

Request for Proposals

White Fir Ridge Hand Treatment Project

Project Proponent: California Deer Association (CDA)

Location: Inyo National Forest, 2 miles (~5-minute drive) from the Town of Mammoth Lakes

Project treatment will occur on up to approximately 391.6 acres within the Mammoth Lakes Ranger District on the Inyo National Forest (INF). The White Fir Ridge Hand Treatment Project is located in Mono County, California, and is in Township 3 South, Range 27 East, Sections 24 and 25; Township 3 South, Range 28 East, Sections 19 and 30; Mount Diablo Meridian. Primary access is provided from Highway 203 via Highway 395.

Project elevations range from approximately **7,400 to 8,200 feet**. Due to winter snow accumulation, portions of the project area may be inaccessible from late October through late May.

Project Deliverables

- 391.6 acres of Hand Cut and Pile

Project Timeline

The timeline for this treatment would begin upon execution of the contract (estimated October 2026) to October 31st, 2027.

Contractor Minimum Qualifications

- Contractor, Contractor's principal, or Contractors' staff shall have been regularly engaged in the business of operations such as hand cutting, thinning, piling, etc., within forest environments for at least 3 years.
- Contractor shall possess all permits, licenses, and professional credentials necessary to perform services as specified under a CDA contract.
- Contractor shall take out and maintain during the life of the Contract all the insurance required and, if requested, shall submit certificates for review and approval by CDA. Acceptance of the certificates shall not relieve the Contractor of any of the insurance requirements nor decrease the liability of the Contractor. CDA reserves the right to require Contractor to provide insurance policies for review by CDA.
- Contractor shall be responsible for registering with [Sam.gov](https://sam.gov) prior to bid submission due to this project being executed under an existing Stewardship Agreement. Contractors who are not registered will not be considered.

Contractor Quality Assurance

The Contractor will perform quality auditing in the form of visual inspections across each unit to evaluate that the silvicultural prescriptions are being met. Furthermore, Contractor will inspect all cutting and piling to ensure that all items meet the listed specifications below. If the Contractor determines that the silvicultural prescriptions, cutting and piling are not met in an area of any unit, the Contractor will be obligated to make the necessary adjustments. Measures taken to correct the treatment in an area of the unit will be communicated to the CDA project manager.

Each treated unit will also be evaluated by the CDA project manager to ensure that all of the project activities meet the listed specifications. If it is determined by either party that the treatment does not comply with the listed specifications in any area of any unit, the Contractor will be obligated to make the necessary adjustments.

Description of Work

The project will entail fuels reduction and selective thinning to be performed by hand across approximately 392 acres in the Inyo National Forest. The primary objective of the project is to reduce hazardous fuels, remove dead and dying trees, and improve stand conditions in preparation for prescribed burning. The absence of fire in the region has led to the forest becoming unnaturally dense and overcrowded, posing a wildfire risk for the local community. White fir mortality has led to a high number of snags and elevated fuel loads. The project map for the treatment area is included in Appendix E. The acreage breakdown by task is summarized below.

Virtual unit boundaries are to be used for all units. The contractor may use flagging to mark unit boundaries if desired. A detailed layout map will be provided for use with Avenza maps or similar program for delineating virtual boundaries. Global positioning system devices must have an accuracy of at least 15 feet to ensure compliance with the allowable tolerance.

The hand treatment will generally consist of cutting and piling designated vegetation within the project area. Cut material will be hand-piled in accordance with the project specifications, with pile locations selected to minimize impacts to riparian resources, waterways, roads, and retained vegetation. Treatment requirements, including vegetation to be retained or removed, pile specifications, and resource protection measures, etc., will be identified in the attached Appendices.

Table 1. Treatment Prescriptions Summary Table

Task	Treatment	Prescription	Acres
1	Hand Cut & Pile	Treat all material <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing and activity generated fuels	391.6

Much of the treatment for this project will occur along publicly accessible USDA Forest Service system roads. When working within 200-ft of a roadside, contract crew will be required to display signage to indicate to oncoming traffic from both directions that work is ongoing. If any of the treatment activities demonstrate a risk of debris falling into the roadway, the contract crew will be required to perform traffic control to promote public safety. The contract crew will provide all the necessary signage.

Project Design Features are listed in Appendix D.

Task 1. Hand Cut & Pile – 391.6 Acres

Crews will perform hand cutting and piling following a Designation by Prescription as described below and further summarized in Appendices A & B under the “Hand “Thinning” and “Biomass & Slash Disposal”.

The prescription entails selectively cutting conifers to achieve an average basal area of approximately 80-120 square feet per acre while creating a healthy, discontinuous canopy. Leave tree spacing shall vary across the project area based on site-specific considerations, creating a mosaic landscape via retention of small dense clumps of trees with interlocking crowns, creation or expansion of openings, and removal of ladder fuels within 15 feet of the dripline of healthy canopy trees greater than 20” DBH. Treatments will generally include conifer trees up to 14-inches in diameter. Conifer trees greater than 14” and less than 20” DBH may be designated by CDA Project Manager to be cut to achieve the basal area objective. All stumps shall be cut to a height of 8-inches or lower from the uphill side.

Cut trees will be selected to thin the stand from below, targeting ladder fuels and trees with poor form. When selecting trees to thin, retain the largest, healthiest, best formed trees (free of forks, crooks, dead tops, trunk scars, single-sided crowns). Tree preferences for removal are white fir, lodgepole pine, Jeffrey pine, and juniper.

Cut all standing dead trees while retaining approximately 2-5 of the largest snags per acre. Retained snags shall be characterized as visible wildlife cavity trees to meet wildlife habitat objectives. Snags retained shall not pose a hazard to roads, trails, dispersed campsites, or other public infrastructure. This project area has active bark beetles, therefore, trees actively infested by bark beetles shall be considered dead. Remove all trees less than 20” DBH that exhibit red pitch tubes around more than 1/3 of the bole circumference.

Retained trees within 50 feet of system roads shall be pruned up to 8 feet from the ground, or 1/3 of the tree height, whichever is less. Pruning shall be conducted in a manner that maintains tree vigor and avoids unnecessary stress or damage to residual trees. Pruned branches shall be flush cut without damaging the bole or leaving branch stubs. All brush within 10 feet of USFS system roads shall be cut and piled or lopped and scattered to an acceptable depth. All live and dead brush shall be cut to a 4-inch stump or lower.

All activity generated fuels and preexisting fuels between 1 to 14-inches in diameter will be bucked down to 4-foot segments, all limbs will be cut from stems, and this material will be added piles. If there is insufficient material to build an acceptable pile, lop and scatter may be designated as the sole biomass and slash disposal treatment method.

Appendix A – Hand Thinning Specifications

I. Hand Thinning

All live fir 0”-14” DBH, pine 0”-14” DBH, and standing dead 0”-20” DBH may be considered for cut based on the following guidelines:

1. Thin stands to an average of 80 to 120 square feet per acre.
2. Leave tree spacing should vary and not be uniform by creating Individuals, Clumps, and Openings (ICO) pattern:
 - a. Leave some denser clumps of trees (<10-foot spacing) with interlocking crowns.
 - b. Create or enlarge existing openings in areas where there are pests/pathogens, existing dispersed campsites, sparse canopy cover, or other relevant factors. (0.25-1.0 acres).
 - c. Thin radially around individual healthy trees by removing all intermediate and suppressed trees within 15 feet of crown dripline.
3. Target declining, suppressed, intermediate, and co-dominant trees for removal. Leaving healthy dominant trees.
4. Cut all trees <14” DBH within 15 feet of the dripline of a healthy tree greater than 20” DBH that can act as ladder fuel.
5. Cut all standing dead trees, leaving 2-5 large diameter snags per acre that exhibit wildlife characteristics (cavities, forks, broken tops, etc.). Leave snags should not pose a hazard to roads, trails, or dispersed camp sites.
6. All green trees actively beetle-infested are considered dead. Cut all trees <14” DBH with red pitch tubes on >1/3 circumference of the bole.
7. Species in order preferred for removal:
 - a. White Fir
 - b. Lodgepole pine
 - c. Jeffrey Pine
 - d. Juniper (various)
8. Stump Heights
 - a. Stumps shall not exceed, on the side adjacent to the highest ground, the maximum height of 8 inches except that occasional stumps of greater heights are acceptable when CDA Project Manager determines that they are necessary for safe and efficient operations.
9. Residual Trees Along Roads
 - a. Limb residual trees 50 feet from system roads up to 8 feet in height or 1/3 of the height of the tree, whichever is less.
10. Brush Treatment
 - a. Cut all brush within 10 feet on each side of system roads to increase fire resilience and prepare for re-introduction of prescribed burning.

Appendix B – Biomass & Slash Disposal

I. Hand Piling

All activity generated fuels and pre-existing fuels that meet the utilization specification above shall be piled within units and designated areas. All piles shall be neat, compact and constructed by laying limbs, stems, boles and all other slash so that it is conical in shape. All piles shall be free of dirt. Pile must include a substantial amount of finer fuels to aid in ignition and consumption. These fine fuels shall be placed at the bottom of the pile and be progressively built up, beginning at the 1-hour size class (fines) and increasing in size-class. If fine fuels are not present to sufficiently meet the intent of acting as “kindling,” contractor shall notify the CDA Project Manager.

Piling in these units will occur under the following specifications, unless otherwise approved by the CDA Project Manager:

1. Minimum pile size shall be 8’ in diameter and 8’ in height
2. Wax paper shall be placed within the pile.
3. Piles shall NOT be placed:
 - a. Within control areas, except where designated by an Archeological Monitor
 - b. Within the dripline of residual trees
 - c. Within 5 feet of any down logs exceeding 12” in diameter at the small end.
 - d. Within dense, continuous shrubs
 - If piles must be placed in dense shrubs, a 2-foot buffer must be cut away from the pile.
 - e. On logs, rocks, or stumps
 - f. In roadways, trails, swales or drainage ditches
 - g. Within 10 feet of unclassified channel bottoms or within 25 feet of designated classified streams.
 - h. Within 15 feet of another pile
 - i. Within 15 feet of boles of residual trees
 - j. Within 10 feet of hiking trails and roads

II. Lop and Scatter

Lop and scatter shall occur in units where there is not enough material to build a sufficient pile to minimum specifications within 50 feet of pile location. Pending field verification, lop and scatter may be designated as the sole biomass and slash disposal treatment method for certain units.

All lop and scatter activities shall occur under the following specifications:

1. Material shall average no more than 6” in depth across the unit in a discontinuous manner
2. Lopped pieces shall not exceed 4 feet in length
3. Treatment material shall be left in condition that all pieces are not at risk of rolling

Appendix C – Specific Provisions by Unit

Unit No.	Acres	General Prescription	Cut Brush	Prune
I01	14.6	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
I02	10.6	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
M01	18.2	Cut & pile or lop & scatter <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, treat existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
M02	18.0	Cut & pile or lop & scatter <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, treat existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
M03	8.8	Cut & pile or lop & scatter <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, treat existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
H01	56.6	Cut & pile or lop & scatter <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, treat existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
H02	68.2	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
H04	21.7	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	N/A	N/A
H05	20.2	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
H06	50.0	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	N/A	N/A
H09	87.7	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road
WFR02-1	17.0	Cut & pile <14" DBH to an average target of 80-120 basal area, pile existing & activity generated fuels	10' from Road	50' from Road

Appendix D – Project Design Features

All operations as listed above shall follow all specifications described under this item.

I. EQUIPMENT CLEANING (As applicable)

Equipment and clothing shall be cleaned before entering project units. Equipment will be considered clean when visual inspections of tires, tracks, and underbody does not reveal soil, seeds, plant material or other such debris (as applicable). Disassembly of equipment components or specialized inspection equipment is not required.

II. LIMITED OPERATING PERIOD(S)

1. Snags

- a. Cutting of snags should not occur during the nesting period for cavity dependent species (April 15 – July 15). This limited operating period (LOP) may be adjusted during any year if a Wildlife Biologist determines breeding chronology does not coincide with these dates.

2. Nesting Birds

- a. If work takes place during nesting bird season (March 15-August 30), nesting bird surveys will be conducted by CDA or USFS staff within each annual treatment area prior to implementation. Surveys will include revisiting nest sites that have already been documented by Forest Service personnel. If nesting birds are detected, the nest structure and location will be flagged for avoidance until after the birds have fledged. This process will be completed in coordination with the Forest/Project wildlife biologist and suggestions about avoiding impacts while work continues will be applied.
- b. The Forest/Project wildlife biologist may adjust Limited Operating Periods (LOPs) as appropriate according to breeding chronology and environmental conditions on any given year.
- c. If indications of nesting raptors are detected, a Forest/Project wildlife biologist will be consulted and the nest structure, and any surrounding trees that provide beneficial thermal or predatory protection will be identified as a protective buffer while nest is active.
- d. If raptors have already laid eggs or chicks are in the nest, mechanical and aerial treatments will be prohibited within established protective buffers of raptor nests until chicks have fledged or nest is no longer in use. Hand treatments may occur within the protective buffer if the Forest Service/Project wildlife biologist determines nesting raptors will not abandon the nest. If work needs to occur within high-priority treatment units, near or adjacent to infrastructure raptor nests under construction may be dismantled to discourage nesting.

3. Goshawk PACs

- a. For all proposed treatment areas in suitable northern goshawk nesting habitat, a nest survey will be conducted before any tree thinning/cutting operations commence.
- b. A limited operating period (LOP) would prohibit vegetation treatments within approximately ¼ mile of any northern goshawk nest site during breeding season (February 15 through September 15). The prohibition would be lifted if surveys confirm northern goshawks are not nesting. If the location of a nest stand within a PAC is unknown, the LOP would either be applied to a ¼ mile area surrounding the PAC, or a Forest Service. Wildlife Biologist would conduct surveys to determine nest stand location. Upon Wildlife Biologist discretion, this limited operating period (LOP), may be adjusted and/or amended. A Wildlife Biologist will

confirm whether or not a goshawk PAC is in the project area and recommend protection measures.

III. BORAX APPLICATION

1. Jeffrey Pine stumps will be treated with a Cell-u-Treat or Borax fungicide to prevent the spread of root disease. It should be applied in a uniform coating and at a rate of one pound per 50 square feet of stump surface.
 - a. All stumps > 3" diameter within 300 feet of roads and infrastructure.
 - b. All stumps > 14" diameter throughout the entire project area
2. Application shall follow all State and Federal rules and regulations as they apply to this fungicide application.
3. Borax fungicide should be applied within 4 hours of stump creation. It will not be applied on rainy days, or within 200 feet of running or standing water.

IV. INVASIVE PLANTS

Known areas with invasive plants within the project area will be identified prior to operations. Identified areas may have operation restrictions.

V. CONTROL AREA(S)

1. Control Areas will be designated on contract maps and flagged on the ground. Monitors may be required for project work completed within Control Area.
2. Contractors may be subject to specific piling locations within Control Area, up to 50' maximum distance away from cutting location.
3. If unanticipated discoveries of a protected resource are made during project implementation, contractor shall notify CDA Project Manager immediately.

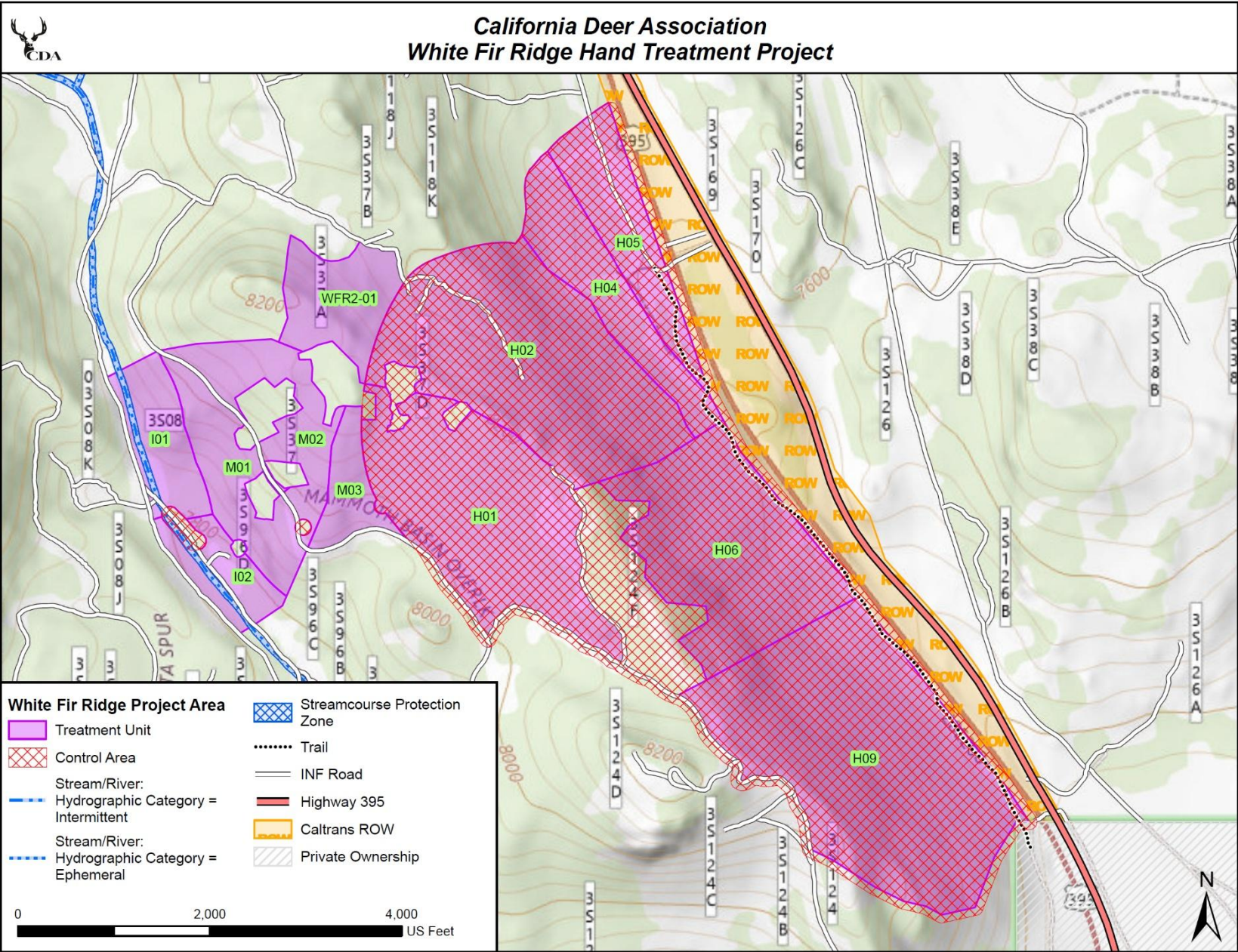
VI. INFRASTRUCTURE

1. The Contractor will be responsible for any damages to infrastructure within the project area.
2. Activity generated slash will be cleared from roads and parking areas upon completion of a unit and returned to near original condition as practical.
3. Damage to system roads shall be minimized and road integrity shall be maintained throughout operations. Prior to winter period roads shall be returned to near original condition as practicable. The roads within this project area are high use roads for visitors.
4. Contractor shall utilize system roads within the project area for transportation. Off-road driving on unrecognized roads must be approved by CDA Project Manager prior to use.

VII. TRAFFIC CONTROL

Contractor is responsible for controlling traffic when felling trees within 1.5 times the strike distance of any open trail or road.

Appendix E – Project Area Map (s)



Appendix F – Technical Proposal Guidelines

The California Deer Association (CDA) has prepared this guidance for the development and submittal of technical proposals for this project. Please review the guidelines for instructions on how to prepare and submit a bid for this project. Refer above for project treatments and specifications.

I. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

A. BIDDER'S QUALIFICATIONS

Before an offer is considered for award, the Bidder may be required to submit a technical and price proposal, as described in item C (1), and comply with all other provisions stated herein. The proposal should be practical and be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise delineation of what the Bidder will do to satisfy the requirements of the contract.

B. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Technical Proposal: The technical proposal will be used to make an evaluation and arrive at a determination as to whether the proposal will meet the requirements of CDA. Therefore, the technical proposal must present sufficient information to reflect a thorough understanding of the requirements and a detailed description of the techniques, procedures, and/or program for achieving the objectives of the specifications/statement of work.

- a) Technical proposals will be evaluated and ranked on the basis of the following criteria. As a minimum, the proposal must clearly provide the following:

i. Technical Approach

1. Describe your plan of operations. Include a timeline and the rationale for the work activities identified to ensure all contractual requirements will be completed by the termination date.
2. Describe your quality control plan for work performed.

ii. Capability and Past Performance

1. Provide a list of the experience of your key personnel who will be working on this contract.
2. Identify subcontractors you propose to use for this contract and the work activities planned for subcontracting. Describe subcontractor's past performance as able. If any subcontractors are certified in their area of expertise, provide information as to when, what, and by whom they are certified.
3. Submit a list of similar or related contracts that your firm has completed in the past 3 years. This listing must include the contract type; contract amount or contract size; location, the year completed, the Agency, company or individual contracted with, and a current telephone number.

iii. Utilization of Local Work Force

1. Local labor is defined as local and regional communities. Identify how you intend to utilize labor, subcontractors, and other workforce from the local area. Additional evaluation preferences will be given for the use of labor or subcontractors located closest to the contract area.

- 2) Price Proposal: All bidders shall provide a total proposed cost for completion of the listed project work. **CDA encourages bidders to submit a cost estimate based on price per acre.** Compensation shall be issued upon CDA's receipt and acceptance of each completed

deliverable, with payment tied to the submission of each individual report and its associated work products.

II. RFP RESPONSE SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

A. CDA CONTACTS

All contact during the competitive process is to be through the CDA contact person: Lauren Archer – larcher@caldeer.org

B. SUBMITTAL OF RFP RESPONSE

- 1) Late responses will not be accepted.
- 2) RFP responses must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday October 2nd, 2026. Any RFP response received after that time or date cannot be considered and will be returned to the Bidder.
- 3) RFP responses are to be submitted on the CDA webpage platform.
- 4) Please include “**White Fir Ridge Hand Treatment**” in the Subject Line for bids.
- 5) All costs required for the preparation and submission of an RFP response shall be borne by the Bidder.
- 6) Bidder expressly acknowledges that it is aware that if a false claim is knowingly submitted (as the terms “claim” and “knowingly” are defined in the California False Claims Act, Cal. Gov. Code, §12650 et seq.), CDA will be entitled to civil remedies set forth in the California False Claim Act.
- 7) **It is understood that CDA reserves the right to reject any or all RFP responses.**

C. RESPONSE FORMAT

- 1) Bidders shall not submit to CDA a re-typed or otherwise re-created version of these documents or any other CDA-provided document.
- 2) RFP responses, in whole or in part, are NOT to be marked confidential or proprietary. CDA may refuse to consider any RFP response or part thereof so marked. RFP responses submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to public disclosure. CDA shall not be liable in any way for disclosure of any such records.

III. CDA PROCEDURES, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS

A. RFP ACCEPTANCE AND AWARD

- 1) RFP responses will be evaluated by a selection committee (i.e., CDA, USFS).
- 2) **The committee will recommend award to the Bidder who, in its opinion, is best qualified to perform the work described in this RFP. Award may not necessarily be made to the Bidder with the lowest bid. (Best Value)**
- 3) CDA reserves the right to award a single or to multiple General Service Providers, dependent upon what is in the best interest of CDA.
- 4) CDA has the right to decline to award this contract or any part of it for any reason.
- 5) Any specifications, terms, or conditions issued by CDA, or those included in the Bidder’s submission, in relation to this RFP, may be incorporated into any contract that may be awarded as a result of this RFP.
- 6) CDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to accept one part of a proposal and reject the other, unless the bidder stipulates to the contrary, and to waive technical defects, as the interest of CDA may require. Award will be made by an authorized CDA Representative.

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All bids are subject to evaluation by the Selection Committee (SC). The SC will be composed of CDA staff, USFS staff, and other individuals who have expertise or experience in this type of

project. The SC will select/recommend a Bidder in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP. Evaluation criteria include technical approach, capacity and past performance, and benefits to local communities. The evaluation of the RFP responses shall be within the sole judgment and discretion of the SC.

The award will be made to the Bidder (a) whose proposal is technically acceptable and (b) whose technical/price relationship is the most advantageous to CDA. Therefore, CDA reserves the right to award without discussions with the Bidders. However, after receipt of initial offers, written or oral discussions may be conducted with all responsible Bidders whose offers are determined to be in the competitive range. Discussions conducted after receipt of an offer do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by CDA.

Firms lacking a past performance record (new firms or those with no relevant experience within their organization) will be treated as an unknown performance risk and will receive a neutral rating in this criterion. A neutral rating will be established as the average of all other competing Bidders.

CDA will base the award decision on a tradeoff between price and non-price factors, comparing the relative risk to CDA of poor or non-performance posed by each of the Bidders, and making a judgement as to whether or not reduced risk of performance is worth additional cost. In some cases, this will result in award to a lower-ranked but lower-priced offer, in other cases award may be to a higher-ranked but higher-priced offer. CDA may, when in its interest, reject any or all offers or waive any informality in offers received.