

2013 Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (WFPS) Frequently Asked Questions

General Contractor – National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI)

1. Why did Great Lakes Timber Professionals (GLTPA) and Wisconsin County Forest Association (WCFA) select NCASI as the general contractor?

NCASI is an independent, non-profit research institute that focuses on environmental and sustainability topics relevant to forest management and the manufacture of forest products. NCASI's mission is to undertake scientific studies that will enhance the technical understanding of environmental and sustainability issues associated with forest management practices and the use of wood-derived materials to manufacture forest products. NCASI is a 501(c)(6) research organization. Through research investigations, surveys, and other information gathering activities, NCASI helps ensure that the ongoing dialogue concerning environmental policies affecting the forest products industry, and environmental decision-making at many different levels, are grounded in technical information of the highest possible quality. Due to the wide scope of the research question and the potential for multiple research projects, the project needed an organization with the resources to manage the disparate research issues. NCASI has the resources and experience to coordinate this large project. The WFPS falls within the area of expertise and capabilities of NCASI.

Project Roles – Organizations and NCASI/Project Manager

2. What is the role of the GLTPA/WCFA with the WFPS?

GLTPA and WCFA will jointly oversee the WFPS execution. GLTPA and WCFA will direct research needs and objectives to NCASI and schedule periodic research reviews to ensure project goals are being met. GLTPA will also be responsible for distributing the final product(s) to the appropriate entities. If at any point during the research process there are questions about the study, they may be directed to the Project Manager.. GLTPA and WCFA will seek input on WFPS from the forestry community via the WI Council on Forestry (COF) throughout the project to aid in their decision making process regarding research direction. As the grant money was allocated to GLTPA/WCFA, they will retain final decision-making authority. Entities such as NCASI, COF, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and other subcontractors may be utilized as resources, but the final authority and responsibility rests with GLTPA/WCFA.

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3. What will be the role of COF with the WFPS?

As requested by GLTPA/WCFA, COF will review and provide input on direction of WFPS Study.

The Executive Director of GLTPA is also the chair of COF, and the executive director of WCFA is the co-chair of COF, the organizations already have a strong working relationship.

4. What will the role be of COF WFPS Subcommittee?

Provide technical assistance and oversight to Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (WFPS) on behalf of the COF. Serve as liaison between the WFPS and COF. Assist COF in interpreting WFPS results and in developing recommendations based on those results. Key roles of this subcommittee include:

- *Subcommittee reviews, improves, and endorses WFPS RFPs*
- *Subcommittee assists WFPS in developing a transparent and credible process for reviewing research proposals and selecting best proposals for funding.*
- *Subcommittee assists WFPS in recruiting individuals with appropriate credentials to serve on panels that review proposals submitted in response RFPs*
- *Subcommittee assists WFPS in reviewing, interpreting, and summarizing WFPS products.*
- *Subcommittee prepares recommendations to COF based on WFPS products and other sources of information that may become available during 2014-2015.*

This subcommittee will be appointed by the Chair and Vice Chair of the COF.

5. What will be the role of NCASI and Project Manager?

National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI), the General Contractor for the 2013 Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (Study), in conjunction with the Project Manager will perform the following Duties and Responsibilities to ensure the Study meets its defined objectives and outcomes within the defined timeline and budget.

Duties and Responsibilities

Conduct an inventory of recent and ongoing research relevant to the overall study.

Primary deliverables are:

- (i) A portfolio of well-designed research projects that address priorities identified in the study document;*

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- (ii) reports from subcontractors on their research projects; and*
- (iii) interpretive summaries of the subcontractor reports and other relevant information.*

Incorporate a peer review in the vetting of study findings to ensure success and credibility of the study.

Assist with determining the Study direction and research priorities.

Assist with the development of project scope for Research Investigators (Investigators) to ensure that they are well-defined with measurable outcomes that support the objective and timeline of the Study.

Assist with identifying Investigators with the capability and capacity to work on the Study.

Respond to prospective Investigator's questions.

Primary contact for Investigators for all matters related to their project i.e. scope, timelines, deliverables and information resources.

Maintain ready availability to the Investigator to assure deliverables are completed on time and satisfy the project scope.

Monitor Investigator work progress related to their approach, deliverables and project time tables and updates Project Agent and Project Administrators.

Assist in coordinating the availability of resources including data, individuals and/or organizations for Investigators.

Assist with Investigator project administration including contract preparations, insurance requirements, payment schedules, and recommending contract payment requests etc.

Work collaboratively with state and federal agencies, Investigators and other resource professionals and organizations to maintain a knowledge of data and information available for the Study.

Identify, track, monitor and communicate project-related issues, scope changes, variances and contingencies that may arise during the Study and facilitates amicable solutions.

Proactively communicate Study status, issues and risks to the Project Agent and Project Administrators.

Find and work to remove Study roadblocks or obstacles.

Submit quarterly invoices to GLTPA for amounts sufficient to cover actual expenses to subcontractors during the previous three month period.

Prepare and present oral and/or written updates on a regular basis and as requested by the Project Agent and/or Project Administrators.

Assist with the summary and delivery of the outcomes for the Study.

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Grant/Project Administration

6. What is the budget for the WFPS Grant?

The Grant is \$600,000 over a two-year period. Over 85% or \$516,000 will be used specifically for research projects. The remaining 15% will be utilized for project management and grant administration. In addition there is over \$82,000 of in-kind value being provided by GLPA, WCFA, NCASI, COF, and COF Forest Practices Subcommittee. GLTPA will be providing 200 hours of in-kind service annually (400 hours for the Grant period for a value of \$20,400). GLTPA will be reimbursed via the Grant for staff time for administration of the Grant. This will not exceed \$3,000 per year (\$6,000 for the Grant period).

WCFA will also be providing 200 hours of in-kind service annually (400 hours for the Grant period for a value of \$17,000) and will not receive any Grant funds.

WI COF will be providing 39 hours of in-kind service annually (78 hours for the Grant period for a value of \$8,000).

WI COF Subcommittee will be providing 200 hours of in-kind services annually (400 hours for the Grant period for a value of \$20,400) and will receive no Grant funds.

NCASI will be providing in-kind services at 160 hours each per year (320 hours for the Grant period for a value of \$20,800). In addition, NCASI will be reimbursed from Grant funds to hire a consultant in WI to manage the WFPS at a cost not to exceed 39,055 per year (\$78,110 for the Grant period).

7. What do you anticipate will be the focus of the funding? What are the policy implications of the research?

The focus of the funding will be to address the research question; “How does Wisconsin continue to provide sustainably grown wood fiber to support competitive wood using industries in the future?” The goal of the project is to research and provide information to better understand where efficiencies can be gained ensuring Wisconsin’s forest products industry can remain competitive and vibrant, while assuring the ecological, economic and social benefits of Wisconsin forests continue for future generations. The WFPS is not to evaluate policy alternatives, but to fill in knowledge gaps that will inform current and future policy questions.

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8. When is the submission deadline and the expected timeline for awarding grants? When are the research projects expected to be completed?

The Study Plan was submitted to the Wisconsin Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) on December 27, 2013 for a 14-Day Passive Review Approval. The JCF approved the Study Plan on January 21, 2014. A goal for an initial RFP for research projects is targeted by March 2014. Subsequent RFPs would be offered after results were completed in the first series of forest study research projects. All work would be targeted for completion two years after JCF approval.

In the unlikely event that the research deviates from the timeline, NCASI and any involved subcontractors will be responsible for identifying the cause of the delay and reformulating and submitting an updated timeline.

9. What will be the next steps after the research is completed?

As discussed above, the goal of this research is to provide critical information to those in the forest products industry. After the research is completed, it will be made publically available. Data obtained during WFPS will become the property of the State of Wisconsin and will be housed in WDNR Division of Forestry and posted on the new web site created for “capacity grants” at the direction of the Natural Resources Board.

As the goal of the research is to provide information to better understand where efficiencies can be gained to ensure Wisconsin’s forest products industry can remain competitive and vibrant, while assuring the ecological, economic and social benefits of Wisconsin forests continue for future generations, the specific policy implications are unknown at this time.

10. Is peer review part of research results?

Yes. As peer review is critical to the success and credibility of the study, we will incorporate a peer review in the vetting of research findings.

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11. What are the next steps upon approval of the WFPS Plan by the JCF?

Upon approval from the JCF the immediate next steps will be:

- a. Week 1 - Hire the Project Manager to begin the overall planning of the WFPS and to carry out their specific roles and responsibilities to implement, monitor and assist to assure that when completed the WFPS has met the defined objectives.*
- b. Week 2 - Convene the COF WI Forest Practice Study Committee to prioritize the research issue and recommend to the COF the first round of Request for Proposal (RFP).*
- c. Week 4 - Upon approval by COF prepare the first round of RFPs.*
- d. Week 8 – Award the first round of RFPs.*

12. How will you handle any unexpected costs that exceed the grant monies? Will there be further contribution towards costs, if any, incurred by selected applicants beyond the award?

The Grant is for a maximum of \$600,000. Cost that exceed this amount will need to come from outside sources. At this point it is expected that the research needed to address the objective of the study will not exceed the Grant monies.

13. How will NCASI solicit bids for projects? What is the process for selecting the proposals to fund?

NCASI will work closely with GLTPA/WCFA and COF in developing and distributing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and in evaluating proposals submitted in response to RFPs. Evaluation of proposals and selection of projects for funding will be conducted using a transparent process involving technical review of proposals by volunteers with expertise relevant to the topics addressed in the RFPs. Proposal evaluation criteria (e.g., technical feasibility, relevance to WFPS priorities, cost relative to expected benefits, and investigator qualifications) will be defined in RFPs.

14. How and when will progress reports be distributed?

The Project manager will generate the reports and they would be distributed to JCF by GLTPA/WCFA and will also be available on the COF website <http://study.wisconsinforestry.org>