

Request for Qualifications to Support NROC's Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup

Background

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) is a Regional Ocean Partnership established in 2005 by the Governors of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont to coordinate regional priorities and cross-jurisdictional ocean and coastal management issues in state and federal waters out to the Exclusive Economic Zone. Federal agencies have participated as equal partners with the states since the inception of NROC. In addition to its charter membership, NROC welcomes and includes voluntary participation from other federal and state agencies, Tribes, the New England Fishery Management Council, and regional partners, including ocean industries, academia, and environmental organizations. NROC works to promote inclusive engagement that is critical to advance complex coastal and ocean management issues throughout the region.

Regional priorities for NROC include climate change, coastal hazards and resilient communities, ecosystem health and biodiversity, improving ocean data and science, and proactive coordination around ocean management and regulatory decisions. We address regional priorities through three standing committees: Ocean Planning, Coastal Hazards Resilience, and Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health.

Ocean Planning Committee

NROC's Ocean Planning Committee (OPC) works to balance the development of new and emerging ocean uses such as offshore wind with the protection of existing maritime uses and critical habitats, species, and resources, through its leadership in ocean planning. The OPC facilitates regional coordination, engagement, and information sharing for regulatory and management decisions, including those related to offshore renewable energy, electricity transmission and submarine cables, disposal sites, aquaculture, marine transportation, and habitat protection. NROC also maintains the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#), a source of ocean user-informed and expert-reviewed geospatial data products for coastal and ocean management and planning.

At the request of Tribes, states, and federal agency OPC members, NROC recently initiated the Submerged Archaeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup. The intent of the Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup is to coordinate regional approaches to assessing archeological and cultural resources, identify information gaps, and initiate projects that will improve the collective understanding and the use of information in ocean planning and decision making. The Workgroup composed of Tribes, states, federal agencies, and other regional experts has convened multiple times to propose a vision and discuss priorities and approaches to advance existing mapping efforts and current understanding of areas with potentially submerged Tribal cultural resources.

NROC is seeking additional capacity and expertise to achieve the outcomes of the Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup. The intent of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to identify, pre-qualify, and select contractors to support the tasks outlined below. **NROC currently has \$150,000 to support contractor capacity for the three tasks in this RFQ and expects to have**

additional funding for subsequent tasks identified through the outcomes of this work and at the direction of the Workgroup. *Please note that individuals, independent contractors, consulting firms, research institutions, and other non-governmental organizations are welcome to respond to one, several, or all the tasks in this RFQ.*

Request for Qualifications

NROC is requesting qualifications for contractual support to advance the tasks of the Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup. Respondents are welcome to submit qualifications for any, several, or all the work tasks. Instructions for submitting qualifications follow. Respondents are encouraged to reach out with questions to the Senior Program Director, Amy Trice atrice@northeastoceancouncil.org.

Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Task Categories

At the request of Tribes, states, and federal agency OPC members, NROC recently stood up the Submerged Archaeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup to focus on answering questions in the Northeast related to this topic. The geographic focus of this work is coastal areas and state and federal waters from Maine through Connecticut and potentially including New York. NROC considers the questions and information needs raised by the Workgroup to be a long-term project, and tasks proposed here will be used to inform the Workgroup's composition and future projects. Individuals, independent contractors, consulting firms, research institutions, and other non-governmental organizations are welcome to respond to one, several, or all task categories outlined below.

TASK 1: Literature Review and Synthesis

Synthesis of information related to archeological and cultural resources for the coastal and offshore environment from Maine through Connecticut, potentially including New York.

Including:

- a. Traditional ecological and cultural knowledge provided by Tribes in the project area that has been published or documented (i.e., through white papers, published literature, or agency documents).
- b. Published research including information on historic sea levels, marine archaeological and related geological and geophysical survey data and projects, paleolandscape reconstruction, seafloor mapping, and predictive climate and sea-level modeling.
- c. Data and information from recent surveys and studies in current offshore wind development planning and leasing areas in Southern New England, the New York Bight, and the Gulf of Maine and that has been provided or is otherwise available.
- d. Review literature and provide a summary of cultural resource publications, including their methods, that have been implemented in other US regions, with a specific focus on the Mid-Atlantic, Pacific Islands, and the West Coast.

TASK 2: Summary of Ongoing Submerged and Coastal Archeological and Cultural Resources Work

A synthesis of information and geospatial data related to ongoing studies in the Northeast coastal environment from Maine through Connecticut, potentially including New York, to identify submerged and coastal archeological and cultural resources.

- a. A written inventory and any available geospatial data layers of coastal cultural sites based on ongoing or recently concluded Tribal, state, federal, and other studies (particularly in Maine and Massachusetts).
- b. A summary of the sensitivity of any information identified in this task and recommendations about whether geospatial data and other information could be incorporated into the Northeast Ocean Data Portal. The recommendations to the Workgroup should include timelines, data confidentiality and sharing considerations, methods, and other potential products that could be developed for those datasets that can be incorporated into the Northeast Ocean Data Portal.

TASK 3: Identifying Data and Developing Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Data Products

Development of data products showing cultural resources in coastal areas and identification and availability of offshore datasets that could be used to identify potential submerged cultural landscapes. Potential activities for this task could include:

- a. Identify data that could be used to identify potentially submerged landscapes, such as:
 - i. Bathymetry, side scan sonar, sub bottom profiler, and backscatter data
 - ii. Sediment core properties data (bulk density, isotopes, pollen, magnetic properties)
 - iii. Regional stratigraphic model(s) developed as part of the [Submerged Paleocultural Landscapes Project](#)
 - iv. Other relevant geophysical information, data, and methods included as appropriate and determined by researcher/contractor in consultation with Workgroup
- b. Develop data products that could indicate the geographic areas and extent of potentially preserved paleocultural landscapes. Potentially including:
 - i. Locations, stratigraphy, ages, and nature of the ancient environment conditions present within preserved submerged ancient landforms (e.g., culturally- and archaeologically-sensitive margins of water bodies, moraines, paleo-lakes, -ponds, -wetlands, -channels, -deltas)
 - ii. Geochemical indicators (e.g., macro-fossil, paleobotanical, and pollen analyses, marine vs. terrestrial productivity metrics)
 - iii. Areas with evidence of pre- and post-colonial human occupation or previously identified cultural sites (e.g., shell heaps, habitation, resource utilization, and ceremonial sites)
 - iv. Others defined by Workgroup
- c. Identify key data gaps and recommend additional data collection in those areas to co-develop data products and make recommendations to a workplan for addressing data gaps.
 - i. Include recommendations for any additional field studies, types of data and information that should be collected, data collection efforts that could be modified, modeling or other analysis methods that should be used, and intended outputs. Work

to ensure data outputs are compatible with the Northeast Ocean Data Portal and can be used in decision making.

- d. Develop story maps describing and depicting historic occupation, sea level change over time, known cultural resources, landforms and other indicators of cultural landscapes, contacts and resources for consultation, and others as identified by the Workgroup.
- e. Develop a spatial data layer for incorporation into the Northeast Ocean Data Portal that shows the footprint of each reference or study that has been conducted and includes attribute information enabling direct link to the study, its authors, and its data. Work from Task 1 or 2 would be used to inform the basis for this Task.

Responsibilities and Qualifications

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate with the NROC Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup as well as NROC members, staff, and contractors to identify task needs and outcomes.
- Develop clear and actionable products and plans that can be used in future decision making.
- Coordinate any outreach to NROC members and Workgroup with NROC staff.
- Develop any meeting summaries for NROC member, staff, and participant review.
- Advise NROC on outcomes and potential next steps.

Qualifications:

- Experience working with Tribal Nations in New England.
- Experience with geospatial, geophysical, seafloor, and cultural resource data and analysis.
- Experience working with sensitive cultural data types.
- Experience in coastal and ocean policy, research, cultural resources, planning, or regulatory work in the US with preference for the Northeast.
- Experience researching and synthesizing complex information to make clear recommendations on needed actions.
- Familiarity with submerged archeological and cultural resources literature.
- Ability to work independently and meet key deadlines.
- Experience presenting research and findings clearly for action.

Additional Details:

- NROC will use this RFQ to develop a list of pre-qualified candidates so that we can request a scope and budget for specific projects or support as the need arises.
- Please provide details about the individuals who have the expertise to provide this support and examples of related previous work.

RFQ Submission Requirements and Process

Respondents should submit a package to the NROC Senior Program Director for electronic receipt no later than **11 PM EST on Thursday, November 7, 2024**. Electronic submissions should be submitted as

a single PDF and directed to Amy Trice, NROC Senior Program Director at atrice@northeastoceancouncil.org. Please resubmit your package if you do not receive confirmation of receipt within 24 hours. Respondents are encouraged to submit earlier than the final deadline and NROC will review packages on a rolling basis. NROC may reopen this RFQ or extend the deadline.

At a minimum, all submittals must include:

1. A cover letter.
2. A statement clearly articulating how the individual or team would address the task categories they are interested in supporting, demonstrating the individual's or team's understanding of each desired role, and indicating how the individual or team meets the desired responsibilities and qualifications for that category.
3. A description of the individual's or team's qualifications for each category of interest, including resumes for key personnel, summaries of successfully completed relevant projects, deliverables, and a description of each team member's role in those projects.
4. A description of the team's structure with an organizational chart, if necessary, identifying the lead and each team member's role for each category.
5. A statement of availability and fully loaded hourly rates for each member (or other equivalent cost information such as labor, benefits, and indirect cost rates).
6. Additional information respondents feel necessary to provide.

There is no page limit. Respondents are encouraged to be concise. Submissions should demonstrate the individual's or the organization's interest, capabilities, and knowledge of the subject matter for each category. Submissions should not include specific proposals or solutions and associated cost information.

Review and Selection Process

NROC intends to use this RFQ to interview and hire contractors. Interviews and pre-qualification of individuals and organizations will occur on a rolling basis. NROC will notify those respondents who do not pre-qualify by the mid-January.

Please direct any questions about this RFQ to Amy Trice at atrice@northeastoceancouncil.org.