



Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL #NA23-002-2024-CRCMP

**DEVELOPING AN ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACH
FOR LA PARGUERA NATURAL RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

DNER's Coral Reef Conservation & Management Program (CRCMP)
Federal Funds
Fiscal Year 2023-2025
Federal Contribution NA23NOS482013

Request for Proposal Deadline: April 10, 2024

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NA23-002-2024-CRCMP

AN ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACH FOR LA PARGUERA NATURAL RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

A. DESCRIPTION

La Parguera is a highly touristic coastal sector located southwestern of Puerto Rico. La Parguera Natural Reserve is located within this sector. The Natural Reserve was first designated as part of the Boquerón Insular Forest in 1919 by the US Forest Service. By 1974, La Parguera was declared a Natural Reserve and in 1979 a Marine Protected Area. It extends from La Pitahaya in Cabo Rojo to Punta Jorobado in Guánica. The marine extension is nine nautical miles and includes 27 cays and islets among which are Isla Magüeyes (host to the biggest Marine Science lab on the archipelago), Isla Guayacán, Isla Cueva, Isla Mata La Gata, Cayo Enrique y Cayo Caracoles. Some of the natural attributes of the Natural Reserve such as coral reefs (including 4 endangered species), sea grass beds, fisheries, mangrove forests, bioluminescent bays are home to manatees, threatened sea turtles and native birds.

In 1995, the Government of Puerto Rico approved (via Executive Order 1995-75) a management plan for the “Special Planning Area” of the southeast sector of La Parguera. Among the objectives of this management plan were to establish public policies that guided the conservation of natural resources in harmony with the areas development; localize and delimit study areas based on analyses of the physical-spatial conditions and identify potential existing or future impacts to its natural resources. Included within this management plan were the topography, climate, soils, geology and hydrology of La Parguera sector and La Parguera Natural Reserve. Potential conflicts that were evaluated and described include: changes in demography and land use, tourist zonation, intense recreational activities, air contamination, illegal trash dumping, excessive light, transit and boat anchorage, water, land, and noise contamination.

The Natural Reserve was identified as one of the Priority Management Areas, in 2010’s Puerto Rico Local Action Strategies. However, this Reserve is highly visited throughout the year and its high density of visitors poses management challenges. The popularity of recreational boating has risen in the last years. This is an activity that may lead to negative impacts on the marine environment if not managed appropriately. Studies done in the Natural Reserve have documented the impact of human activities on the ecosystems (Armstrong R. 2015, Hernández López WJ. 2015, Pittman SJ, Hile SD, Jeffrey CFG, Herlach B, Appeldoorn R. 2010, Valdés-Pizzini M, Schärer-Umpierre 2014, Vega-Rodriguez M, 2008). Based on coral and fish data collected (and analyzed) between 2011-2007, Pitmman et al., provided management recommendations that include, using the available coral and fish survey data (and associated maps) to support marine zoning that identifies conservation and “no-take” reserves for selected areas within the Natural

Reserve while maintaining access to other areas and increase efforts to protect and restore mangrove forests and ecosystems.

On November 2021, the PR DNER personnel conducted a survey with the collaboration of Puerto Rico Sea Grant. The objective was to survey the opinions and perception of visitors, local commerce, and residents on various management aspects. As a result, the main areas of concern were: the increase in the number of boats, boat speed, noise and light contamination. Recommendations that resulted from this survey include establishing limits on the number of visitors in certain areas, installing additional anchor buoys and establishing (or effectively enforcing) boat speed limits.

The goal for this project is to review and evaluate the “Special Planning Area” management plan of the southeast sector of La Parguera with the purpose of identifying which management regulations or recommendations that have been successfully implemented and to use an ecosystem-based (and watershed) approach for developing a management plan for the Natural Reserve. The Ecosystem-based Management Plan for La Parguera Natural Reserve project should aim to identify areas in the Reserve that are exposed to the highest management pressures due to land-based sources of pollution, identify and prioritize main recreational and navigational uses, evaluate fisheries, and develop management recommendations for minimizing the management challenges. The plan should explore the creation of no-take zones in the Natural Reserve. Community engagement will be required for the development of this project.

Specifically, this project will:

1. Compile, via literature review, the scientific information available for the Natural Reserve and use it for the development of appropriate management strategies.
2. Identify land-based sources of pollution and pollution threats, provide recommendation for monitoring strategies, and integrate recommendations from La Parguera’s Green Infrastructure Master Plan, as possible.
3. Review, quantify, and provide management strategies for recreational uses in the Reserve. For example, it prioritizing management actions to address the urgent needs of managing the number of boats in the Reserve and their boat speeds and minimizes light and noise contamination.
4. Explore the possibility of creating no-take zones in the Nature Reserve.
5. Provide recommendations for restoration activities (as it pertains to coral reefs or nearby habitats) using ecosystem-based approaches.
6. Provide clear management recommendations for the creation of legal regulations that can be sustained through the Management Plan or recommendations on how effectively enforce relevant current ones.
7. Engage with municipal leaders, scientific community, and community groups (via interviews or roundtables) to gather insights on their perspectives regarding current or future management efforts and needs.

A 1. PROJECT TASKS

- Work Plan and Schedule
- Quarterly progress reports and a final report.
- Literature review of compiled scientific and management work including survey results obtained in collaboration with Puerto Rico Sea Grant which provides recommendations for the framework of the Management Plan.
- Report on annual roundtables (or interviews) with the municipal leaders, the scientific and management communities, with community leaders as well as fishers and dive shops in La Parguera Natural Reserve to gain their perspectives for the management plan and efforts.
- Organize an annual meeting with PR DNER and partners to share literature review findings and recommendations.
- At least two outreach and education activities in high public traffic, such as marinas, beaches with important marine resources and/or boat ramps to bring awareness on the importance minimizing management challenges.
- An Ecosystem-based Management Plan for La Parguera Natural Reserve with clear management recommendations on strategies and legal regulations that can be implemented to help alleviate management challenges. The DNER Guánica and La Parguera Nature Reserve Manager will be actively participating in the supervision of this contractor and in product review.

B. FUNDING

This is a two-year project. The maximum amount for this proposal is \$72,880. Proposed projects should not exceed this amount. Only one proposal will be selected. The funds are from the federal NA23NOS482013 contribution for the 2023 federal fiscal year and are due August 30, 2025. The project must be completed by that date.

C. ELIGIBILITY

The private sector, academia, and for-profit and non-profit organizations can submit proposals. They must meet the Puerto Rico government's eligibility requirements for professional services contracts and submit evidence.

D. FORMAT REQUIREMENT, CONTENT AND PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

D 1. FORMAT & CONTENT

The proposal must be written on a computer with (min) Arial font size 11, with a maximum of 20 pages. Pages more than 20 will not be reviewed. The proposal should address the following points in a concise but complete manner and provide all the information necessary for the evaluation of the proposal:

(1) Cover Page:

- Title of the project
- Project location(s)
- Project Task Force/Project Task Force Organization: Include names, titles, affiliations, and contact information of the project leader and key personnel.

(2) Proposal Narrative: All proposals should include a comprehensive description of the project, its tasks, and deliverables. These proposals will include:

- Summary: Briefly describe the proposed project and any important details.
- Introduction: Background and historical importance of this project.
- Project Objectives
- Methodology: Detailed descriptions on the development of the management plan.
- Deliverables: description of project outcomes and products.
 - Workplan: Detailed schedule, with project-specific outputs and/or activities. The time to carry out the work will be from the date of award of the contract until no later than August 30, 2025.
 - Project Reports
- Administration & Project Costs: The maximum funds are \$72,880. Proposed projects may not exceed this amount.
- Literature Cited

D 2. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

All proposals should be received by April 10, 2024, at 4pm (AST). Applicants must submit their proposal electronically, and a hard copy to be delivered in person or by mail (postmarked by the due date), as follows:

- **Digital** - pdf. Please send to pmzc@drna.pr.gov
- **Printed copy:** To be delivered in person before 4pm (AST) to the Office of Coastal Zone and Climate Change, located on the 8th Floor of the Cruz A. Matos Building at location Street 8838, km 6.3 Sector El Cinco, Río Piedras, beside the Botanical Garden in Rio Piedras.

Or send via postal mail (to be sent before the deadline) to the following address:

Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales.
Oficina del Programa de Zona Costanera y Cambios Climáticos
San José Industrial Park, 1375 Ave Ponce de León
San Juan PR 00926

E. EVALUATION CRITERIA

E.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

A DNER review team will evaluate proposals that meet this application's requirements. Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's demonstrated ability to create an ecosystem-based management plan for La Parguera Marine Reserve and submit it according to DNER's established formats and expectations. The criteria to evaluate the proposals will be as follows:

Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Value
Experience	Experience working in La Parguera Nature Reserve or with watershed management experience or with developing management/action plans. Experience working meeting DNER's product delivery and expectations.	20%
Proposal Content	Organization, clear and concise description of the proposed project, as well as the use of funds. You must meet all requirements and objectives of the Request for Proposal. Proposed activities must be in line with the public policy of the DNER.	30%
Work Plan	Accurately identify the tasks, outputs, delivery period and completion of the project.	30%
Budget	Accurately identify tasks, deliverables, and associated costs. The cost of the proposal should not exceed the amount of funds available.	20%

E.2 SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. The contractor must comply with all contracting requirements established by the Government of Puerto Rico, in accordance with current and applicable laws.
2. They must submit evidence of all certifications and documents described below, which must also be available at the time of awarding the contract. These certifications and documents will form part of the contract.
 - a. Single Supplier Registry (*Registro Único de Proveedores - RUP*) of the General Services Administration (ASG) from the Government of Puerto Rico.
 - b. System for Award Management (SAM.gov) to complete contracts that are federally funded.
 - c. License or certification for working in Puerto Rico, if applicable.
 - d. Copy of an identification with photo

3. Project must be completed by no later than August 30, 2025. All progress reports will be submitted to NOAA.
4. All proposals submitted in response to this request shall be the property of the DNER and shall be part of the public registry, and, as such, may be subject to public review following the selection process.
5. The DNER reserves the right to request any information or clarification from any or all applicants.
6. The selected contractor shall sign a contract for Professional Services.