

May 6, 2016

Thicket of Diversity Request For Proposals

Request for Proposals

As an affiliate of the Big Thicket Association (BTA), the Big Thicket All Taxa Biological Inventory (ATBI) now referred to as the “Thicket of Diversity” (ToD) is requesting proposals for **1) biological surveys and inventories of all taxonomic groups in southeast Texas and 2) research to inform sustainability and management of biological populations particularly of those considered pollution indicator species and / or At-risk species. At-risk species include those with status under the federal Endangered Species Act and a state’s Endangered Species Act. Other at risk species are those on a state’s Fish and Wildlife Department’s sensitive species list, and a state’s Department of Agriculture lists.** Although surveys and inventories are focused primarily on the National Park Service’s Big Thicket National Preserve; surveys may include lands and waters owned/ managed by The Nature Conservancy, State and National Forests, State Parks and private land holdings as appropriate.

The ToD is requesting proposals to evaluate research priorities, assess funding needs, and coordinate inventory efforts of all extant organisms on the lands and waters mentioned above. For more specific information on research needs or species of interest please see Table 2. The ToD seeks to facilitate research activities and data dissemination between individual researchers, the entities managing surveyed lands, and the general public. Although the ToD does not issue collecting permits; working as a partner with public and private interests, the ToD will send proposals forward with recommendations to facilitate the process.

OVERVIEW OF SUPPORT & FUNDING

Funding Source:

The ToD has acquired mitigation funds for Supplemental Environmental Projects from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for this purpose. Grant requests for individual research projects submitted to the ToD Executive Council should not exceed \$13,080 (See Table 1.) and fall within the allocated TCEQ budget categories. Due to limited funding, the ToD cannot fund projects that require institutional overhead.. Larger scale or more in-depth proposals requesting more than the authorized amount may be considered if the ToD acquires additional funding sources.

Support:

Housing/Laboratory - A Field Research Station located in Saratoga, Texas is available for temporary housing and contains a basic laboratory facility. Information and reservations can be made through the [ToD website](http://www.thicketofdiversity.org) (www.thicketofdiversity.org).

Funds Availability:

For one (1) year or less projects: the initial 70% of approved funding will be sent within 14 days from the date of final approval by the ToD Executive Council. The remaining 30% of the funds will be withheld until project completion, receipt of a final report, and verification that all ToD data entry is received in the required format.

For multi-year projects: the initial 70% of the first year's approved funding will be forwarded as before, the remaining 30% will be provided after the ToD receives an acceptable first year annual report. Funding of additional years will be dependent upon receipt of an acceptable annual report for each subsequent year, and funds for such additional years will be distributed using the same 70/30 percentages. The final year's 30% will be withheld until project completion, receipt of a final report, and verification that all ToD data entry is received in the required format.

Acknowledgement of Financial Support

Performing Party shall acknowledge the financial support of the TCEQ SEP program in any publication involving the use of SEP Funds or whenever work funded in whole or in part by this Agreement is publicized or reported in news media. All publications, news releases and projects signs shall contain the following notation:

*Performed with penalty monies from a
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality enforcement action.*

SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL:

Proposals will be accepted at any time. Please note: **All Research activities and specimen collections must follow the protocol of the individual agency/organization issuing the research permit which in most cases will be Big Thicket National Preserve.** Upon receipt of your proposal, the ToD Science Committee will review and make recommendations to the ToD Executive Council for funding allocation. Funds will be awarded based upon scientific merit, agreement with the goals stated above as well as the rules for using the funds as described in funding agreements (details available). Final approval and funding is completed at the quarterly meetings of the ToD Executive Council. These meetings are currently held in January, April, July, and October. Completed proposals (ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION ONLY) should be sent to:

- Mona A. Halvorsen, Director, Thicket of Diversity director@thicketofdiversity.org

Further information or questions concerning this process may be directed to Mona A. Halvorsen 936-274-1181 (Office)

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Researchers receiving support from the Thicket of Diversity (ToD) are required to submit **Annual Reports on September 30th of each year.** Researchers must submit a completed Final Report, data for the ToD database, and a complete list of the taxa collected, associated collection data, expenditures, etc., no later than 1 year following project completion. All data collection and reporting must comply with the format and protocols established by the ToD and any agency/organization granting a collecting permit(s). Copies of any publications resulting from projects funded by the ToD are required for BTA and NPS files. For additional information related to reporting requirements and frequently asked questions specific to the NPS and ToD please visit the following link:

http://www.thicketofdiversity.org/static/media/uploads/TOD%20Files/TOD%20Docs/Docs%20for%20Researchers/research_process_flowchart.pdf

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

Proposals should be limited to four printed pages or less (not including required CV's), longer proposals will not be accepted. The following minimum content, and format, is required for proposals to be considered:

Introduction: Background information relative to the taxa involved and the status of knowledge for the region/state/preserve, etc.

Methodology: Proposed research plan to include research methodology, an estimate of expected results (anticipated number of specimens and taxa to be collected), proposed properties where collections will be made, and where collections will be stored/archived.

Timeline: Provide a timeline to indicate project start and end date, anticipated field schedule, key milestones, data submission, and reporting. Indicate if the investigator(s) intend to present, or publish, the findings of the inventory.

Budget: If you anticipate seeking ToD funds, please include an itemized budget and a brief justification with the proposal. Projects that span more than one (1) year are required to submit a budget for each year.

Contact: Include complete contact information along with a- CV including relevant experience and publications for each investigator/co-investigator. Students, or other collaborators, assisting investigators do not need to provide a CV.

Insurance:

Unless prohibited by law, Performing Party shall require its contractors and suppliers to obtain and maintain adequate insurance coverages sufficient to protect the Performing Party from all claims and liability for injury to persons and for damage to property arising under the Agreement. If Performing Party is performing work under this Agreement using its own employees and resources, then (unless Performing Party is a governmental entity or this requirement is waived by TCEQ) Performing Party shall obtain and maintain insurance coverages sufficient to protect the Performing Party from all claims and liability for injury to persons and for damage to property arising out of the Performing Party's performance of the work under this Agreement.

TABLE 1

Funding Limitations by Category that have been approved by the TCEQ for this Supplemental Environmental Project. Receipts and work logs must be provided for each Supplemental Environmental Category

Funding Limitation Category	Allowable Expenses for each Supplemental Environmental Project Category	Quantity	Price per item	Total per Item
Funding Limitation Category - 1	Leader/Research Contractor(s) -collecting and inventorying specimens; analyzing and identifying species, conducting environmental studies	120 hours	\$50/hour	\$6,000
Funding Limitation Category -2	Undergraduate Student Contractor(s) -data entry and lab analyses	300 hours	\$12/hour	\$3,600
Funding Limitation Category - 3	Vehicle or boat rental fee and fuel to access locations of specimen collection	18 days	\$160/day	\$2,880
Funding Limitation Category -4	Public notification of species collection event(s) in newspapers to recruit volunteers	3 newspaper advertisements	\$200/ad	\$600
	Total Direct Cost			\$13,080

Table 2. Research needs or species of interest

Current SEP Agreement list of organisms include	lichens, bryophytes, mussels, mollusks, amphibians, fish or birds
Expanded individual taxonomic groups include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lichens and Bryophytes in air quality studies • Invasive aquatics including <i>Salvinia</i> spp, watermilfoils, hydrilla, water hyacinth, etc. and their current treatment impacts on aquatic ecosystems and water quality • Organisms important to healthy soils and/or oil spill remediation- worms, nematodes, protozoa, fungi, bacteria, and arthropods
Additional comparative inventories of organisms are modeled after the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's Discover Life in America.	<p>Acanthocephala (Spinyheaded worms), Algae, Ameoboza, Annelids: Aquatic and terrestrial Worms and Leeches, Arachnids: Harvestmen or Daddy Long-legs, Arachnids: Ticks, Arachnids: Mites, Arachnids: Scorpions and Pseudoscorpions, Arachnids: Spiders, Bryozoa (Moss animals), Chilopoda (Centipedes), Cnidaria, Coleoptera, Collembola, Crustaceans: Crayfish, Crustaceans, Dermaptera: Earwigs, Diplopoda, Diplura, Diptera: flies, Ephemeroptera: Mayflies, Fungi, Hemiptera: Bugs and Hoppers, Hymenoptera: Bees and Ants etc., Isoptera: Termites, Lepidoptera: Moths and Butterflies, Lichens, Mecoptera: Scorpionflies, Microbes: Archaea, Microbes: Bacteria, Microbes: Microsporidia, Microbes- Protists, Microbes- Viruses, Microcoryphia: Jumping Bristletails, Molluscs: Clams and Snails, Myxomycetes, Nematodes, Nematomorpha, Nemertea, Neuroptera: Lacewings, Antlions, etc., Odonata: Dragonflies and Damselflies, Orthoptera: Grasshoppers, Crickets, etc., Orthopteroids, Pauropoda, Phthiraptera-Lice, Plants: Non-vascular, Plants: Vascular, Platyhelminthes, Plecoptera, Protura, Psocoptera, Siphonaptera, Symphyla, Tardigrades, Thysanoptera, Thysanura, Trichoptera, Vertebrates: Amphibians, Vertebrates: Aves (Birds), Vertebrates: Fishes, Vertebrates: Mammals, Vertebrates: Reptiles.</p>

Please visit our website at www.thicketofdiversity.org