

## **WAFWA Request for Proposals**

**Closing date extended to October 9, 2023**

### **Coordinator of the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI)**

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) is seeking a skilled independent contractor to lead the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) and serve as the Program Coordinator. The WNTI Coordinator serves as an expert advisor and senior leader as the convening partner in conservation of 21 focal species of western native trout and char in 12 western states. The Coordinator plays a leading role in developing and maintaining WNTI as a top performing initiative of WAFWA and premier Fish Habitat Partnership by demonstrating their ability to maintain strategic direction, innovate, cultivate relationships with key decision-makers; write and deliver communications; and pursue and acquire targeted fundraising. Working through a shared vision from WAFWA leadership and a Steering Committee, the Coordinator may oversee work products of additional WNTI contractors and needed service providers as appropriate.

### **BACKGROUND ON WNTI**

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) represents 24 states and Canadian provinces, an area covering nearly 3.7 million square miles of some of North America's most wild and scenic country. WAFWA's reach encompasses more than 40 percent of North America, including two-thirds of the United States.

WNTI is an initiative of WAFWA and is recognized as a Fish Habitat Partnership by the National Fish Habitat Partnership Program (NFHP). Covering over 1.75 million square miles of public and privately managed lands, WNTI and our partners combine science-based assessments with expert and local knowledge to establish joint priorities for native trout conservation at a landscape scale. Since its inception, WNTI has directed over \$7 million in federal fish habitat funds leveraged with over \$57 million public and private matching dollars for 226 priority native trout conservation projects. With the collaboration and coordination of WNTI Partners, together we have removed 163 barriers to fish passage, reconnected or improved 2,072 miles of native trout habitat, and placed 41 protective fish barriers to conserve important native trout conservation populations. In order to ensure our collaborative investments are directed toward the highest priority projects, WNTI has funded over 1,123 watershed, fish population, and habitat surveys and assessed 2,482 stream miles.

WNTI's operational and fiduciary obligations are to WAFWA as a nonprofit organization and administered under the eligibility requirements of funding through NFHP. This is supported through the establishment of a WNTI Steering Committee which provides strategic guidance and maintains relevancy and needed direction for governance. The WNTI Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from 12 western state fish and wildlife agencies, 3 federal natural resource agencies, Native American Tribes, Canadian provincial fish and wildlife agencies, and Trout Unlimited. WNTI has partnered with over 350 organizations, nonprofits and businesses,

and works collaboratively across 12 western states to conserve (protect, restore, and recover) 21 native trout and char species. Formed in 2006, WNTI provides a novel perspective and impetus to improve the return on investment of the time, money and workforce dedicated to native trout conservation.

See <https://westernnativetrout.org> for information on WNTI's work and accomplishments.

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

Objectives for this position include all coordination tasks that enable WNTI to implement the actions of its Strategic Plan, manage the WNTI Steering Committee and governance requirements, and fulfill its obligations as a partnership under NFHP and as an Initiative under WAFWA. The Coordinator's long-term annual goal is to raise a minimum of 250K/year in funding to support WNTI operations and on-the-ground habitat restoration projects.

Core areas of responsibility include:

- WNTI Steering Committee coordination
- Strategic and Operational planning
- WAFWA and NFHP related coordination
- Operations/Administration and Budget
- Grant and project oversight and administration
- Development, Outreach, and Marketing
- Coordinate deliverables and work assigned to other WNTI contractors

The selected Coordinator will be an independent contractor with WAFWA who will work under the guidance of the WAFWA Board and Executive Team and the WNTI Steering Committee to meet its vision, mission, goals and objectives. The Coordinator organizes and assigns the work of WNTI and is responsible for implementing the scope of work detailed below. Accordingly, the Coordinator should have experience in group coordination and facilitation, leadership, project management, and have strong writing skills. WAFWA will administer funds related to this contract and all grants associated with WNTI. All invoices and related documentation will be submitted through WAFWA's business offices for processing, accounting, and inclusion in the annual budget and audit cycle.

Most activities for this position are administrative in nature and performed from a desk in an office setting. The Coordinator typically travels to meetings approximately 3-5 times each year, and travel expenses are reimbursed. The Coordinator is responsible for paying self-employment taxes, providing his/her/their own benefits (such as health insurance), as well as office space and equipment (computer, printer, phone) essential to this role. WAFWA/WNTI will not provide benefits nor support services, including office space and secretarial services, for the benefit of the Coordinator. This position is fully remote; preference will be given to individuals based in the Western U.S.

The Coordinator is monitored and evaluated by the WNTI Steering Committee through annual performance metrics, oversight by WAFWA's Executive Director and Board, and WNTI's annual

performance evaluation by the NFHP Board. The contract agreement administered by WAFWA on behalf of WNTI covers on-going coordination activities at a minimum through September 30, 2025. Pending funding levels and need, the WNTI Steering Committee, WAFWA Leadership, and the selected Coordinator may choose to extend the contract or select a different Coordinator for future activities past September 30, 2025, at their discretion. The ideal candidate will commit to the Coordinator position for two years, with a strong desire to serve in the role longer term depending on performance and available funding.

Start date is negotiable with a target date of November 6, 2023. The successful candidate will work alongside the current WNTI Coordinator until the end of December 2023.

## **DESIRED EDUCATION/KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS**

- Bachelor's degree or higher in public/nonprofit administration, communications, fisheries biology, aquatic ecology or related field and at least 3 years' fundraising experience.
- A demonstrable history of partnership cultivation and participation.
- Knowledge and understanding of principles of fundraising and donor stewardship.
- Knowledge of fisheries biology, aquatic ecology, and conservation.
- Previous involvement with natural resource conservation issues and programs.
- Experience in how to work effectively with a Steering Committee (or Board) and other key partners and leaders.
- Familiarity with non-profit, state, federal, and tribal fish management resource entities or past experience that demonstrates the ability to grow relationships with these entities.

## **DESIRED QUALITIES**

- High degree of energy, integrity and determination, as well as the intellectual, organizational, and personal qualities to quickly earn respect and foster collaboration.
- Ability to think strategically and create competitive and innovative strategies and plans.
- Highly efficient in priority setting, time management and meeting deadlines under pressure.
- Ability to work and make judgments independently and take initiative.
- Confidence to experiment to find creative solutions.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

All anticipated tasks are listed below and specific work related to each task will be further refined through coordination between the selected Coordinator and the WNTI Steering Committee.

### **Coordination and Representation (40% of time)**

- Manage WNTI's Steering Committee membership and operation within its Bylaws.
- Coordinate and conduct bi-monthly Steering Committee Zoom meetings, and at least two annual in person meetings of the Steering Committee. Prepare and distribute meeting notes following conference calls and meetings.
- Coordinate and conduct 3-4 WNTI leadership Zoom meetings annually.
- Coordinate WNTI strategic and annual operational/business activities.
- Coordinate a WNTI update at annual interagency native trout species conservation or management team meetings.

#### National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP)-related coordination

- Represent WNTI at NFHP Board meetings and functions. Represent WNTI in bi-monthly coordination conference calls of the Board staff and other NFHP Fish Habitat Partnerships nationwide. Serve as WNTI point of contact for information requests in all matters pertaining to the Board (e.g., participation on Board committees; input requested for developing Board guidelines or policies; review of reports, news releases, or products developed by the Board pertaining to WNTI, etc.).
- Interpret NFHP Board policy and program guidance to ensure WNTI operations and program delivery are in accordance with that policy and guidance.
- Coordinate with other Fish Habitat Partnerships and identify ways to work together to leverage resources to meet objectives.
- Support NFHP national projects database development, populate WNTI entries.

#### Western Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies (WAFWA)-related coordination

- Maintain communications and administrative direction and operations with WAFWA business office and Executive Leadership.
- Participate in WAFWA summer conference; present WNTI updates to WAFWA Fish Chiefs, build a vision for WNTI with Fisheries Committee, and provide updates as requested by Executive Committee.
- Interact with Fish Chiefs, Fisheries Committee, Directors, and Executive Leadership (as requested) as required to maintain strategic priorities from the Board.
- Provide WNTI updates for WAFWA website, articles for WAFWA e newsletters.

### **Operations/Administration and Budget (30% of time)**

#### WNTI/WAFWA tasks

- Prepare WNTI's annual budget and workplan.
- Administer/oversee WNTI's annual operations grant agreement, monitor budget, oversee 2-3 subcontracts, approve and submit invoices, produce interim and final reports.
- Run WNTI's annual Small Grants Request for Proposals process, oversee all WNTI awarded Small Grants agreements, review/approve invoices and reports.

- Coordinate deliverables and work assigned to other WNTI contractors: Science and Data Specialist, Technical Writer, Communications Specialist, Western Native Trout Challenge Manager.
- Lead development of grants to other funders: write grant applications, coordinate budgets and deliverables with on-the-ground project leads, approve and submit invoices, produce interim and final reports.
- Work with WAFWA to track donations to WAFWA’s Foundation for Western Fish and Wildlife and send thank you notes to donors.
- Work with WAFWA to track Western Native Trout Challenge registrations and donations.

NFHP tasks

- Run WNTI’s NFHP annual Request for Proposals, coordinate project review/ranking process with WNTI Steering Committee.
- Coordinate and write annual NFHP allocation report including completing WNTI recommended projects’ data entry into national projects database.
- Coordinate and write report for NFHP Board evaluation of WNTI and application for Congressional reauthorization in 2025.
- Ensure WNTI meets requirements for maintaining NFHP operational support and on-the-ground-project funding and seeks non-federal match and additional operational funding as needed.

**Development, Outreach, and Marketing (30% of time)**

- Coordinator’s annual goal is to raise a minimum of 250K/year in funding to support WNTI operations and on the ground habitat projects in WNTI’s Species of Emphasis portfolios.
- Outreach to partner agencies and organizations to enhance and expand support and participation in WNTI’s delivery of conservation actions. Foster collaborative partnerships capable of implementing on-the-ground projects.
- Assist Communications Specialist in implementation of WNTI’s Campaign for Western Native Trout and in marketing of WNTI’s Western Native Trout Challenge to anglers.

**RFP PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Your proposal must be emailed by October 9, 2023, to Therese Thompson, WNTI Coordinator at [thompson@westernnativetrout.org](mailto:thompson@westernnativetrout.org). No late submissions will be accepted. Start date is negotiable with a target date of November 6, 2023. The successful candidate will work alongside the current WNTI Coordinator until the end of December 2023.

If you have questions about the position or the RFP process, please email Therese Thompson [thompson@westernnativetrout.org](mailto:thompson@westernnativetrout.org) before September 22/after October 5 or Julie Carter [jcarter@azgfd.gov](mailto:jcarter@azgfd.gov) between September 22-October 5.

In a single pdf file labeled “Your Last Name: WNTI Coordinator”, please provide the following information:

1. A cover letter highlighting your knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience as they pertain to the Knowledge/Skills and Desired Qualities listed in the position description. Please keep the cover letter/proposal to a maximum of three pages.
2. A description of past positions in which you played a key role similar to this Coordinator position Scope of Work. For each past position please include a short description of your role and outcomes achieved.
3. A bid for accomplishing this work for a two-year contract. Bids can be expressed as an hourly rate, a monthly rate, or a lump sum annual contract with milestones.
4. Start date availability.
5. Three references.
6. A full resume. Your resume will not count against the three page limit.

## **RESERVED RIGHTS**

WAFWA has the right to:

- Reject any or all the proposals;
- Cancel the entire RFP process;
- Remedy technical errors in the RFP;
- Negotiate with any, all, or none of the respondents to the RFP;
- Solicit the best and final offers from all or some of the prospective Contractors;
- Accept the written proposals as an “offer” without negotiations and issue a notice to proceed;
- Contract with any respondent based solely on the qualifications and capabilities of the Contractor;
- Solicit follow up information as deemed necessary, including references.