

## Answers to the Questions Submitted by Potential Contractors in response to the Request for Proposals – Estuaries 101 Middle Grade Curriculum

### Curriculum Design Questions:

1. *Have you decided how many modules you are requesting to be developed?*

No. As indicated in Section II.(2.1.) of the Estuaries 101 Curriculum RFP, the curriculum should be organized around three specific domains: life, earth and physical science. We expect the selected vendor to guide Reserve Educators in contributing NERR research stories, images, maps, data and other resources needed to build cohesive stories and activities for the curriculum. The vendor will also guide Reserve Educators in writing the proposed activities. The vendor is then responsible for the overall packaging of all these resources and activities into an appropriate number of modules and activities (for more details, please read the answer to question 5 below).

2. *I am guessing that the first year be devoted to the development and the second year be devoted to implementing the curriculum (holding workshop/etc).*

I am assuming that by “implementing the curriculum” you also mean to say that it will be tested and corrections will be made to the curriculum on the second year. If that is the case then the answer is “yes”.

3. *Should the middle school activities mirror the high school activities in terms of topics (just more simplified), or should there be brand-new topics?*

As described in Section II.(2.1.) of the Estuaries 101 Curriculum RFP, the development process entails new research and reserve stories contributed by all 27 Research Reserves, so we expect to see brand-new topics for the middle-school curriculum. This does not preclude the possibility that a lesson may be based on one of the same subjects but use the concepts for a different activity or in a different way. With this said, there are two topics that should be included, climate and other Weeks Bay relevant topics, such as the Jubilee Phenomenon.

In addition, the high-school curriculum currently highlights certain reserves. In the development of the middle-grade curriculum we will give higher priority to those reserves not highlighted in the high-school curriculum.

4. *Are you looking for about the same number of activities for middle school as there are in the high school curriculum (about 10 activities)?*

At this point we can't determine the number of activities that will make-up the curriculum. Each module should contain multiple activities designed to address different levels of student preparedness and preconceptions. Because of the process established in the design and development of this curriculum (see Section II.(2.1.) of the Estuaries 101 Curriculum RFP), the selected vendor will not generate the first draft of the activities, Reserve Educators will do that in a workshop, guided by the vendor. All drafted activities and lesson plans will be given to the Vendor after the workshop who will, in turn, spend most of their time (a) significantly strengthening and polishing the activities; (b) draft and add individual assessment pieces to all the activities; (c) communicate directly with individual Reserves to clarify points or solicit additional information, if needed, to strengthen the content provided; and (d) formatting and ensuring that all the activities communicate in one voice.

We anticipate having, at least, one activity drafted per reserve (total 27), but don't anticipate all of them making the cut, whether because they don't have sufficient data to support the story or because the activity might be better geared for the high-school level curriculum. Again, it is extremely important for the potential vendor to realize that their curriculum writer, in this case, will not be drafting the proposed activities, but the Reserve Educator is, his/her role is primarily to help shape the activity into a final and well polished lesson plan.

5. *Please clarify: Is the curriculum to be geared toward Weeks Bay, or is it to be developed for Weeks Bay but applicable nationwide?*

The curriculum is to be applicable nationwide and contain a set of activities that are focused on Weeks Bay, Alabama. At least, one of the activities should address the Jubilee Phenomenon (see Section II. (2.2.) of the Estuaries 101 Curriculum RFP).

6. *Please clarify what you mean by Web-ready. What do you need from us in terms of a Web-ready solution?* Lessons, background information, illustrations, interactive components, and evaluations must be formatted to be easily posted on the estuaries.gov web site. All credits for images or information, permissions and copyrights must be obtained before being considered web-ready.

The final product will not only be a link to a web site, but will actually include a front end interface, featuring interactive tools, that will ultimately be transferred to Weeks Bay NERR to be loaded into estuaries.gov. The curriculum modules will be Web-browser based with student materials available in a downloadable format that teachers can print as needed. The selected vendor will develop Web-based software which will include: (1) Generic “back end” components designed to interface with the new NERRS System-Wide Monitoring Education Interface (listed under Section II. (2.2) and to be live on estuaries.gov by April 2010); (2) Specific “front end” interfaces which will be customized to the content of the curriculum.

7. *Would the person developing the curriculum have authorship of the modules? This is an important question for tenure track faculty that are expected to publish.*

This question has several implications in the context of intellectual property rights. As any other work produced or purchased with federal funds, there are a series of stipulations that the selected vendor will need to follow, if interested in retaining authorship. On the assumption that the vendor is selected, this request will need to be further discussed and special award conditions will need to be included in the contract, if approved by Weeks Bay NERR and the State of Alabama. Weeks Bay NERR and the State of Alabama will want to retain royalty-free, nonexclusive access to the resulting products, as well as, reproduce, distribute, or publish portions of the completed products that would involve intellectual core content as a result from the contract and that involve NOAA data or products.

#### **Process Questions:**

1. *How many staff members must give approval?*

The Education Coordinator for Weeks Bay NERR, Alabama; the National Education Coordinator for NOAA’s Estuarine Reserves Division, and about eight Reserve Educators who are part of a Workgroup formed to act as an Advisory Committee to the vendor selected. The ultimate selection and contract process will be the decision of the Weeks Bay Reserve staff and the State of Alabama.

2. *How many drafts are expected?*

Three: (1) A rough draft resulting from the work done during the workshop organized with Reserve Educators, and a (2) second (close to final) polished draft produced by the selected vendor. (3) The final draft will be revised through the piloting and review process during the second year.

#### **Budget Questions:**

1. *I am assuming that the budget (100K) does not include workshop materials?*

We were not anticipating any workshop materials. If needed, these can be distributed electronically to all participants 1-2 weeks before the workshop. Participants can be asked to bring their own printed copies.

2. *I am also assuming that the budget includes all travel for the dates listed in the announcement.*

Yes. In the response to the RFP, please clarify how many people on the contract will be budgeted for travel.

3. *Regarding travel, what might be the additional travel requirements beyond those listed in section 2.4 of the RFP?*

There is no other anticipated travel requirement beyond those listed in section 2.4 of the RFP.

**Contractor Performance report**

1. *Should the person performing the assessment of the curriculum in addition to the curriculum developer and web designer fill out a contractor performance report?*

If the person performing the assessment of the curriculum is a sub-contractor, yes, please add a performance report for them.

**Criteria for Evaluation - Questions**

2. *How will partners applying together be evaluated?*

The proposal is evaluated based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section I (1.7) of the Estuaries 101 Curriculum R.F.P.

3. *How important is it to have experts knowledgeable in local issues?*

We don't require that the experts are knowledgeable in local issues, but we do require that the experts have knowledge and understanding of basic ecological principles and estuarine science, and/or related fields