

Request for Information

Department of Agriculture

**Virginia Range Estray and Feral Horse
Management Cooperative Agreement**

Issued Date: July 23, 2013

Communications regarding the RFI are to be directed to:

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1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) is requesting information from qualified organizations to develop a horse management plan for the Virginia Range stray and feral horse population. The Department has jurisdictional authority over the Virginia range horses and is seeking to enter a cooperative agreement with an organization to manage and sustain the Virginia Range horses at healthy levels and preserve public safety.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The history of the Virginia Range horse population is characterized controversy. Numerous issues have impacted horse management, including: population growth, encroachment into urban areas and subsequent public safety and traffic issues, scrutiny, private and federal property concerns, and even legal action.

Despite common misconceptions that these animals are wild horses, the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) declared the Virginia Range “wild horse free area” through a land use planning process in 1986. The herd in the Virginia Range is designated as stray/feral livestock. Since the animals are not on BLM herd management areas, all horses, which have migrated or have been “let go” onto the Virginia Range, fall under existing Nevada state laws pertaining to stray/feral livestock. These include NRS 569.0075, 569.008, and 569.0085. Although the horses do not fall under protection of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the State of Nevada have taken every precaution to ensure the stray/feral horses have been cared for in accordance with Nevada state law.

For past two years, the only horses that have been trapped and transferred to the Warm Springs Correctional Center are those considered to be public safety concerns. Public safety concerns include livestock that are in residential areas and horses in close proximity to roadways. Currently, no general fund money is allocated for the management of feral or stray livestock, other than the reimbursement from the sale of the livestock.

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) recently entered into a signed a Placement Cooperative Agreement with Return to Freedom, Inc. (RTF), a non-profit organization located in Lompoc, Calif., that is a sponsor of the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign. RTF may purchase all horses collected by NDA for public safety purposes for \$100 per horse on an as-is basis. Any horses tendered to but not accepted by RTF within two business days after being notified shall be subject to disposition by NDA in any manner permitted by law. RTF works with third-parties who adopt or purchase the stray horses ensuring that the horses will not be released back on the Virginia Range, a violation of Nevada Revised Statute. RTF provides NDA with an annual report of all horses resold/or placed during the previous 12 months. The cooperative agreement with RTF applies to Washoe, Storey and Lyon Counties, and the Consolidated Municipality of Carson City.

As as result of legislative changes made during the 2013 session of the Nevada Legislature, the Nevada Department of Agriculture is now able to enter into an agreement with a private non-profit organization for the management of the Virigina Range feral and stray horses. This RFI is for the *management* of the Virginia Range feral and stray horses, including maintaining healthy populations and protecting public safety in

accordance with state statutes and administrative codes. The agreement covers the geographical area of I-80 south to Fernley Alt 95 south to the junction of HWY 50 west to us 395 north to the east side of the McCarran loop north to McCarran and I-80 intersection.

3. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Please include as part of this RFI the background of the cooperator to include personnel, years of experience, qualifications, demonstration of fiscal health, and the organizational history.

4. SUMMARY OF THE COOPERATOR'S SOLUTION

Please include in this section how the proposed cooperator will manage the Virginia Range horse population. The RFI should have a management plan that contains the following components:

1. Maintains and preserves horse populations and maintains horse health in high forage resource and low forage resource conditions
2. Includes population research and regularly collected census data using current scientific methods established in peer-reviewed research journals
3. Establishes protocols for regularly determining rangeland health using current scientific methods established in peer-reviewed research journals
4. Preserves natural resources, plant communities, wildlife, federal livestock permittees, and private land owners/users
5. Demonstrates how the vendor will address public safety, including keeping roadways and urban areas free from the hazardous presence of feral and stray horses
6. Includes components to manage citizen concerns
7. Includes mitigation and mediation measures (e.g., backup and contingency plans) for all of the above.

To be considered for a cooperative agreement the entity must address the following issues in a satisfactory manner:

1. Demonstrate the network or organizational capability to manage horses on the entire Virginia Range area describe above.
2. Be able to demonstrate resources, both personnel and fiscal, that would enable the cooperator to satisfactorily meet the performance measures of the cooperative agreement, detailed below.
3. Show a history of working with private, state, and federal agencies related to similar management agreements.
4. Acknowledge that the range has a set and limited amount of resources and provide the agency with a scientific evaluation (based on current peer-reviewed research) of the range or previously established work that demonstrates a manageable number of horses over a long term period to ensure that horses will not suffer due to overpopulation during common drought years.

Performance Measures

The follow performance measures should be included in the RFI:

1. Demonstrate an ability to control the herd size of horses that takes into consideration the available resources of the range and scientific studies performed by research universities and institutions. The cooperators must address what actions would be taken to ensure existing federal AUMs of livestock permittees are taken into consideration as well as the ability of private land owners to fence out their property.
2. Demonstrate management capability by a limited number of horses per year traveling into urban areas that would be deemed a public safety issue, thereby causing NDA to take collection action and having to process the horses collected under the current placement cooperative agreement with RTF.
3. Demonstrate a positive public relationship with local communities as demonstrated by a electronic survey performed each year.
4. Demonstrate management capability to control herd size and manage resources such that artificial feeding and population support is not needed.

5. PROJECT COSTS

Please include detailed financials of how the proposed vendor will finance the Virginia Range Feral and Estray Horse Management Plan; if a non-profit, 501(c)3, please include current financials, a fundraising plan (if applicable), tax filings for the past five years, and all available audits.

6. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

6.1 RFI SUBMISSION TIMELINE

The following represents the proposed timeline for this project (RFI). All times stated is Pacific Time (PT).

TASK DATE/TIME

1. Deadline for submitting first set of questions Aug. 9, 2013 @ 2:00pm
2. Answers to first set of questions submitted available on or about Aug. 16, 2013
3. Deadline for submitting second set of questions Aug. 30, 2013 @ 2:00pm
4. Answers to second set of questions submitted available on or about Sept. 13, 2013
5. Deadline for submission and opening of proposals Oct. 4, 2013 @ 2:00 pm
6. NOTE: These dates represent a tentative schedule of events. NDA reserves the right to modify these dates at any time, with appropriate notice to prospective vendors.

6.2 PROPOSAL PACKAGING

6.2.1 Hardcopy or email submissions are accepted. Email submissions shall indicate:

TO:

FR: Cooperator's Name

RE: RFI Virginia Range Estray and Feral Horse Management Cooperative Agreement,
Closure Date

The body of the email should address any particular notes that will make evaluation easier and improve use in building a budget.

SIGNATURE: Please use the key vendor contact's name and contact information as a signature.

6.2.2 Proposal may be modified by facsimile, e-mail or written notice provided such notice is received prior to the announced closure date.

6.2.3 Hard copy submissions shall be submitted to the State and be clearly marked as follows:

6.3 RFI FORMAT AND CONTENT

6.3.1 Title Page

The title page must include the following:

- A. Title: "Virginia Range Estray and Feral Horse Management Cooperative Agreement";
- B. Name and Address of the Cooperator;
- C. RFI Opening Date:

6.3.2 Cooperator's Proposed Solution

6.3.3 Project Costs

6.4 WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

6.4.1 Questions must be addressed and sent to the individual identified on Page 1 of this RFI.

6.4.2 All communication regarding this RFI must include the following:

6.4.2.1 RFI #;

6.4.2.2 Cooperator Name;

6.4.2.3 Contact Name;

6.4.2.4 Address;

6.4.2.5 Telephone Number; and

6.4.2.6 Email Address.

6.4.3 The deadline for submitting questions is as specified in Section 7.1, RFI Timeline.

6.4.4 All questions and/or comments will be addressed in writing and responses emailed or faxed to prospective vendors on or about the date specified in Section 6, RFI Timeline.

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

COSTS ARE ESTIMATES OR BUDGET BUILDING PURPOSES ONLY. THERE IS NO COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF EITHER THE COOPERATOR TO THE STATE OF NEVADA; OR ANY OBLIGATION BY THE STATE TO THE COOPERATOR. COOPERATORS MUST CONSIDER THAT THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) WHERE LOW COSTS ARE THE TARGET.

If an agreement is entered into, it must provide for the cooperating person or entity to hold the state of Nevada harmless from any claim or liability arising from an act or omission of the cooperating person or entity in carrying out the cooperative agreement. The cooperator may be required to provide applicable insurance provisions as required by State of Nevada general services contracts.

For ease of evaluation, the information provided must be presented in a format that corresponds to and references sections outlined within this RFI. This will allow the agency to more easily create a budget based on a comparison and extraction of information from all respondents. Unlike an RFP where a single vendor is selected, each RFI response will be a potential contributor to part of the overall budget.

All Cooperator responses will be held in confidentiality and not be available for public knowledge.

7.1 RFI SUBMISSION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

7.1.1 Any irregularities or lack of clarity in the RFI should be brought to the NDA designee's attention as soon as possible so that corrective addenda may be furnished to prospective vendors.

7.1.2 Alterations, modifications or variations to a proposal may not be considered unless authorized by the RFI or by addendum or amendment.

7.1.3 Proposals may be withdrawn by written or facsimile notice received prior to RFI closure.

8. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist is provided for vendor's convenience only and identifies documents that must be submitted with each package in order to be considered responsive.

RFI – Submission Requirements Completed

- Title Page
- Table of Contents [Preferred but optional]
- Organization Background
- Company Background
- Summary of Proposed Solution
- Costs and Financials