



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**PROJECT:**

**Interstate 15 Rainbow Canyon Wildlife  
Crossing Planning and Design**

**SUBMITTAL DEADLINE:**

**By 5:00 PM (PDT) on June 2, 2026**

**SUBMIT RESPONSES TO:**

**[rfp@teamrcd.org](mailto:rfp@teamrcd.org)**

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## 1. Introduction

The Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District (TEAM RCD) is a local public agency and special district that promotes conservation practices of natural resources, opportunities for public education and participation, and a sustainable quality of life for communities within its territory. The District includes 505,000 acres, or approximately 789 square miles, extending south from Scott Road to the San Diego County line, and from east of Anza west to the Orange County line, also including a loop around the north of Lake Elsinore. Additional information related to the governance of, and services provided by TEAM RCD may be found at [www.teamrcd.org](http://www.teamrcd.org).

TEAM RCD requests proposals from qualified engineering and environmental consultants experienced in wildlife connectivity infrastructure planning and design, as well as working with Caltrans and their standards and specifications, to cooperatively assist TEAM RCD and key partners with the planning, coordination, development, and preparation of environmental review and engineering design for a wildlife overpass across Interstate 15 located in Western Riverside County, just south of Temecula and north of the San Diego County line. This includes building on the already-approved Project Initiation Document (PSR-PDS) to advance the project through the Caltrans project development process, including the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase and Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) to 65% design.

**Project Contact:** Direct all inquiries regarding this Request for Proposals (RFP) by email to [rfp@teamrcd.org](mailto:rfp@teamrcd.org). The deadline for final questions is provided in Section 2.

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, except certain dates as described below in Section 2, written addenda will be issued. Any amendment to this RFP is valid only if issued by TEAM RCD in writing. All addenda for this RFP will be distributed via the TEAM RCD website at [www.teamrcd.org](http://www.teamrcd.org). It is the proposer's sole responsibility to monitor the website for possible addenda to this RFP. Failure of proposer to retrieve addenda from this site shall not relieve the proposer of the requirements contained therein.

## 2. Tentative Project Schedule

The following represents the tentative schedule for this project. Any change in the scheduled deadlines for questions, question response, and proposal submission will be advertised in the form of an addendum to this RFP. The schedule for the evaluation process and other future dates may be adjusted without notice.

Direct all questions regarding this RFP to [rfp@teamrcd.org](mailto:rfp@teamrcd.org) by 5:00 p.m. PDT on May 19, 2026. Clarifications will be published electronically on [www.teamrcd.org](http://www.teamrcd.org) by 5:00 p.m. PDT on May 26, 2026.

RFP release	5/1/2026
Optional Pre-Bid Site tour	5/14/2026 at 1:00 pm PDT
Deadline for final questions	5/19/2026 by 5:00 pm PDT
Question response	5/26/2026 by 5:00 pm PDT
Proposal Submission Deadline	6/2/2026 by 5:00 pm PDT
Evaluation of proposals	6/3/2026 to 6/10/2026
Interviews (if necessary)	6/11/2026 to 6/18/2026
Notice of Contract Award	Week of 6/22/2026
Agreement execution by RCD	Week of 7/13/2026
Project kick-off meeting	Week of 8/10/2026
Scope of work completion	No later than 7/12/2029

### 3. Project Description

#### **Background**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has designated Interstate 15 between the San Diego-Riverside county line and Temecula as one of the state’s top 12 priority wildlife barriers. This highway segment is a nearly impassable barrier to wildlife movement between the Santa Ana and Palomar Mountains, severing a habitat linkage that is essential for the long-term viability of wide-ranging species and those shifting their range in response to climate change. Mountain lions and other wildlife, including bobcat, coyote, mule deer, gray fox, ringtail, spotted skunk, and striped skunk have been documented by camera traps on both sides of the highway, but existing crossing structures are inadequate. As a result, the Santa Ana mountain lion subpopulation, in particular, is experiencing significant genetic restriction.

The Interstate 15 Rainbow Canyon Wildlife Crossing, a planned vegetated overcrossing, will reconnect this landscape, providing safe passage for a multitude of wildlife species continuing their path through a key climate corridor. The crossing will link the Santa Ana Mountains, via the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve, to the Palomar Mountains and other protected areas within the greater eastern Peninsular Ranges region, restoring landscape-scale connectivity essential for ecological resilience. The Western Riverside Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) owns the property adjacent to I-15 to the west of the planned crossing location. This property is part of the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve, which is composed of protected lands managed by San Diego State University. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns the property to the east of the highway at the proposed crossing site. RCA and TNC will cooperate with Caltrans District 8 and other project

partners as needed to provide right of way for the crossing's construction. The postmile locations for proposed overcrossing alternatives are RIV-15 R1.67 and RIV-15 R1.70.

In 2022, TNC convened an expert workshop to inform the design requirements for potential I-15 crossing structures. Experts considered elements such as vegetation cover, substrate type, and noise and light mitigation to meet the specific needs of mammals, birds, bats, plants, and invertebrates. The resulting design elements will result in a net gain of wildlife habitat and facilitate the movement of pollinators, birds, and less mobile species, while also creating potential live-in habitat for smaller wildlife. Overall, these design elements are expected to make the overcrossing suitable for at least 26 different species.<sup>1</sup>

In response to wildlife mortalities, Caltrans District 8 constructed 3 miles of wildlife exclusion fencing along both sides of I-15, from the Temecula Creek Bridge (just south of the City of Temecula) to the San Diego County line, as part of a highway rehabilitation project. The fencing was finalized in 2022, and no mountain lions have been killed by vehicle strikes along this stretch of highway since fence construction was initiated, though genetic isolation persists.

In November 2024, Caltrans approved the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the overcrossing, a Project Study Report - Project Development Support (see Attachment B – Adopted PSR-PDS). The PID contains further details on the proposed crossing design alternatives and expected needs and requirements in subsequent project development phases. Work described in this RFP will build on the PID to deliver completion of the PA&ED phase and PS&E to 35% and 65% design. Please note that the Cooperative Agreement between TEAM RCD and Caltrans is expected to cover only PA&ED, though work under this RFP also includes PS&E to 65% design.

### **Project Team and Partners**

The Project Team includes TEAM RCD, TNC, Caltrans District 8, and Western Riverside RCA. TNC brings decades of experience in conservation science, land protection, and partnership building in the South Coast region, including managing complex conservation-oriented partnerships in the area. In this location, TNC has worked together successfully with partners, including Western Riverside RCA, to protect hundreds of acres of land, develop a plan for the Santa Ana-Palomar Mountains Wildlife Linkage, and advance the planning of this proposed wildlife crossing. The Project Team will be responsible for project management and coordination with the Consultant Team and other project partners. TEAM RCD will be the primary project manager and will direct the

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, T., C. Brehme, J. Carpenter, N. Frost, M. Jennings, B. Kus, S. Strahm, and T.W. Vickers. 2023. *Interstate 15 Wildlife Crossing Design Considerations for Focal Species in the Santa Ana-Palomar Linkage, Southern California*. <https://www.scienceforconservation.org/products/interstate-15-wildlife-crossing-design>

scope of work to ensure deliverables are achieved on schedule. The Project Team will provide guidance and review and feedback to consultants throughout the process, with TEAM RCD and Caltrans providing final sign-off on project deliverables.

Project partners may include those organizations, agencies, and other entities that are consulted or informed throughout the process and asked for input/advice at key project checkpoints within their area of expertise. These partners will help to refine and review deliverables and provide valuable subject matter expertise and feedback on specific elements of the project. The Project Team will be responsible for seeking and consolidating input from partners on product deliverables and for convening meetings with partners to receive presentations from the Consultant Team on draft products.

## 4. Scope of Services

The following scope of services was developed by TEAM RCD and TNC and is reflected in a successful grant application to the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). Through this grant, TEAM RCD (the grantee) will hire a Consultant Team to advance the wildlife crossing project through PA&ED and PS&E to 35% and 65% design. Proposals are expected to include the Consultant Team's recommended approach and include additional detail on the various tasks necessary to accomplish the Scope of Services. Respondents may propose alternative methods or approaches that deviate from descriptions below if they achieve the task's objectives.

### **TASK 1: Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA/ED)**

The Consultant will complete all necessary mapping, studies, planning, design, and environmental review activities to advance the project through the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase of the Caltrans project development process.

#### **Subtask 1.1 Project Coordination**

The Consultant will maintain close communication with TEAM RCD to ensure all documents are technically correct and are completed within the budget and schedule parameters. Preparation of contracts, invoicing, financial management, and project data management are included in this task. This task includes attending and arranging meetings to initiate the project and to discuss issues such as general project coordination and incorporation of Project Team and partner input into process and design.

Project files shall be indexed in accordance with Caltrans project development Uniform File System.

### **Subtask 1.2 Project Report**

A Project Report (PR) will be prepared that expands the PID's preliminary scope into a more detailed and refined analysis. The PR will be prepared in alignment with the guidelines included in Appendix K of the Caltrans PDPM. Caltrans will provide quality management assurance by validating PA/ED related documents and their approach. The PR activities and deliverables may consist of, but are not limited to, the following at the PA&ED level:

- Preliminary Geometrics
- Exceptions to Design Standards
- Updated Right of Way Data Sheet
- Transportation Management Plan
- Stormwater Data Report
- Hydraulics/Hydrology Studies
- Preliminary Geotechnical Design Report
- Advance Planning Study
- Preliminary Construction Cost Estimate
- Preliminary Construction Schedule
- Value Analysis
- Draft Project Report, if required, and Project Report

Consultant may provide a revised deliverable list based on their project understanding as part of their RFP response.

### **Subtask 1.3 Environmental Document**

The Project must be environmentally approved under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). While the PID states that an Initial Study with a Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) is required for approval under CEQA, the project may seek a Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) under California Public Resources Code section 21080.56 and a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA. If a SERP is deemed not appropriate by CDFW, then an IS/MND and Environmental Assessment (EA) will be required.

Responses to this RFP should assume that the project will require an IS/MND and EA; project impacts to environmental resources will be analyzed and technical studies prepared, as needed in this scenario. Please see the Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report in the attached PSR-PDS for the anticipated necessary studies.

Caltrans District 8 will be the CEQA and NEPA lead agency. The Consultant will work with Caltrans District 8 to deliver completion of the project's Environmental Document.

### **TASK 2: Engineering Design**

The Consultant will develop the 35% and 65% design and cost estimates; services include the preparation of the PS&E deliverables in accordance with Caltrans standards and procedures. This includes design development, drafting, and documentation sufficient to support project review, permitting, and advancement to final design. Respondents should state whether they propose to advance multiple build alternatives to 35% design before the preferred alternative is selected.

### **OPTIONAL/ADDITIONAL TASK 3: Rainbow Canyon Road Roadkill Survey**

The Consultant shall conduct systematic roadkill surveys twice per week along Rainbow Canyon Road, covering the segment between the Temecula Creek Inn Golf Club entrance (north limit) and Rainbow Valley Road (south limit). Surveys shall be completed sequentially in both northbound and southbound directions during each survey day.

#### **Field Methods**

During each survey, the Consultant shall:

- Identify and document roadkill and live wildlife observed on or immediately adjacent to the roadway.
- Record observations from the safest possible locations, including from within the vehicle or from designated safe turnouts.
- Wear appropriate safety equipment (e.g., reflective safety vest and hard hat) when outside the vehicle.

#### **Data Collection**

For each wildlife observation, the Consultant shall record the following information:

- Route direction (Northbound or Southbound)
- Species (to the lowest taxonomic level practicable)
- Condition (Alive or Dead)
- Confidence level of identification (High, Medium, Low)
- Date and time of observation
- Location (latitude and longitude)
- Additional notes as appropriate (e.g., proximity to roadway, carcass condition)

#### **Data Management and Products**

The Consultant shall compile all collected data into a structured digital database.

Deliverable products shall include:

1. Raw Data Product

- A georeferenced digital dataset (e.g., Excel, CSV, or GIS-compatible format) containing all recorded observations.
  - Dataset shall be organized, quality-checked, and clearly labeled.
2. Summary Report
- A brief summary report provided at an agreed-upon reporting interval (e.g., monthly or quarterly), including:
    - Total number of surveys completed
    - Species observed and frequency
    - Number and location of roadkill incidents
    - Notable patterns or observations
3. Spatial Product (Optional, if requested by RCD)
- A map or GIS layer depicting roadkill and live wildlife observation locations along the survey route.

### **Communication**

The Consultant shall provide email updates to the Project Team upon request, including survey status, preliminary findings, or notification of notable wildlife observations.

## **5. Proposal Guidelines and Requirements**

### **Registration and Clarifications**

All interested firms should register with TEAM RCD by filling out this [form](#) by **5:00 p.m. PDT on May 12, 2026**.

Direct all questions regarding this RFP to [rfp@teamrcd.org](mailto:rfp@teamrcd.org) by **5:00 p.m. PDT on May 19, 2026**. Clarifications will be emailed to all registered firms and published electronically on [www.teamrcd.org](http://www.teamrcd.org) by **5:00 p.m. PDT on May 26, 2026**. Interested firms must be registered with TEAM RCD in order to directly receive RFP clarifications. Questions received after **5:00 p.m. PDT on May 19, 2026** will not receive a response.

### **Pre-Bid Tour**

An **optional** pre-bid tour will be held at **1:00 p.m. PDT on May 14, 2026**. Only interested firms registered with TEAM RCD by May 12, 2026 will receive details about the pre-bid tour.

### **Budget**

The project budget is limited to a maximum of \$3,156,500

### **Proposal Requirements**

Please provide the following information in your proposal. Failure to include all the elements specified may be cause for rejection.

**1. Cover Letter**

- Name and mailing address of firm
- Name members and roles of the proposed team
- Contact person, email address and telephone number

**2. Qualifications and Background**

- Provide concise, 1-2-page descriptions of comparable projects now in progress or completed within the last five (5) years for which members of the team provided similar services. These descriptions should demonstrate the team's experience relevant to the project described in this RFP.
- Provide a team organization chart with clear indication of roles and titles, and clear indication of percent of person time that will be available for this project. Provide a summary of the qualifications and experience of each team member assigned to this project, along with their professional resume.
- Provide the following information, to the extent such documents already exist:
  - List of names and contact information for clients for which services were performed during most recent projects (up to three).
  - Samples of the services performed including the scope and cost.
- Note any certifications as a disadvantaged business enterprise.

**3. Project Approach**

- Provide a clear statement of project understanding, including complexities and services requested.
- Describe the Consultant Team's approach to your work, including communication process, project management, and quality control.
- Provide a detailed description of your firm's approach to the successful completion of the project, following the general outline of the Scope of Services sections above.
- Identify any sub-Consultants you propose to utilize to supplement your firm's staff. Identify the services which would be completed by the firm's staff and those that would be provided by sub-Consultants, if any.

**4. Proposed Budget and Fees**

- Provide a proposed budget and fee structure for the Scope of Services described in this RFP. Include a schedule of hourly rates for all proposed staff and the amount of time each person will be devoted to this project. Define any other reimbursable expenses requested to be paid by TEAM RCD. **Note that the project budget is limited to a maximum of \$3,156,500.**

## 5. **Proposed Timeline**

- Submit a basic project schedule incorporating milestones with completion of each task required, subdivided as necessary. The start date for the schedule should be July 20, 2026. The actual start date will be established after the contract is awarded and may be earlier or later than the proposed schedule. The project shall be complete by July 12, 2029. Proposals that complete all project tasks on a more expedient timeline are welcome.

### **Proposal Acceptance**

TEAM RCD reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, or any item or part thereof, or to waive any informalities or irregularities in proposals.

TEAM RCD reserves the right to postpone proposal review for its own convenience.

Issuance of this RFP and receipt of proposals does not commit TEAM RCD to award a contract. TEAM RCD reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to contract award without obligation in any manner for proposal preparation, interview, fee negotiation or other marketing costs associated with this RFP.

TEAM RCD reserves the right to require confirmation of information furnished by proposer, or to ask the proposer for additional evidence of qualifications to perform the work, or to obtain information from any source that has the potential to improve the understanding and evaluation of the proposals.

TEAM RCD reserves the right to negotiate with more than one proposer concurrently.

Proposals received by TEAM RCD become public information and will be made available to the public upon request after award.

Proposals submitted are not to be copyrighted.

If the Scope of Services requires modification during the course of work, TEAM RCD will determine whether to amend the current agreement or to issue a subsequent RFP for additional services.

TEAM RCD accepts no responsibility for costs incurred by any individual or firm submitting a proposal pursuant to this RFP.

In submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer is certifying that it takes no exceptions to this RFP including, but not limited to, TEAM RCD's Professional Services Agreement ("Agreement"), which is included here as Attachment A and made a part hereof by this reference. If any exceptions are taken, such exceptions must be clearly noted in the proposal and may be

reason for rejection of the proposal. As such, the proposer is directed to carefully review the attached Agreement and, in particular, the insurance and indemnification provisions therein.

## 6. Evaluation and Selection

### **Evaluation and Selection**

Selection will be based on demonstrated competence and qualifications for the services to be performed at fair and reasonable prices. Proposed deviations from the RFP requirements will be noted and taken into consideration. The information provided in response to the RFP's requirements will be the basis for evaluation. Failure to provide this information or the inclusion of any conditions, limitations, or misrepresentations may adversely affect the evaluation of your proposal. Any proposal deemed irresponsible or unresponsive will not be considered. TEAM RCD reserves the right not to award any contract or to award multiple contracts. Proposals will be evaluated for the following criteria:

- Qualifications and Experience (25 points)
  - Demonstrated experience of the consultant team in relation to the services required and quality of performance on similar past projects.
  - Demonstrated experience working with Caltrans on planning, design, and environmental review processes.
  - Recommendations of prior clients.
  - Demonstrated experience, technical competence and availability of key personnel in relation to the services required.
- Understanding and Approach (60 points)
  - Describes familiarity of project and demonstrates understanding of work completed to date and project objectives moving forward.
- Schedule (15 points)
  - Capability of the project team to provide the services desired in a timely manner.
  - The schedule addresses all knowable phases of the project, in accordance with the general requirements of this RFP.

### **Notification of Contract Award**

Proposals will be reviewed within 1-2 weeks, and TEAM RCD may request interviews at its convenience. Every effort will be made to adhere to the stated evaluation schedule, but it may be modified as needed without prior notice. All entities submitting responses to this RFP will tentatively be notified of final decision to award a contract by 5:00 p.m. PDT on July 17, 2026.

## 7. Attachments

Attachment A – Professional Services Agreement

Attachment B – Adopted PSR-PDS

Attachment C – WCB Grant Agreement