV Assessment:** The consultant shall evaluate the presence, distribution, and condition of SAV within the project areas to support the acquisition of ten-year maintenance dredging permits and permits required for SAV mitigation sites. The assessment shall include the data collection, mapping, and documentation necessary to satisfy applicable permitting requirements.
5. **Final Report:** The consultant shall prepare a draft report documenting the results of the field surveys, dredging needs assessment, and coastal waterways inventory. The draft report shall include recommendations for maintenance dredging priorities and an implementation plan for future maintenance activities. The draft report shall be submitted to SMPDD and

participating counties for review and comment. The consultant shall incorporate or otherwise address comments received and submit a final report reflecting the revisions.

6. **Maintenance Dredging Permitting:** The consultant shall coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other applicable federal and state regulatory agencies and perform all services, including preparation, submission, and revision of permitting applications and responses to agency comments or requests for additional information, required to obtain final permitting determinations for county-wide, ten-year maintenance dredging permits for eligible waterways within Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties.
7. **SAV Mitigation Site Authorization:** The consultant shall coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other applicable federal and state regulatory agencies and perform all services required, including preparation, submission, and revision of permitting applications and responses to agency comments or requests for additional information, to secure authorization for at least three (3) SAV mitigation sites located across the Coast.

Project Schedule

SMPDD anticipates that the dredging needs assessment, coastal waterways inventory, SAV assessment and final report will be completed within 12 months of contract execution. SMPDD anticipates that the maintenance dredging permitting and SAV mitigation site authorization will be completed within 24 months of contract execution. SMPDD recognizes that the consultants may structure their process differently; however, SMPDD expects a clear project schedule, milestone dates, and a plan that ensures all deliverables will be completed within 24 months of contract execution.

SECTION 3: FINAL DELIVERABLES

Deliverables for the project include:

1. **Coastal waterways inventory and dredging recommendations.** The final coastal waterways inventory shall be delivered to SMPDD in GIS file formats compatible with ESRI software. The final report, maps, engineering analyses, and all supporting work products shall be provided electronically in PDF format. In addition, access to any background information, data, field survey data, and other information compiled over the course of the project must be provided without restriction.
2. **Ten-year maintenance dredging permits for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties.** The consultant shall perform all services required to obtain final permitting determinations for ten-year maintenance dredging permits for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties that include all eligible waterways. The required deliverable shall be a final written determination from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approving or denying each requested permit. Submitting a permit application alone shall not satisfy the requirement of this task.
3. **Permitted SAV Mitigation Sites:** The consultant shall perform all services required to obtain final permitting determinations for SAV mitigation sites, strategically located across the coast. A minimum of three (3) approved sites is expected. The required deliverable shall be a final written determination from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approving or denying each requested permit. Submitting a permit application alone shall not satisfy the requirement of this task.

Once completed and delivered to SMPDD, the final products and all related work materials, documents, files, data, and information become the sole and exclusive property of SMPDD,

including all underlying intellectual property rights. SMPDD may, at its sole discretion, copy, post electronically, distribute, disseminate, and/or share the final report and any associated materials with anyone SMPDD deems fit, including but not limited to federal, state, county, and local government entities, agencies, partners, and the general public. SMPDD may do so through any means and in any form of media. Work products must be provided to SMPDD in formats compatible with applicable Microsoft Suite software and Adobe PDF software. All GIS data must be delivered in industry-standard, fully editable formats compatible with ESRI software.

SECTION 4: PRICING AND FEES

Proposals shall include a detailed cost breakdown of all anticipated project expenses, including labor rates, travel, per diem, and any other applicable costs. The proposal shall also include a breakdown of anticipated costs by task as determined by the proposers' technical approach. At a minimum, the cost proposal shall separately identify labor costs, direct/reimbursable expenses, subconsultant costs, travel expenses, and any optional services.

This RFP does not commit SMPDD to pay for any direct and/or indirect costs incurred in the preparation or presentation of a response. All finalist(s) shall pay their own costs in preparing for, traveling to, and attending interviews.

SMPDD reserves the right to negotiate the final fee prior to recommending any firm for a contract. SMPDD reserves the right to use all pertinent information (also learned from sources other than disclosed in the RFP process) that might affect SMPDD's judgment as to the appropriateness of an award to the best evaluated proposer. SMPDD is not obligated to accept the proposed fees submitted by any respondent and reserves the right to negotiate pricing and contract terms within its discretion.

SECTION 5: RFP SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

By submitting a proposal, the proposer acknowledges that it has received, reviewed, and relied upon this RFP in preparing its submission.

An original and four (4) copies of the proposal shall be signed and submitted, along with a digital copy of the proposal in PDF format on a USB flash drive, in a sealed envelope or package by **11:00am CST on September 10, 2026**, to:

**Request for Proposals – Coastal Waterways Inventory
Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District
10441 Corporate Drive, Suite 1
Gulfport, MS 39503**

Timely submission of the proposal is the responsibility of the proposer. SMPDD will not be responsible for delayed or lost mail received after the deadline. Proposals received after the specified time shall be rejected and returned to the proposer unopened.

The proposal shall be limited to no more than a total of twenty-five (25) typed pages, including content pages, supporting appendices, and resumes. The cover letter is not included in the 25-page total. Paper size shall be 8 1/2" x 11". Text shall not be smaller than a font size of 11. Any information contained on pages that exceed the page limit will not be evaluated. Proposers shall submit the signed original and four (4) copies of the proposal, along with a digital copy of the proposal in PDF format on a USB flash drive, in a sealed envelope or package to SMPDD on or

before the date and time specified. The original must be signed by an authorized representative of the proposer.

All proposals shall include the following:

1. **Cover Letter**: Provide a brief statement of the team's interest in the project and a narrative description of the project proposal. Include information on the qualifications of the firm and why your team is best qualified.
2. **Technical Approach**: A description of the proposed methodology for completing the scope of work, including field surveys, dredging needs assessment, coastal waterways inventory, SAV assessments, reporting, and all permitting. Respondents should also include a description of the quality assurance/quality control measures that will be used to ensure accurate and timely completion of the project.
3. **Project Team Makeup and Qualifications**: Provide a list of team members who will be directly involved in the project, including subconsultants, and provide a brief statement of qualifications for all individuals to include credentials such as education, area of expertise, years of service, and relevant work experience. Include an organizational chart that identifies the project manager and the roles of each team member, including sub-consultants. This should include identification of the geography of responsibility and/or task responsibility of each team member, including sub-consultants.
4. **Previous Experience with Projects Similar in Scope and Scale**: Include descriptions of at least three relevant projects that were completed by your team. Please include the following related to the previous projects:
 - Name and location of project
 - Name of team member involved in the project
 - Brief description of the project, deliverables, and timeline
 - References: client name, contact person, title, phone number, and email address
 - Range of contract dollar value
5. **Project Schedule**: Provide a detailed project schedule that identifies major milestones, deliverables, and anticipated completion dates. Include a timeline from contract execution to final product delivery.
6. **Project Budget**: Include an overall budget and breakdown of work tasks with clear descriptions of how the money will be allocated for this project. Provide the mark-up rate for all reimbursable expenses, in any.

Emphasis will be placed upon selecting a qualified team under the procedures outlined below.

SECTION 6: PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals that comply with the instructions set forth in this RFP will be evaluated by SMPDD and its designated selection committee. SMPDD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. At its sole discretion, SMPDD may choose to waive non-material irregularities or deviations from the RFP instructions.

Proposals will be evaluated using a weighted scoring method. The evaluation process may include interviews and additional information meetings.

Project Understanding and Technical Approach: 40 Points

- ***Understanding of Project Goals:*** Demonstrated understanding of the project's goals, objectives, scope of work, and Coastal Mississippi's unique dredging challenges, and ability to translate the RFP priorities into a cohesive plan.
- ***Technical Approach:*** Quality and feasibility of the proposed methodology.
- ***Project Management Approach:*** Effectiveness of the proposed project management plan, including schedule, quality assurance/quality control, coordination with SMPDD, local jurisdictions, regulatory agencies, and subconsultants, and ability to meet project milestones and deliverables.

Project Team and Firm Qualifications: 25 Points

- ***Project Team Qualifications:*** Qualifications and experience of key personnel of prime contractor and subconsultants. The successful team is expected to have a high level of familiarity with the communities in the project area.
- ***Technical Capabilities:*** Demonstrated expertise in coastal dredging projects, SAV surveying, hydrographic surveying, GIS, permitting, and project management.

Relevant Project Experience: 25 Points

- ***Past Performance:*** Demonstrated experience successfully completing projects of similar size, scope, and complexity.
- ***Client References:*** Quality of references based on previous performance, including communication, responsiveness, technical competence, and ability to deliver projects on schedule and within budget.

Budget: 10 Points

- ***Fee Proposal:*** Reasonableness and competitiveness of the proposed fee relative to the scope of work and technical approach.

Total Available Points: 100 Points

SECTION 7: QUESTIONS/REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

All questions about this RFP must be submitted via email to kgunter@smpdd.com no later than 5:00pm CST on August 21, 2026. Answers to the questions will be posted to the SMPDD website at https://smpdd.com/rfp_publicnotice/ no later than August 28, 2026. Proposers are cautioned that any statements made by any person shall not be relied upon unless subsequently ratified by a formal written response to the RFQ, such as an amendment or Response to Inquiries document.

SECTION 8: CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The project is funded through the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources as GOMESA Project 3000044112. The successful Proposer shall comply with all 2 CFR 200 requirements and comply with all applicable provisions of Section 70914 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts (Pub. L. 117-58), also known as the Build America Buy America Act.

SMPDD is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and hereby notifies that all Proposers will be afforded the full opportunity to submit proposals in response to this advertisement for proposals and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status in consideration for an award.

SMPDD reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or information in any RFP, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items. SMPDD further reserves the right to modify or amend this RFP, revise the RFP schedule as necessary, and withdraw or cancel this RFP at any time prior to contract award. SMPDD assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by Proposers in response to this RFP or in responding to any further request for interviews, additional data, etc. SMPDD reserves the right to conduct interviews with some or all proposers within its discretion. SMPDD reserves the right to not answer questions in its sole discretion, and to waive any and all formalities pertaining to the request and/or proposals, and to reject any and all proposals. SMPDD further reserves the right to negotiate with multiple proposers simultaneously, irrespective of the total scores of the evaluation, and to contract with multiple proposers.