

**Performance Work Statement (PWS)-Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest East Zone Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS) Plant Survey**

**1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE (SCOPE) OF THE CONTRACT**

The scope of this contract is to perform project level surveys for the presence of Regional Forest Sensitive Species (RFSS) plant species (see Attachment 2-RFSS Plant List) within suitable habitat in two separate project areas on the East Zone of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF). The results of the RFSS plant surveys will be used in resource management and land management planning. Approximately 3,446.5 acres of suitable RFSS plant habitat within 82 stands are to be surveyed within the North Branch project area on the Eagle River-Florence Ranger District (ER-FL RD) under Contract Line-Item Number (CLIN) 1 of this contract. Approximately 3,422.5 acres of suitable RFSS plant habitat within 58 stands are to be surveyed within the Armstrong Creek project area on the Lakewood-Laona Ranger District (LK-LA RD) under CLIN 2 of this contract.

**DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION**

The North Branch project area is in the southwest portion of the ER-FL RD in the townships of Alvin, Argonne and Hiles, in Forest County, WI. The project area extends from the North Branch of the Pine River south to Scott Lake Rd (FS Rd. 2883) and from WI Highway 55 west to the Headwaters Wilderness Area and Butternut Lake. Project stands are approximately 14 to 23 air miles east to southeast of Eagle River, WI in Alvin Township, T 40N R 13E Sections 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35, in Argonne Township, T 38N R 13E Sections 2, 3, 8, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27 and 28 and T 39N R 13E Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 16, 17, 18, 26, 27, 34, and 35, and in Hiles Township, T38N R13E Section 18, T39N R12E Sections 12 and 13, and T40N R12E Sections 25, 26, and 35 (see Attachments 1-CLIN 1-North Branch Stand List, 10-Project Location Map, Project overview Map and Compartment Maps).

The Armstrong Creek project area is in the northeastern portion of the LK-LA RD in the townships of Blackwell and Laona, in Forest County, WI. The project area extends from the LK-LA RD boundary south to Goodman Park Rd (FS Rd 2136), Halley Creek, and the Peshtigo River and from the LK-LA RD boundary west to Forest County Highway H, Purdy Lake, the Peshtigo River, and Catwillow Creek. Project stands are located approximately three to ten air miles due east of Laona, WI in Blackwell township, T 35N R 15E Sections 1, 2, 10, 11, and 12, T 35N R 16E Sections 5, 6, 7, and 8, T 36N R 15E Sections 35 and 36 and T 36N R 16E Sections 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33, and in Laona township, T 35N R 15E Section 3 and T 36N R 15E Section 27 (see Attachments 2-CLIN 2-Armstrong Creek Stand List, 10-Project Location Map, Project overview Map and Compartment Maps).

The areas to be surveyed may or may not be physically identified on the ground but are delineated on the project maps showing land features such as roads, creeks and waterbodies and in the stand GPS shapefile. Project stands are predominantly northern mesic forest consisting of mixed of northern hardwoods. Northern hardwoods are the prevalent forest type in the project area with inclusions of natural origin red and white pine and even aged aspen. (see Attachment 4-USFS Codes).

## 2. CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS (SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS)/ TASKS

#### *TASK 1- FIELD SURVEYS AND DATA COLLECTION*

The Contractor shall survey for each of the RFSS plant taxa on the attached RFSS plant list (see Attachment 3-RFSS Plant List) and survey most intensively where target species are likely to be found. The Contractor shall survey during the appropriate phenological time period(s) for the species under consideration.

Task 1.1- For stands less than 100 acres, the preferred survey method is a random or intuitive meander, where the surveyor detours to areas most likely to harbor RFSS plants based on habitat and the judgment of the surveyor. The random or intuitive meander should concentrate on as many potential sites as is possible while still sampling the entire stand.

Task 1.2- For stands 100 acres or greater the preferred survey method is systematic or patterned searches, where the surveyor walks a series of evenly spaced and roughly parallel transects to maximize coverage of a stand. Spacing of the transects may vary depending on vegetation density and visibility, habitat quality, and judgment of the surveyor, but should be between 200 and 350 feet.

Task 1.3- The Contractor will record and garnish survey routes of the project area by providing either topographic maps with routes delineated and dated or tracking files from a GPS unit.

#### *TASK 2- DATA REPORTS*

The contractor shall submit a report summarizing the results of the field surveys. One hard copy and one electronic copy of the report shall be submitted to the USFS. The electronic copies shall be in Microsoft Word (doc, docx), Microsoft Excel (xls, xlsx.), or pdf formats. Each final report shall include the following sub task items:

Task 2.1- Completed Survey Summary datasheet for all stands surveyed, summarizing habitat quality, RFSS plant and NNIS findings (see Attachment 5-RFSS Survey Summary).

Task 2.2- Completed stand datasheets. The contractor shall complete a datasheet for each survey area (see Attachment 6-RFSS Plant Survey Datasheet), to include a summary of habitat, structure, unique features, disturbance, abundant/dominant species by functional group, presence of RFSS plants, non-native invasive species (NNIS) and habitat indicator species (Canada yew (*Taxus Canadensis*) or Toothwort (*Cardamine* spp.)), and a quick assessment of earthworms, browse and RFSS plant habitat quality.

Task 2.3- List of all plant species, using Latin nomenclature, seen, by community type(s) or stand(s).(see Attachment 7-Species Checklist). The Contractor will provide a list of plants found within the survey area; this list shall be limited to species with which the contractor is familiar and is not intended to be exhaustive or complete. Survey area is defined as a single stand or group of similar stands

Task 2.4- Completed WI NHI Rare Plant Report Form for any RFSS plants located, including GPS locations (see Attachment 8-WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report Form). If a RFSS plant population is located, information regarding the plant identity, number of individuals, phenological /growth stage, legal description of the site, precise location (GPS), area of coverage by the population, and habitat characteristics, will be recorded on Wisconsin's Natural Heritage Inventory (WI NHI) form (see Attachment 8-WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report Form).

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Additionally, photographs will be collected and will be given to the COR along with the designating the locations of the RFSS in the field with color-coded flagging and/or green paint that is provided to the Contractor, in a visible but discreet manner.

Task 2.5- Completed Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) inventory form for NNIS occurrences inventoried, including GPS locations (see Attachment 9-NNIS Inventory Form). The contractor shall document any observations of NNIS listed on the NNIS Inventory form and should be recorded on the NNIS Inventory form, including precise location (GPS), area of coverage by the population and infestation percent.

Task 2.6- During the performance of this contract, the Contractor is requested to report to the COR any unusual sightings such as large stick nests, artifacts or heritage sites (that are not already marked with flagging or in obvious ways), or other special features.

### **DELIVERABLES**

The Contractor shall:

- Provide the COR with a survey plan prior to doing field surveys.
- Report survey progress to the COR on a bi-weekly basis with a report of days and time spent in the field.
- Complete data sheets (see Attachments 5-RFSS Survey Summary, 6-RFSS Plant Survey Datasheet, 7- Species Checklist, 8-WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report Form, 9-NNIS Inventory Form, and) as directed above (final copies printed legibly in ink or typed).
- Report any location of RFSS plants to the COR within 4 business days, along with the plant identity, number of individuals, phenological/growth stage, legal description of the site, precise location (GPS), area of coverage by the population, and habitat characteristics.
- Verify identification of all RFSS plant species by comparison with regional herbarium collection and/or consultation with botanical experts as needed.
- For locations of listed plants, complete the WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report Form (see Attachment 8- WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report Form) with the final copies typed or printed legibly in ink.
- Mark RFSS plant locations in the field with color-coded flagging and/or green paint that is provided to the Contractor, in a visible but discreet manner.
- Provide 2-3 good quality color slides or digital photographs of each RFSS plant taxon located, with at least one showing the plant in detail and one showing the plant in its habitat.
- If the contractor collects and vouchers any plant specimens, a labeled herbarium sheet of the vouchered specimen shall be forwarded to the Eagle River-Florence Ranger District herbarium located in Florence.

### **SCHEDULE**

Survey period will be weather and phenologically dependent but should begin approximately July 1, 2023 and is to be completed by September 15, 2023. Final reports, maps and/or GPS track files, and government furnished property (i.e., USFS Yale key) must be submitted to the contract officer representative (COR) by October 16, 2023.

Before any contract work is started, the COR will arrange for a pre-work conference to discuss contract provisions and specifications. At that time, the Contractor will present a proposed progress schedule for completing the work.

### **3. GOVERNMENT FURNISHED PROPERTY**

The government will provide electronic maps of the specific areas to be surveyed (see Attachments 10-Project Location Map, Project overview Map, and Compartment Maps), GIS shapefiles, electronic data forms (see Attachments see Attachments 5-RFSS Survey Summary, 6-RFSS Plant Survey Datasheet, 7-Species Checklist, 8-WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report Form, and 9-NNIS Inventory Form), and aerial photos (as requested), as well as flagging and/or marking paint to delineate to RFSS plant locations.

A USFS Yale key will be issued to the contractor to access stands behind locked gates. This will require the Contractor to sign a USDA-Forest Service Personal Custody Property Receipt and acknowledge financial responsibility for the value of items lost or damaged. The USFS Yale key shall be returned with the final report. Complete payment will not be made until both are submitted.

### **4. TRAVEL**

The contractor shall furnish all equipment, labor, materials, (except Government furnished property listed in the Government Furnished Properties Section below), transportation, supervision, and incidentals necessary to conduct surveys.

### **5. CONTRACTOR'S KEY PERSONNEL**

#### **Qualifications and experience of individual or firm.**

List names, education, and experience of individuals to be used on this contract. You must list all individuals and the position they will be occupying. The following should be addressed for each individual:

- The contractor and the contractor's employees must be able to identify all the RFSS plant taxa on the attached RFSS plant list (see Attachment 3-RFSS Plant List)
- Knowledge of plant taxonomy, identification, and classification.
- Ability to identify habitat associations.
- Experience in identifying key habitats and predicting plant occurrences by habitat in northern Lake States forest communities, particularly Wisconsin.
- Experience in searching for and identifying uncommon, rare, and sensitive species of the northern Lake States forests with specific attention to endangered, threatened, and special concern plant species in northern Wisconsin.
- Experience in using GPS personal navigation systems to locate and document features.
- Experience in aerial photo interpretation.
- Experience in plant specimen preparation and handling.
- Extent of education in botany or related biological field.

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**6. MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT**

An original invoice will be submitted to the COR via IPP who will then send it to the procurement officer for payment. The COR's signature on the invoice indicates satisfactory completion and acceptance of work.

**7. ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – CLIN 1-North Branch Stand List, 3 pages
- Attachment 2 – CLIN 2-Armstrong Creek Stand List, 2 Pages
- Attachment 3 – RFSS Plant List, 4 pages
- Attachment 4 – USFS Codes, 2 pages
- Attachment 5 – RFSS Plant Survey Summary Sheet, 2 pages
- Attachment 6 – RFSS Plant Survey Datasheet, 2 pages
- Attachment 7 – Species Checklist, 2 pages
- Attachment 8 – WI NHI Rare Plant Field Report, 2 pages
- Attachment 9 – Invasive Species inventory Form, 2 pages
- Attachment 10 – Project Location Maps: Overview, project and compartments/stands