

TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
Water Supply Enhancement Program
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Instructions for FY2018-2018 Proposal for Water Supply Enhancement Project

Introduction

As the population in Texas increases in size every year, the importance of water supply also increases. The TSSWCB administers the WSEP to increase available surface and ground water supplies through the targeted control of water-depleting brush in areas in need of water conservation. The WSEP offers cost-share assistance to landowners to help increase water supplies for municipal Water User Groups.

The *FY2018-2019 Proposal for Water Supply Enhancement Project* form provides the TSSWCB a detailed explanation of each proposal seeking funding. These proposals will be ranked against other proposals throughout the state (see the TSSWCB *State Water Supply Enhancement Plan* adopted January 19, 2017, posted on the agency website). This document provides instructions for completing the proposal application and provides explanations and resources for answering the questions on the application form. If additional space is needed to answer any question on the form, attach a separate sheet.

This request for proposals (RFP) is being released prior to the conclusion of the 85th Texas Legislature and final approval of the State's budget for the 2018-2019 biennium. Any project allocations approved by the TSSWCB based on this RFP will ultimately depend on the outcome of the budget approval process for the 2018-2019 biennium.

Question

Is the Project Applicant an entity other than a soil and water conservation district (SWCD) (for example, a private company, a municipality, or a groundwater conservation district)?

Explanation

SWCDs are fundamental to the implementation of the WSEP by providing technical assistance to landowners for brush control to enhance water supplies. If the Project Applicant is NOT a SWCD, then the Project Applicant must obtain a letter of support from the affected SWCD for this proposed project. Without a letter of support from the affected SWCD, a project application will be considered to not qualify for funding.

Question

Has a Feasibility Study with a watershed-specific computer model been published for the watershed of the proposed project? If yes, identify the document.

Explanation

The proposed project must have a Feasibility Study with a watershed-specific computer model performed by an individual with expertise in hydrology, water resources, or another technical area pertinent to evaluation of water supply (per §203.053 Agriculture Code). Only Feasibility Studies accepted by the TSSWCB as of March 23, 2017 will be considered as eligible Project Watersheds for this RFP. As a result, any Feasibility Studies currently in

progress that may be completed and accepted by the State Board after March 23, 2017 would only be eligible for WSEP cost-share funding in subsequent RFPs issued for FY2020 and beyond. Published Feasibility Studies, which have been accepted by the State Board as approved project watersheds, are available on the TSSWCB website at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/reports#feasibilitystudy>.

Question

Subbasin from Feasibility Study where proposed project will be implemented (limit one subbasin per application).

Explanation

Identify which subbasin the proposed project will be implemented in. From the Feasibility Study, use the subbasin number, name, or unique identifier. A maximum of only one (1) subbasin may be listed on each application.

Question

Is a water conservation need documented in the *2017 State Water Plan* for the target water supply? In other words, are projected water demands in excess of existing water supplies for the municipal Water User Groups relying on the target water supply?

Explanation

Agriculture Code §203.053 requires that in prioritizing water supply enhancement projects for funding, the TSSWCB shall consider the need for conservation of water resources within the territory of the project, based on the *State Water Plan* as adopted by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) (not the Regional Water Plans adopted by the 16 Regional Water Planning Groups). Project eligibility, as related to the *State Water Plan* as adopted by the TWDB, will be based on the documented water conservation need for each target water supply. TWDB defines need as projected water demands in excess of existing water supplies for a particular Water User Group. Information in the *State Water Plan* can be obtained on the TWDB website at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/> or at <http://texasstatewaterplan.org/>.

Question

Is brush control identified as a recommended Water Management Strategy in the *2017 State Water Plan* for the watershed of the proposed project?

Explanation

There are 16 Regional Water Planning Areas in the State of Texas. Each Region identifies particular strategies in the *State Water Plan* to help meet water demands in their region. While project eligibility as related to the *State Water Plan* will be based on the documented water conservation need for each target water supply, a connection to RWPGs and their decisions on water management strategies is important. Therefore, if brush control is included as a recommended water management strategy in the *2017 State Water Plan* for a particular RWPG, then a **2% bonus** to the base calculated Ranking Index will be applied to the associated proposed project. Information in the *State Water Plan* can be obtained on the TWDB website at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/> or at <http://texasstatewaterplan.org/>.

Question

In which Regional Water Planning Area is the proposed project located?

Explanation

There are 16 Regional Water Planning Areas in the State of Texas. Each proposed project area will be located in at least one Region; and, in some cases more than one Region.

Information in the *State Water Plan* can be obtained on the TWDB website at

<http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/> or at <http://texasstatewaterplan.org/>.

Question

Overall goal of the project.

Explanation

Each project that is funded must have an overall project goal. Please explain in detail the overall goal of the proposed project. Describe the type and amount of brush to be treated, the public water supply to be enhanced, and the municipal Water User Group to be benefited.

Question

Describe the method of treatment and the maximum cost per treated acre for the method.

Explanation

Provide method of treatment of brush (e.g., mechanical such as grubbing or shearing or chemical such as aerially-applied herbicide) for the proposed project and the maximum cost per acre for the method.

Question

Water Yield (gallons per treated acre per year; for subbasin from Feasibility Study).

Explanation

Indicate the water yield expected for this project in gallons per treated acre per year. Please include **ANY** and **ALL** information explaining how this estimate was calculated. For example, if the project had a Feasibility Study, a computer model, an ongoing study, or other information necessary to provide an accurate water yield estimate. If a Feasibility Study is published for the watershed, then this water yield number should correspond to the subbasin in the report.

Question

Cost of added water per acre-foot.

Explanation

Indicate the average cost of added water in \$ per acre-foot. Please include **ANY** and **ALL** information explaining how this estimate was calculated. For example, if the project had a Feasibility Study, a computer model, an ongoing study, or other information necessary to provide an accurate average cost of water enhanced for water supply.

Question

Total cost of proposed project.

Explanation

Please provide the total cost of this proposed project. This should be the amount of cost-share funds that can be obligated to landowners over the project period. Base the cost on a two-year project period. A maximum of \$600,000 over the project period may be requested.

Question

Cost-Share Rate.

Explanation

Indicate the cost-share rate for the proposed project. Will the cost-share rate be less than 70%? Per 31 TAC §517.25(f)(3), in order to address the criterion in Agriculture Code §203.053(d), the Ranking Index may be adjusted for projects that propose a more favorable cost-sharing contract rate. That is, the Ranking Index will be adjusted to give more favorable consideration to a project that proposes a cost-share rate that lessens the State's cost. Therefore, if the proposed cost-share rate for a project is less than or equal to 60% but greater than 50%, a **2% bonus** to the base calculated Ranking Index will be applied to the associated proposed project. And, if the proposed cost-share rate for a project is less than or equal to 50%, a **5% bonus** to the base calculated Ranking Index will be applied to the associated proposed project.

Question

Public Water Supply expected to be enhanced by the proposed project.

Explanation

Provide a detailed description of the surface waterbody or aquifer to be enhanced through brush control. This should be the most immediate public water supply downstream of the project subbasin.

Question

Municipal Water User Groups relying on the Public Water Supply expected to be enhanced by the proposed project.

Explanation

Identify the municipal Water User Groups who rely on the waterbody or aquifer to be enhanced. Information about municipal Water User Groups is in the *State Water Plan*, which can be obtained on the TWDB website at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/> or at <http://texasstatewaterplan.org/>.

Question

Describe severity of water shortage in either 1) the watershed of the proposed project, or 2) the municipal Water User Groups to be benefited by the proposed project.

Explanation

Please provide detailed information about the water shortage in the proposed project area or for the affected municipal Water User Groups. Please include the current population that this project will affect and drought stage, if any. Information about Public Water Supplies and drought stages can be obtained on the TCEQ website at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/trot/droughtw.html>. Information on current reservoir levels, drought conditions, and aquifer levels can be obtained on the TWDB website at <http://waterdatafortexas.org/>.

Question

Describe impact of brush control in proposed project area on wildlife.

Explanation

Will brush control have a negative or positive impact on wildlife in the proposed project area? Explain.

Question

Describe anticipated level of landowner participation in proposed project area.

Explanation

Explain how many landowners are willing to participate in the proposed project area. If possible include the number of landowners willing and the acreage the willing landowners will treat (for example, "All 15 landowners in the proposed area are willing to participate and treat a total of 18,439 acres of brush."). Also, include any forms *WSEP 001 Application for Water Supply Enhancement Program Assistance* that have been completed by individuals willing to participate in the WSEP in the proposed project area.

Question

How does the applicant SWCD propose to provide technical assistance to landowners for brush control and to administer the water supply enhancement cost-share program for this project?

Explanation

Per 31 TAC §517.39, in order to maximize the effective and efficient use of WSEP grant funds, an SWCD participating in a water supply enhancement project must choose one of two options to provide technical assistance to landowners for brush control and to administer the water supply enhancement cost-share program. Option A – The participating SWCD agrees to allow a regional conservation technician to implement the project within the jurisdiction of that SWCD on behalf of that SWCD. Option B – If a participating SWCD chooses to administer the project within the jurisdiction of that SWCD, then that SWCD agrees to employ a local district conservation technician to provide technical assistance and to administer the cost-share program within the jurisdiction of that SWCD. Costs incurred by the participating SWCD under Option B may be eligible for reimbursement from TSSWCB. Indicate which Option the affected SWCD chooses for this project application.

Question

Description of watershed of proposed project including soil types, land use, slope, brush distribution and density, surface and ground water resources, and proximity of brush to waterbodies and other hydrologically sensitive areas critical to streamflow and aquifer recharge.

Explanation

Describe the characteristics of the watershed of the proposed project, including soil types, slope, land use, vegetation, brush distribution and density, surface and ground water resources, and proximity of the brush to waterbodies and other hydrologically sensitive areas critical to streamflow and aquifer recharge. Also, if possible, attach a detailed map of the proposed project area showing the location of brush to be removed and number of acres to be treated. This information will aid in completing the geospatial analysis.

Question

Other funding sources to help offset State cost not to exceed 80% of the total cost of the project.

Explanation

Explain if there will be any other funding source for the project. For example, will a city, municipality, water supplier, river authority, or any other group be providing any money for the proposed project, either as cost-share for landowners or for administrative costs to implement the project?

Question

Brush to be treated.

Explanation

For each type of brush to be addressed through the proposed project, indicate 1) the density of brush as a percentage of canopy cover across the entire subbasin, and 2) the total number of acres of brush to be treated in the proposed project area. Brush acreage cannot be larger than the total acreage of the project subbasin. If brush type is other, identify the species.