

Request for Proposal Natural Resource Damage Restoration Projects for Shoal Creek Watershed Restoration

I INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is seeking applicants that can implement successful environmental restoration programs and projects within priority areas of the Springfield Plateau. The goal of the restoration based RFP is to restore aquatic natural resources injured by historical mining practices of ASARCO, Blue Tee, Eagle Picher Technologies, and others referred to as “mining companies” throughout the RFP.

A. Natural Resource Injury Overview

The Natural Resource Trustees (Trustees) consisting of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR) have identified extensive natural resource injuries in the Missouri portion of the Tri-State Mining District due to the releases of hazardous substances from Mining Companies’ activities throughout the 1900s. Terrestrial resources (e.g. soil and migratory bird habitat) are injured due to toxic concentrations of lead, zinc, and cadmium in abandoned mine/mill waste. Aquatic resources (waterfowl, mussels, fish, crayfish, other invertebrates) are injured due to releases of heavy-metal contaminated water and sediment to area streams. Groundwater is contaminated with heavy metals due to mining activities, which has potentially limited the habitat of the federally threatened Ozark cavefish. The securing of Natural Resource Damages (NRD) and implementation of restoration projects is a means of compensating the public for resources injured by a release of a hazardous substance. In this case, damages were calculated by estimating the area impacted by mining operations, and restoration funds were obtained through legal settlements with the mining companies.

B. Restoration Goals and Objectives

It is the goal of the Trustees to award funds to an entity or entities whose proposals can best restore or protect aquatic habitat, and other natural resources. The Trustees have set aside \$2 million for restoration projects benefitting Shoal Creek. These entities will carry out projects which benefit aquatic resources via direct habitat restoration, and ensure the long term viability of the restoration projects by way of contracts, conservation easements, ownership, or other controls. A proposal in response to this RFP will identify specific projects to address a specific resource concern and to address one or more of the following restoration objectives:

- Reduce impacts from heavy metals present in the water and sediment in areas of

Spring River that are unlikely to be addressed by USEPA remedial actions in the region.

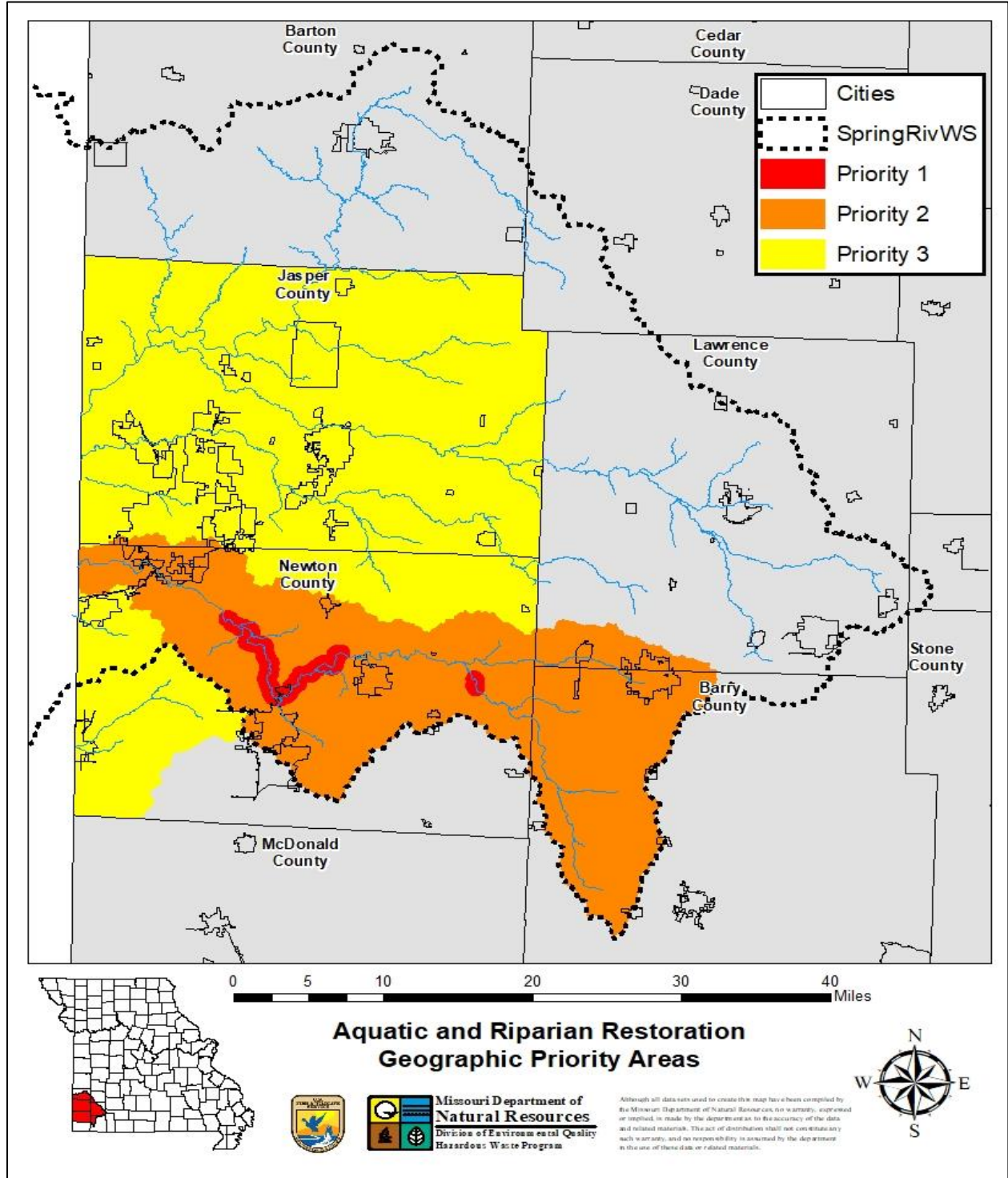
- Implement projects that benefit freshwater mussels whose species richness and densities have declined in streams.
- Reduce the erosional loss of land and associated sediment inputs to streams due to unstable streambanks.
- Reduce nutrient run-off and inputs from agricultural activities, wastewater treatment plants and private septic systems.
- Provide for replacement of aquatic organism passage barriers which reduce aquatic connectivity.
- Implement agricultural conservation practices which reduce nutrient inputs from livestock and exclude cattle from streams.
- Reduce stream sediment inputs from gravel roads, and other sources.

C. Geographic Priority Areas for Restoration

The Trustees have prioritized areas for restoration within the Springfield Plateau (See Figure 1) in a tiered approach as a means of complying with the Springfield Plateau Regional Restoration Plan (SPRRP) preferred alternative, and to provide restoration specific to mussels and other injured aquatic resources. The highest priority sites are (in descending order):

- Areas impacting the FWS focal areas within Shoal Creek (Priority 1 areas)
- Within the watershed of Shoal Creek, including the subwatersheds of the tributaries to Shoal Creek.
- Mine-affected areas of the Spring River watershed, within Jasper and Newton counties

Figure 1- RFP Geographic Priority Areas



Environmental restoration funded by the Trustees is intended to complement and not replace mine waste cleanup efforts being conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA is in the process of removing mine waste from specific areas of the Shoal Creek watershed, and is likely to remediate certain contaminated stream sediments in the near future. In an effort to avoid funding restoration projects in areas likely to be disturbed by future cleanup work funded by EPA, the Trustees will NOT fund restoration within the stream in certain areas identified in red on the figure contained as Figure 2.

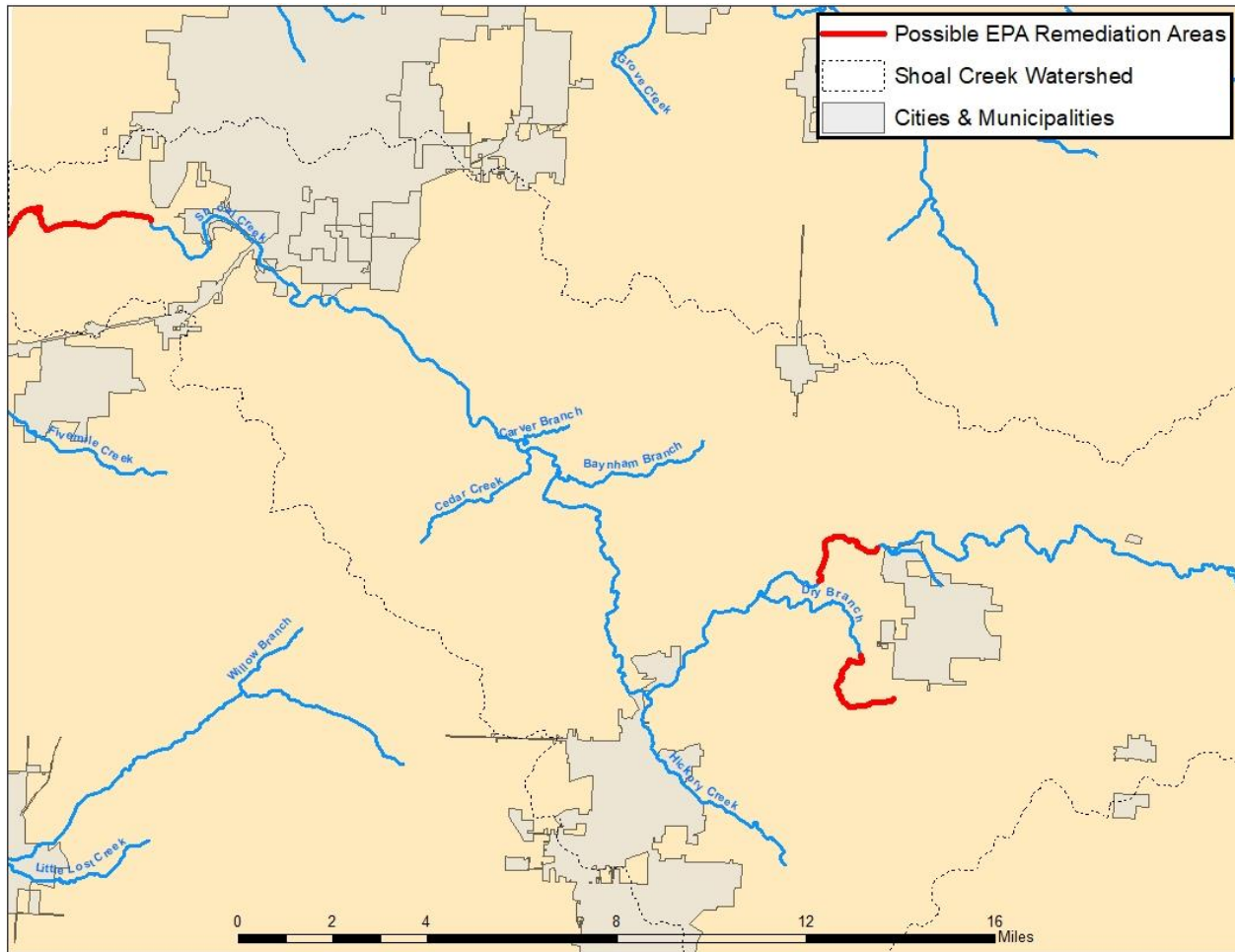


Figure 2- Excluded Stream Reaches

Note that currently, only the areas in red of Figure 2 are off-limits for funding consideration. If the EPA indicates they will remove sediment in additional areas, NRDA funds will not be able to be used in those areas until EPA has completed their work in those areas.

D. Background

This RFP is an action that has been previously described as part of the Springfield Regional Restoration Plan (SPRRP), which fulfills the requirement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to provide public review and comment. This document can be found at: [Springfield Plateau Regional Regional Restoration Plan](#)

The SPRRP was developed as an ecoregion-comprehensive plan to guide the Trustees in restoring natural resources injured by the release of hazardous substances, and is jointly administered by the Missouri Trustee Council to assist in carrying out their natural resource trust mandates under CERCLA, the Clean Water Act, and other laws. Funds received through settlements must be used to restore, rehabilitate, replace and/or acquire the equivalent of those natural resources injured and services lost.

E. Proposal specifications

This RFP is soliciting project proposals from entities (including external parties as well as the Trustees) to achieve the Trustees restoration objectives of benefiting aquatic natural resources within the prescribed tiered priority areas. Successful applicants will implement specific projects and/or a programmatic suite of projects with a proven track record of positive benefits to aquatic habitat and other aquatic natural resources.

In order to be acceptable, all NRD restoration projects proposed must be 1) compliant and consistent with federal and state laws, 2) technically feasible and within available funding and 3) address injured natural resources or the services they provide. Projects cannot be used for EPA response actions, nor can they be proposed by parties responsible for NRD injury to reduce their NRD liability.

Individual projects will be scored by the Trustees based on the scoring matrix found in Appendix I.

Proposals must include:

Name of group submitting proposal - Name the group or individuals submitting the restoration project proposal. Include name of project coordinator, address, telephone, and e-mail address.

Project Description – Provide a description of the type of project and location of proposed restoration.

Project Goals and Benefits – Provide a synopsis of what is intended to be accomplished by the restoration project in terms of environmental improvements and benefits to natural resources.

Amount of request and budget - Provide an approximate budget for the funding requested in descriptive summary categories such as personnel, materials, equipment, operations and maintenance costs, monitoring, etc. Proposals stating only a total cost with no budget breakdown will not be considered. It is not expected that the institutions applying will have specific projects “in hand”. However, if an institution already has specific projects in mind and knows some of those costs, please include this information as well. Please include information pertaining to any types of cost sharing, such as other funding sources or in-kind services that will add to possible restoration projects.

Timeline - Outline the estimated time and steps or phases needed to complete the project including an estimated completion date. Estimate how long the project will take to reach its full potential.

Experience and capabilities - Please detail your experience with performing the tasks you have described. List any equipment that is currently owned that could be used in your proposed projects.

Description of experience with easements and capabilities – Describe how the projects you propose to implement will be legally/contractually protected to ensure their long term sustainability. Please provide information on your experience with easements that have been managed by your organization.

Description of experience with enrollment in state and federal cost-share programs - Please detail your experience in helping landowners participate in cost-share programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, or your organization’s own experience in enrolling in these programs. Please detail how you would maximize the NRD funds by matching funds from other sources.

Description of any restoration projects currently being considered - Please provide details on any known projects that are in need of funding in order for them to be implemented.

Description of experience in biological monitoring - Please provide details on how you will gauge success for your project, and your experience with developing monitoring plans.

Description of staff resources and hourly salary rate - Please provide details on the amount of staff that can work on projects, how they would work on projects, and the portion/amount of their hourly wage that would be covered by these NRD funds.

II. PROPOSAL EVALUATION, SCHEDULE, AND PROCEDURES

Proposals will be evaluated by a state and federal technical committee based on the scoring matrix. Note that each Trustee may submit proposals for consideration as well. Upon completion of the scoring, the committee may recommend short listing the proposals that are potentially acceptable to the Trustee Council. At this point, the Trustee Council may request more information of the applicants, and carry out negotiations for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers on the short listed applicants. The Trustees reserves the right to prepare clarifications and minor modifications to this RFP. Such modifications will be shared on a timely basis with potential respondents as an addendum to this RFP. Any oral communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the Trustees. Interested parties should rely only upon written statements issued by the Trustees. The Trustee Council will make the final selection for funding and notification will be made in writing to the selected respondent(s).

The Trustees reserve the right to withdraw this RFP at any time and for any reason and to issue such clarifications, modifications, and/or amendments as they may deem appropriate. Any additional information will be posted on the Trustee websites, and it will be the responsibility of the applicants to check for updates. These websites are:

<http://dnr.mo.gov/env/hwp/sfund/nrda.htm> and
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/es/ec/nrda/MoTriState/index.html>

Proposals will be due at 5 p.m. CST on September 18th, 2020. The Trustees may extend this due date, if insufficient proposals are received or other circumstances arise that warrant granting more time. The Trustees may request additional information as necessary from proposal applicants within approximately 30 days after the proposal due date. The Trustee will provide written notification of selection within approximately 60 days after the deadline for proposal submission.

Successful applicants will enter into a contractual agreement with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional contracting requirements may be applicable for successful projects. For example, professional services or certain construction activities may require proof of Errors and Omissions Insurance and securing of a Payment and Performance Bond. Successful applicants will be notified of contracting and cooperative agreement needs upon selection of proposals. Final approval of a project will occur at the completion of any necessary contracts or formalization of cooperative agreements.

III. CONTACTS

Questions and RFP submittals should be submitted electronically (preferred) to:
Scott_Hamilton@fws.gov
or Eric.Gramlich@dnr.mo.gov, or mailed to:

Mr. Scott Hamilton
Missouri Ecological Services Field Office
101 Park DeVille Dr., Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203

or to:

Mr. Eric Gramlich
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Appendix I
Proposal Scoring Matrix
Natural Resource Damage Restoration Projects for
Shoal Creek Watershed Restoration

ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA: Projects Must Pass These Four Criteria for Further Consideration:	
Is compliant and consistent with federal and state laws, policies and regulations.	Yes or No
Demonstrates technical feasibility.	Yes or No
Addresses injured natural resources or services targeted for restoration within the RFP.	Yes or No
Project will not be used for response actions, is not being proposed by an identified potentially responsible party (PRP), and is unlikely to be disturbed by future response actions.	Yes or No
PROJECT RANKING CRITERIA: Scored Criteria : 0-5; "0" = criteria not addressed; "5" = criteria is fully met.	
	Scoring:
1. <u>Location of project (25 points possible):</u>	
a) Project occurs in a priority geographic area identified within the RFP. When applicable, score according to the tiered geographic priorities identified in the RFP.	(Score 0-10)
b) Project occurs in a 303d listed stream reach.	(Score 0-5)
c) Project occurs in proximity to a historically metals-impacted areas.	(Score 0-5)
d) Project occurs near known mussel beds or other ecologically important locations.	(Score 0-5)
2. <u>Benefits and services provided, identified in the RFP (27 points possible):</u>	
a) Benefits federal- and state-listed species, or Missouri Species of Concern.	(Score 0-7)
b) Restores lost human uses (e.g., drinking water, recreational opportunities).	(Score 0-5)
c) Improves wildlife habitat (in-stream or riparian/floodplain).	(Score 0-5)
d) Reduces or mitigates nutrient or sediment inputs to the stream system.	(Score 0-5)
e) Reduces bank or channel erosion.	(Score 0-5)
3. <u>Sustainability (14 points possible):</u>	
a) Ecosystem improvements or physical structures emplaced are self-sustaining or low maintenance.	(Score 0-7)
b) Includes a conservation easement, public land ownership, or other institutional control.	(Score 0-7)
4. <u>Cost-effectiveness (23 points possible):</u>	
a) Utilizes cost effective means	(Score 0-3)

- b) Provides the greatest scope of benefits to the largest area or natural resource population. (Score 0-5)
- c) Additional funds (matching or scaled) are provided by proposal source (submitter) or to be pooled with other funding sources. (Score 0-7)
- d) Project involves partnerships between multiple entities (Score 0-5)
- e) Entities involved have experience implementing proposed activities. (Score 0-3)

5. Evaluation component (11 points possible):

- a) Project includes a monitoring component. (Score 0-5)
- b) Project identifies performance measures for successful restoration. (Score 0-3)
- c) If goals of restoration are not being achieved, the project identifies the “next steps” to achieve restoration. (Score 0-3)