

ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SOLE SOURCE

Project Title: Rough Fish Harvest Monitoring for Nutrient Removal from Ocklawaha River and St. Johns River Basins Lakes.

Public Notice: This Notice of Intent to Sole Source is not a solicitation but is to inform the public that the St. Johns River Water Management District (the District) intends to negotiate a non-competitive agreement to purchase a product and/or service that may be a sole source. Any response received to this Notice will not be considered a proposal, bid, or quote. Rather, any response received shall be considered solely for the purpose of determining, in the District's sole discretion, whether to conduct a competitive procurement.

Scope of Work: The District has reason to believe that only a single source is capable of providing the specialized monitoring services necessary to oversee fishing operations and collect fish survey data required for the District's permit with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to implement the harvest. The District's determination is based on the need for specialized experience with gizzard shad harvest monitoring, demonstrated familiarity with FWC permit requirements applicable to the harvest, and the ability to provide the vessels, nets, live tank, GPS equipment, weighing and measuring equipment, sampling equipment, and reporting equipment necessary to perform the required monitoring services.

The District's determination is also supported by its prior marketplace experience for these services. The District has procured these services for many years and has repeatedly sought competitive responses. Solicitations for fish monitoring services were issued in 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018, and in each instance only one quote was received. In 2021, the District publicly posted its intent to enter a sole-source contract for these services and received no responses indicating another source could provide the required services.

The fish biomass of many Ocklawaha River and St. Johns River Basin lakes is dominated by native gizzard shad, *Dorosoma cepedianum*, which thrive in lakes with high nutrient concentrations and abundant phytoplankton. The feeding activity of gizzard shad contributes to perpetuating degraded water quality conditions in lakes where they are abundant. Removal of gizzard shad was first evaluated in a small basin lake with conditions similar to Lake Apopka. Water quality improved significantly following the removal of a substantial portion of the adult shad population. Annual harvests from Lake Apopka began in 1993 and typically remove one million pounds of fish.

The Consultant will be responsible for providing the data needed to evaluate gizzard shad removal and gamefish by-catch in Ocklawaha and St. Johns River Basin lakes during the gizzard shad harvest. The gizzard shad harvest is anticipated to occur October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2029, with the following Project Schedule:

Task #1 – Monitoring the gizzard shad harvest in basin lakes

Lake Apopka – estimated 105 days Lake George – estimated 60 days

Task #2 – Experimental gill net sampling in the pelagic zone of basin lakes

Proposed sampling schedule as follows (may change depending on weather conditions and harvest start/end dates):

Lake Apopka – January, March, May, September – 40 samples (4 sample events) Lake George – April, May, July, September – 40 samples (4 sample events) Contingency sampling event (Lake Apopka) – 10 samples (1 sample event) Contingency sampling event (Lake George) – 10 samples (1 sample event)

Total samples – 100

Task #3 – Commercial gill net sampling in the pelagic zone of basin lakes

Proposed sampling schedule as follows (may change depending on weather conditions and harvest start/end dates):

Lake George – April or May, September – 10 samples (2 sample events) Contingency sampling event (Lake George) – 5 samples (1 sample event)

Total samples – 15

Task #4 – Data management and reporting

The Consultant is responsible for providing the following:

- (a) An owned, leased, or rented 16-foot-long power boat (with appropriately sized motor) capable of safely working on the large basin lakes and capable of transporting and setting nets;
- (b) Six (6) Consultant-provided usable experimental gill nets; each 300-foot-long with six (6) 50-foot-long panels and stretch mesh sized in 0.5” increments from 2.5” to 5.0” (#139 monofilament);
- (c) Three (3) #139 monofilament commercial gill nets; each 450-foot-long with 4” and/or 5” stretch mesh;
- (d) Equipment to accurately weigh and measure fish;
- (e) Functional Global Positioning System (GPS) unit;
- (f) A live tank sufficient to keep all captured gamefish alive while monitoring.

Consultant shall supply all equipment necessary to complete the project as specified in the Statement of Work. Consultant is responsible for monitoring the gizzard shad harvest from Lake Apopka and Lake George, which includes documenting catches of gizzard shad and other fish species taken by commercial gill net fishers. Consultant shall collect and record the numbers and species of fish taken in observed gill net catches from the shad harvest. Consultant shall also collect and record the number, species, lengths, and weights of shad and gamefish from experimental and commercial gill net sampling efforts from designated lakes. Consultant shall utilize experimental gill nets to determine pre- and post-harvest period stocks of gizzard shad and other fish species in Lake Apopka and Lake George. This data shall be reported to the District and to the FWC.

Any Consultant who believes it can meet or exceed the above-mentioned scope of services is requested to provide information regarding its ability to perform the services. To do so, Consultants may email the procurement specialist named below. The email must include a reference for this procurement number. Responses must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on August 19, 2026.

Procurement Specialist:	Breanna Pierce
Email:	BPierce@sjrwmd.com

Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in section 120.57(3), Florida Statutes shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes.