

**Request for Proposals**  
**Jackknife & Lost Beetle Mastication Thinning & Machine Pile**  
**Flathead National Forest, Montana**

**Background and Statement of Work:** This project will reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest stand conditions related to species composition and vegetative structure on 329 acres within the wildland urban interface. Most of the work (284 acres Jackknife) is excavator-based mastication thinning. The remaining work (45 acres Lost Beetle) is machine or hand slashing and excavator piling. Understanding species preference and best tree characteristics for the Jackknife mastication thinning is important for meeting the project objectives because there is variable spacing (11'-19' 15' avg.) and species composition in these mixed stands - tighter leave tree spacing at 11' where lodgepole pine are retained as the preferred leave tree species and wider spacing up to 19' for health well-formed ponderosa pine and western larch. Georeferenced PDF vicinity and unit maps will be provided so the work areas can be reviewed

**Information Requested**

If interested in submitting a bid for this project, please provide a proposal for the above statement of work by providing:

- technical approach
- work experience
- cost
- capacity for this project
- experience in similar projects

Specific requirements are detailed below.

**I. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS**

**General Specifications**

(a) Description of Work – This Request for Proposals is for restoration services related to Jackknife & Lost Beetle Mastication Thinning & Machine Pile including the following:

1. Lost Beetle, 45 acres  
Hand and or excavator-based machine slash all conifer trees <7" DBH and buck into 8 foot or less lengths prior to piling. Trees >7" DBH may be cut as needed for

machine access. Do not cut western white pine, Hemlock, aspen, birch, and cottonwood.

Maximum stump height 6" with no lower live limbs.

Ignore trees <2' in height.

Hand or machine slash all shrubs >3' in height.

Excavator pile >8' in height and includes all contractor generated slash and natural fuel <8" diameter. Piles free of dirt and reasonably compact to facilitate full consumption when burned.

**Note:** This unit requires access through a privately owned F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company Road and will require coordination with them to gain access.

2. Jackknife, 284 acres (items 2-10)

Excavator based mastication tree thinning <7" DBH

Masticate shrubs >3' in height. Leave one clump of shrubs every 75-125'.

Species preference: (1) ponderosa pine, (2) western larch, (3) Douglas-fir, (4) lodgepole pine, (5) engelman spruce, (6) western red cedar, (7) alpine fir, (8) grand fir. Do not intentionally masticate Hemlock, western white pine, aspen, birch, and cottonwood.

Average 15 foot spacing including overstory trees with 11–19-foot variance to select the best trees of the preferred species.

Average 200 leave trees per acre with 160-240 tree per acre variance. **One 1/20<sup>th</sup> acre (26.3' radius) plot will be required for quality control per 5 acres.**

This comes out to 8 to 12 leave trees per plot average.

Masticated material will be within the following specification: 75% of chips from masticating must be <3 feet in length, 25% of chips from masticating may be >3 feet, however, must be no more than 1' in height/depth.

Stump height less than 6 inches, except near rocks, other obstacles or close to leave trees that may be damaged in the process of lowering stump height to 6" or less.

Ignore trees <2 feet in height.

Incidental mastication of trees >7-inch DBH may be required to access trees to thin or isolated areas within units.

Leave all down wood >8-inch diameter intact to the extent practical.

If unmapped wetlands <0.5 acres are discovered during operations at least 50% of the outer riparian management zone (100' buffer) will be deferred and all the inner riparian management zone (50' buffer) will be deferred. If unmapped wetlands >0.5 acres are discovered all the riparian management zone will be deferred (300' buffer). Project POC, inspector or forest service will assist the contractor as needed if unmapped wetlands are discovered. There is a low probability unmapped wetland will be encountered.

**Note:** These units co-mingle with the GNA Jackknife timber sale and a Forest Service hand thinning contract area so may require coordination with multiple contractors to deconflict operations and provide for safety.

The Contractor shall identify which efforts and materials they can supply in terms of supervision, quality control, and incidentals required to complete the work described. The Contractor shall perform all work in a safe and conscientious manner.

The Contractor shall identify what they can supply in terms of materials, labor, equipment, supplies, supervision, quality control, and incidentals required to complete the work described. The Contractor shall perform all work in a safe and conscientious manner.

- (b) Project Location – Jackknife mastication thinning, approx. 2 airmiles southwest of Olney, MT, primarily accessed by Forest Service Road 60 (Good Creek). Lost Beetle hand or machine slashing and excavator piling, approx. 12 airmiles northwest of Kalispell, MT, primarily accessed by Forest Service Road 912 (Ashley Lake). Both projects areas are located in Flathead County.

Project area maps are available for download from:

<https://nff.files.com/f/9c82a9b03a15f455>

- (c) Work Schedule – June 1, 2024 - March 1, 2026. When soils are dry <20% soil moisture or when ground is frozen and or covered by >10” of settled snow.

### **Other Project Requirements and Specifications**

- (a) Utilities – In many locations there will be no or limited sanitation, water, electrical or housing services available. The Contractor shall make its own arrangements for temporary facilities if needed.
- (b) Specifications – Project work shall be accomplished in accordance with the following:

Acceptable equipment for mastication thinning and excavator piling is an excavator-based machine equipped with a bucket and a thumb, grapple, or masticator. Other equipment may be approved. All unit boundaries are marked with flagging and may require the contractor to hang additional flagging if flags occasionally fall, are removed by hunters, animals etc. over time. The maps are georeferenced and compatible with cell phone or tablet mapping applications.

- Slopes >30% may be hand treated if they are too steep to operate on safely.
- Slopes >40% must be hand treated.
- Stump heights >6” exception for high stumps near rocks or to minimize leave tree damage.
- Minimize damage to the residual leave tree boles.
- Any tree designated for retention that poses a safety hazard may be felled without prior approval. All such hazard trees felled to provide for safe work conditions will remain adjacent to the stump.
- Leave all snags standing unless they create a hazard.
- Food storage that complies with the Flathead National Forest Food Storage Order is required.
- Prior to project implementation and mobilization between Lost Beetle & Jackknife units, any equipment used must be weed washed and inspected.
- No timber products may be hauled from the area.

- Protect all survey monuments, signs, and powerline improvements.
- Road or other damage resulting from operations will be repaired at no expense to the government or the National Forest Foundation.
- Roadways and ditches must always remain clear of slashing debris so as not to impede traffic or water drainage.
- Fire equipment including pump and trailer are required to be on site and functional when local fire danger thresholds are high or greater and/or to comply with local fire restrictions.
- No equipment or property will be provided.
- Invoices can be submitted after each item has been inspected and accepted.
- It is the contractor's responsibility to provide for public safety, especially while operating along or near roads.

### **Insurance Requirements**

Upon selection of the winning bid, the Contractor agrees that it has and shall maintain the following insurance coverage indicated below. The effective date of all coverage shall precede the start of any work.

- a. State minimum workers' compensation insurance coverage for its employees, if any.
- b. Broad form general liability, property damage, and automotive liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 for bodily injury, death, or damage to property of any person and \$2,000,000 for bodily injury, death, or damage to property of more than one person. The Contractor shall name NFF an Additional Named Insured and provide NFF with a certificate of insurance evidencing such coverages, prior to the initiation of the Scope of Services.
- c. If the Scope of Services includes professional services as identified herein, Contractor shall also provide professional errors and omissions liability insurance. Professional services for purposes of this section include, but are not limited to performing architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, land surveying or planning, preparation and signing or stamping of drawings, maps, surveys or construction specifications, or design and development of computer software, programs or websites by the Contractor or by subcontractors on behalf of the Contractor, for which professional liability insurance would typically be required. The minimum coverage limits required are \$1,000,000 for each claim and \$1,000,000 annual aggregate.

### **Prohibited Telecommunications Services and Equipment**

The Contractor is responsible for compliance with the prohibition on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment identified in 2 CFR 200.216.

### **Payment/Performance Security**

Contractor shall post cash, a letter of credit, bond, or other financial security that is easily convertible into cash in a form acceptable to the NFF, in its sole determination, to assure completion of the work required under any subsequent agreement and payment of all amounts lawfully due to all persons supplying or furnishing to the Contractor or Contractor's subcontractors with labor, laborers, materials, rental machinery, tools or equipment used or to

perform the work. Contractor may incorporate required associated costs into mobilization costs or other approved expenses.

- a. Work that is classified as construction in accordance with the Miller Act or Little Miller Act or if required per conditions of the funding source, payment and performance bonding will be required in the full amount of any Agreement. For the purposes of this Request for Proposal, construction is defined as “any contract greater than \$100,000 for the construction, alteration, or repair of any public building or public work where the federal government is the owner”, or
- b. If Contractor is not self-performing at least 85% of the total contract value or if the cost of materials is in excess of the larger of \$100,000 or 50% of the contract total, payment and performance bonding will be required in the full amount of the agreement, or
- c. If the value of the agreement is in excess of \$250,000, Contractor will be required to post financial security in a form acceptable to the NFF in the amount of 5% of the total agreement value up to \$250,000 in total financial security.

**American Made Products.** The work associated with this RFP is subject to Build America, Buy America Act. P.L. 117-58, Secs 70911-70917, and as such, domestic content procurement preference requires all iron and steel, manufactured products and construction materials used within the scope of this Agreement, be produced in the United States.

### **Federal Exclusion Verification**

The selected Contractor will be required to affirm that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

### **Federal Flowdown Provisions**

Flowdown Requirements: Any Agreement associated with this RFP may be subject to flowdown requirements under associated federal or state funding agreements, which are included and made part of by this reference.

## **II. REQUIRED COMPONENTS**

### **Technical Proposal**

Please provide a detailed technical approach to the work.

### **Contractor Qualifications**

- (a) Past Experience – Please provide a brief explanation of previous work experience with land management agencies.
- (b) References – Please provide three professional references that can speak to past performance.

## Pricing Schedule

Contractor shall price work according to the schedule below. Prevailing wages are required per conditions of funding sources.

	<b>Task/Item</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Extended Cost</b>
1.	Lost Beetle 6	45 acres		
2.	Jackknife 100	25 acres		
3.	Jackknife 101	28 acres		
4.	Jackknife 102	32 acres		
5.	Jackknife 103	50 acres		
6.	Jackknife 107	40 acres		
7.	Jackknife 1 Fuels	6 acres		
8.	Jackknife 2 Fuels	3 acres		
9.	Jackknife 3 Fuels	7 acres		
10.	Jackknife 4 Fuels	93 acres		
			<b>Total Bid</b>	

### III. SUBMISSION, EVALUATION, AND CONTACTS

#### Contractor Selection Process

This is a request for proposals only and bids furnished are not offers from the National Forest Foundation. This request does not commit the National Forest Foundation to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of the proposal or to contract for supplies or services.

The NFF will use the Evaluation Factors below to review each submitted bid. Based on the outcomes of that selection process, the NFF will notify successful and unsuccessful bidders by May 10, 2024, and will prepare a separate contract document.

#### Evaluation Factors and Relative Importance

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of submitted proposals, ordered from highest weighting (level 3) to lowest weighting (level 1).

##### Level 3 Criteria

- Price / cost
- Equipment and contractor capability
- Timing of when contractor can begin and/or finish the project
- Past performance, references, and USFS feedback

### Level 2 Criteria

- Technical proposal / proposed approach to project
- Overall strategic benefits to meeting NFF goals and grant needs, requirements, and timelines

### Level 1 Criteria

- Benefits to the local community
- Relationship to local community

### **Point of Contact**

Please submit any questions about the project in writing to the Point of Contact.

Marlee Ostheimer  
National Forest Foundation, Northern Region Program Manager  
mostheimer@nationalforests.org

Responses will be shared with known interested parties by email or otherwise posted at <https://www.nationalforests.org/rfp>.

### **Bid Submission**

Submit bids via email to mostheimer@nationalforests.org by May 3, 2024.

### **Equal Opportunity Provider**

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the National Forest Foundation is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.