



Request for Proposals for the West Mono Basin Project: 2026 Sub-POD Field Verification

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Attachments

- EXHIBIT A. INSURANCE PROVISIONS
- EXHIBIT B. PROJECT AREA MAPS
- EXHIBIT C. INF MOTOR VEHICLE USE MAPS
- EXHIBIT D. BID TABLE (Excel Spreadsheet)

1 INTRODUCTION

[Whitebark Institute \(WBI\)](#) is seeking contractor(s) (CONTRACTOR) to verify and establish Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) boundaries for the [West Mono Basin Project](#) (PROJECT). The PROJECT is located in the Mono Lake Ranger District on Inyo National Forest (INF) lands. This PROJECT includes up to **36,225 acres** and will require evaluation of sub delineations of Potential Operational Delineations (sub-PODs).

Responses to this Request for Proposals (RFP) are due no later than 5:00PM (PDT) on May 1, 2026, via email. See Section 6, Proposal Submission and Selection, for further details. Insurance provisions (Exhibit A), project area maps (Exhibit B), Inyo National Forest (INF) motor vehicle use maps (Exhibit C), and bid table (Exhibit D) are attached.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

WBI is a non-profit organization partnering with the INF to develop wildfire resilience projects that benefit communities and ecosystems in the West Mono Basin watershed. This project takes an all-lands approach; however, the majority of lands fall within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The goal of the West Mono Basin Project is to design vegetation treatment projects and conduct associated environmental planning with the objectives of reducing the likelihood of severe wildfires, increasing community resilience to wildfire, improving ecosystem resilience, reducing risks to natural and cultural resources and critical infrastructure, and enabling the maintenance of fuel reduction treatments by reintroducing fire to the landscape. While Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) exist for the West Mono Basin watershed, sub-POD verification (the PROJECT) has been identified as a key need to advance West Mono Basin project planning.

3 SCOPE

It is the intent of these specifications, terms, and conditions to describe the services WBI is seeking. WBI intends to award a contract to the CONTRACTOR(s) that best meet WBI's and USFS's requirements. The contract term shall begin on the date it is executed by WBI and shall terminate upon completion of the work, but no later than November 30, 2026.

WBI and INF are seeking CONTRACTOR(s) to conduct field verification of sub-POD delineations developed by INF through GIS analysis based on fire risk and associated terrain features, including, but not limited to, trails, roads, rivers, and ridgelines.

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

Project work will occur on INF lands within the Mono Lake Ranger District at elevations ranging from approximately 6,400 to 10,000 feet. The project area may be snow-covered and inaccessible from late October through April or May, depending on snowfall. The town of June Lake, at 7,636 feet in elevation, receives an average of approximately 70 inches of snow annually. The town of Lee Vining (6,766 feet) also receives snowfall throughout the winter months. Accordingly, fieldwork windows may be limited to late spring, summer, and early fall. Up to 36,225 acres have been identified by INF and WBI for sub-POD delineation verification. Please refer to the maps and associated table in Exhibit B for specific PODs, sub-PODs, acreages, and geographic descriptions. The included maps are georeferenced and can be used in Avenza Maps (or similar applications). Sub-PODs are primarily accessed via USFS roads off U.S. Highway 395 and California State Routes 158 and 120.

3.1.1 Terrain

Most sub-PODs occur on sloped, rugged terrain, creating challenging hiking and driving conditions. CONTRACTOR(s) must be able to safely perform fieldwork in these conditions. Access is limited and may require a 4WD or high-clearance vehicle. While some sub-POD boundaries can be surveyed by vehicle, others will require hiking on and off established trails. CONTRACTOR(s) should obtain current access information from the Mono Lake Ranger District prior to fieldwork. Vehicle use is restricted to roads designated in the INF Motor Vehicle Use Maps (Exhibit C).

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF WORK

3.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this work is to confirm that existing PODs have been appropriately divided into sub-POD units for use in prescribed fire and wildfire control. Sub-PODs to be verified vary widely in size and complexity. They include smaller units of 30–50 acres, which may include infrastructure or other high-value assets as well as larger units spanning thousands of acres with fewer values at risk.

Each sub-POD boundary should function as a reliable holding feature during both prescribed burns and wildfire events. Wherever possible, boundaries should align with existing natural or man-made features, such as roads, vegetation changes, or terrain.

3.2.2 Requirements and Data Processing

The CONTRACTOR(s) must be familiar with and capable of using the Esri ArcGIS Field Maps® application to verify sub-POD boundaries and track new boundary lines, as applicable. A Field Maps form will be provided by WBI for completion of the required work. POD and sub-POD delineation data will also be provided by WBI and INF, along with access to an Esri account. The INF Fire Management Specialist will train the CONTRACTOR(s) on how to properly complete the Field Maps form.



CONTRACTOR(S) are responsible for providing a tablet, phone, or other device with integrated GPS and wireless connectivity (4G/5G/Wi-Fi) to support Field Maps functionality and fieldwork. CONTRACTOR(S) must also communicate regularly with INF and WBI, providing progress updates through weekly or biweekly meetings.

All data and field verifications conducted by the CONTRACTOR(s) will be reviewed by the INF Fire Management Specialist for approval. If the data are deemed insufficient or are not approved, WBI may require the CONTRACTOR(s) to revisit and redo field verification efforts.

3.2.3 Services

CONTRACTOR(s) shall deliver the following services:

- Provide staff trained in the necessary desktop and field verification techniques to complete all components of sub-POD verification, as determined by the INF Fire Management Specialist.
- Provide the equipment required to complete all work in a timely and efficient manner within the specified timeline.
- Prepare draft and final technical reports describing methodologies, sub-PODs visited, explanations for any sub-PODs not field-verified, and justification for suggested edits to sub-POD boundaries.
- Submit completed Field Maps forms daily, either in real time when cellular service is available or by uploading collected data at the end of each day.
- Provide recommendations for alternative sub-POD delineation lines through the Field Maps application, including reasoning and justification (e.g., connections to control features).
- Participate in training with the INF Fire Management Specialist to ensure proper data collection and completion of the Field Maps form.

3.2.4 Qualifications

CONTRACTOR(s) should hold, or have previously held, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) wildland fire qualifications at the Firing Boss (FIRB) level or higher. CONTRACTOR(s) should have a minimum of three years of experience as a FIRB or higher. They should also have prior experience in field verification of PODs and sub-PODs, as well as in data processing and GIS analytics. Preference will be given to CONTRACTOR(s) with experience serving as a FIRB on INF lands and/or in the Eastern Sierra.

4 DELIVERABLES

4.1 PRODUCT

Final product must consist of:

- A final GIS dataset of sub-POD boundaries, based on field verification and the initial draft sub-PODs developed by INF and WBI staff, as shown in the maps and outlined in the table in Exhibit B.



- Verification and any sub-POD edits must be recorded in Field Maps and reviewed by INF fire staff prior to finalization.
- A GIS dataset documenting the locations where sub-POD field verification was completed, including all unverified lines and polygons, along with a justification for any non-verification.

4.2 SCHEDULE OF WORK

Upon award of this contract, work may begin as soon as conditions allow. The CONTRACTOR(s) shall maintain communications with the WBI Project Manager (PM) about current conditions and expected start dates once the contract is awarded.

Start Date: Spring 2026, depending on snow conditions.

Contract Timeline: Preference will be given to CONTRACTOR(s) who can complete the contracted services within a single season, generally from May or June through October or November. CONTRACTOR(s) may propose alternative timelines, which must be clearly detailed in the submitted Technical Proposal. See Section 6 for Technical Proposal requirements.

5 CONTRACTOR SELECTION PROCESS

5.1 CONTRACTOR SELECTION PROCESS SCHEDULE OF WORK

See **Table 1** below for the CONTRACTOR selection process schedule of work.

Table 1: CONTRACTOR(s) Selection Process Schedule of Work

Description	Completion Date
Advertisement of RFP	Friday, April 10, 2026
CONTRACTOR RFP Questions Due (via email)	Wednesday, April 15, 2026
Responses to RFP Questions Distributed (via email)	Friday, April 17, 2026
Proposals Due	Monday, April 27, 2026
Evaluation and Selection	Friday, May 1, 2026

5.2 RFP QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Any clarifications or questions should be requested **via email** (no phone calls) from the contact below by **5:00 pm on April 15, 2026**. Questions received after this deadline may not be answered.

Questions should be emailed to Project Manager, Jackie White, jackie@whitebarkinstitute.org. Responses to all questions received will be emailed to all CONTRACTOR(s) by **5:00 pm April 17, 2026**.

6 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION & SELECTION

6.1 REQUIRED PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

In response to this RFP, include the following information:

- Technical Proposal approach, including planned methodologies, covering:
 1. Estimated number of days for each sub-POD provided in the RFP and overall project completion timeline.
 2. Ability to complete the work within the described timeline and relevant experience working in the local area.
 3. Plan for accomplishing the work using personnel and equipment.
- Subcontractors (if any) to be used and proposed equipment.
- Verification of FIRB qualifications and relevant experience for CONTRACTOR(s), employees, and subcontractors.
- Past performance on similar projects, including references.
- CONTRACTOR Bid Table (Exhibit D).

6.2 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be submitted via email no later than 5:00 PM (PDT) on April 27, 2026, to Project Manager Jackie White at jackie@whitebarkinstitute.org.

Without exception, proposals submitted after the deadline will not be accepted, regardless of any technical difficulties. If a proposal does not include all required information, it may be considered incomplete and rejected without further evaluation. WBI shall not, under any circumstances, be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by the CONTRACTOR in preparing its proposal, and CONTRACTOR(s) must not include such expenses as part of their proposal.

6.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by WBI and INF. There may be interviews with the top qualified CONTRACTOR(s). CONTRACTOR(s) must have a minimum of three years of experience as a Firing Boss to be considered eligible. CONTRACTOR(s) will be scored on each of the following criteria using a scale of 0-5 which will be multiplied by the weighted values, with 0 = below average and 5 = exceptional (Table 2).

Table 2. Proposal scoring criteria and rating system.

Scoring Criteria	Weight Factor	Rating (0-5)	Weighted Rating
A. Technical proposal/proposed approach to the project/methodologies proposed, overall ability to meet project goals, requirements, and	20		



timelines			
B. Local expertise and years of experience	20		
C. Experience with GIS and Field Maps	15		
D. Price/cost	10		
E. Past performance and references	5		
Total Score:			

6.3.1 Selection Notification

WBI will notify successful and unsuccessful bidders by **Friday May 1, 2026**, and will prepare a separate contract document for the successful bidder.