

Appendix A  
NEPA Environmental Assessment Scope of Work

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)



Statement of Work

Contents

**1 Project..... 3**

**2 General Information..... 3**

    2.1 Scope of Work..... 3

    2.2 Background..... 3

    2.3 NEPA Requirements..... 4

**3 Contractor Technical Requirements / Tasks..... 4**

    3.1 General Tasks..... 4

    3.2 NEPA Tasks..... 6

    3.3 Resource Specific Tasks..... 11

**4 Government Furnished..... 14**

    4.1 Materials..... 14

    4.2 Responsible Official..... 15

    4.3 Agency Point-of Contact..... 15

    4.4 Resource Specialists..... 16

**5 Deliverables / Schedule..... 16**

# 1 Project

Questa to Red River Trail (Q2RRT)

## 2 General Information

### 2.1 Scope of Work

Provide professional services in specific resource areas, GIS, and NEPA/writing/editing to prepare the appropriate level of NEPA documentation for the Carson National Forest [Agency] and fulfill requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Questa to Red River Trail, an approximately 14-mile multi-use recreation trail on the Questa Ranger District.

### 2.2 Background

The purpose of this solicitation is to secure professional services in specific resource areas (silviculture, fire/fuels, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife biology, range, heritage, etc), GIS, and NEPA/writing/editing to prepare the appropriate level of NEPA documentation for the Questa to Red River Trail (Q2RRT) on the Questa Ranger District, Carson National Forest, and fulfill requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The level of NEPA analysis expected is an environmental assessment/finding of no significant impact (EA/FONSI) with a decision notice (DN). Services the selected contractor will be required to provide include but are not limited to data collection; modeling and analyses; development of public notification documents; project record maintenance; coordination of meetings; documentation of all aspects of the NEPA process; and completion of services needed to fulfill any associated or relevant laws, regulations, policies, and agency, regional, and forest goals, directions, and requirements. Responsibilities of The Contractor and The Agency are outlined in this statement of work and include tasks that shall be accomplished by The Contractor; deliverables that shall be produced by the contractor; and documentation, information, or other materials or services The Agency is to provide.

In this document, “The Contractor” generally refers to all personnel associated with the individual or organization selected to fulfill the tasks and deliverables described in this statement of work. The Contractor will be approved by The Agency and will conduct required activities and analyses for this project. “The Agency” within this document refers to all United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service personnel who work on this project, including resource specialists that will review and approve products and services provided by the NEPA contractor as well as representative(s) who will administer the terms of the contract; however, only the contracting officer may officially represent the agency in any adjustments and direction in relation to terms of this contract. The term “Responsible Official” in this document refers to the Forest Service line officer with the authority to make a decision on this project but may also refer to the line officer representing the Responsible Official in directing the project or an Agency representative designated as having authority for the Responsible Official to approve, sign, authorize, or in other manner direct the project. Agency project personnel will be primarily located at the Questa Ranger

District in Questa, NM, or the Carson National Forests Supervisor's Office in Taos, NM. A list of contact personnel will be provided following award of the contract.

## 2.3 NEPA Requirements

The National Environmental Policy Act has two requirements for compliance:

1. Agencies must make informed decisions. "Informed" means a candid and factual presentation of environmental impacts. Reasonable alternatives must be available and considered by the decision maker before making a commitment of resources.
2. Agencies must make diligent efforts to involve the public in their NEPA procedures. The definition of "diligent" varies by agency depending on the severity of impact and other factors. Each project requires an individual approach to involving the public.

NEPA does not regulate agency choices. But it does demand a good faith, hard look at the potential environmental impacts and a full and honest disclosure of impacts to the public.

Ultimately, the NEPA process is the responsibility of the Responsible Official. When the environmental analysis and NEPA documentation is done through a Contractor, the process must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508). In addition to the CEQ regulations, the primary source of agency policy and procedures are Agency NEPA regulations at 36 CFR 220. The Agency must also comply with the Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review ("Objection") Process at 36 CFR 218, and, where appropriate, the Postdecisional Administrative Review Process for Occupancy or Use of National Forest System Lands and Resources at 36 CFR 214.

Supplemental Forest Service guidance for conducting NEPA analyses is contained in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 1950, Environmental Policy and Procedures (Amendment No.: 1900-2012-1, effective June 12, 2012) and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook (1909.15-2010-1, effective September 30, 2010).

The Forest Service is ultimately and legally responsible for the accuracy of the environmental analysis and documentation and is responsible for issuing a final decision that is defensible under the law.

## 3 Contractor Technical Requirements / Tasks

The Contractor shall furnish all materials, supplies, tools, equipment, personnel, and travel (except those items specified to be furnished by the Government) to complete all requirements of the contract, including performance of the professional services listed herein. The Contractor shall be responsible for completing the following tasks and deliverables and meeting the technical specifications herein by deadlines outlined in the timeline provided in 5.0 Deliverables / Schedule (subject to future adjustment).

### 3.1 General Tasks

### 3.1.1 Coordinate closely with The Agency point-of-contact and specialists.

The Contractor shall ensure a high level of coordination on NEPA process activities, the progress being made on tasks and deliverables, and any needs for completion of those tasks and deliverables throughout the length of the contract. Contractor shall provide progress updates to The Agency point-of-contact bi-weekly at a minimum. The format and delivery method of the progress update (written, verbal, or other format; email, phone call or other delivery method) shall be agreed upon.

In particular, The Contractor shall coordinate closely with The Agency point-of-contact and specialists assigned to the project in developing the public involvement plan; reviewing public comments; identifying significant issues; developing the purpose and need, proposed action, and alternatives; developing specialist reports; and developing any material to be distributed to the public. The Agency will review all draft materials. Generally, one review and correction cycle will be sufficient prior to finalizing materials. However, based upon the amount or complexity of revision comments, The Agency shall have the option of reviewing drafts until they are revised to The Agency's satisfaction. The Contractor will edit all documents to incorporate reviewer's comments and defer to the point-of-contact's judgement if editing questions or conflicts should arise.

### 3.1.2 Develop & maintain the timeline and work plan.

The Contractor shall adhere to an agreed upon timeline for completion of tasks and deliverables outlined in Section 5.0 (subject to future adjustment). Contractor shall also track progress according to the timeline and inform The Agency point-of-contact of any unexpected delays or barriers to completing deliverables on time. The Contractor shall coordinate revised timelines and work plans with The Agency point-of-contact when changes are necessary, for approval by Responsible Official.

### 3.1.3 Organize & facilitate internal and public meetings.

The Contractor shall coordinate field visits to the project sites with members of the IDT to gain familiarity with the project area, environmental conditions, and proposed action.

The Contractor shall schedule and coordinate all IDT and public meetings. The Contractor will provide necessary printed materials. The Contractor will facilitate internal and public meetings and record IDT meeting notes adhering to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973. Meeting notes should include participants, key discussion points, decisions, and follow-up tasks and shall be provided within five days of the meeting for which notes were taken. The Contractor shall coordinate with Agency point-of-contact to obtain any notes of internal Agency meetings, which shall be documented by Agency personnel. Meeting notes shall be placed in the project record.

### 3.1.4 Maintain consistency among documents.

The contractor shall ensure that facts, details, and other information used or presented in the various documents generated during this process are consistent among all documents. Specialist

reports shall contain information consistent with other reports, the NEPA documents, public information documents, and any other documents developed.

## 3.2 NEPA Tasks

### 3.2.1 Maintain the project record and an administrative record.

The Contractor shall maintain both a digital and hard copy version of an up-to-date project record consisting of all documents necessary to the project analysis and decision to be made. The Contractor shall make the digital project record accessible or available upon request of The Agency. The Contractor shall gather and organize any documents generated or used during and for the NEPA process and compile and index those documents in the project record in accordance with instructions and guidance documents provided by The Agency. The Contractor shall coordinate with The Agency point-of-contact on attaining internal Agency documents to add to the project record. The Contractor shall coordinate with Agency point-of-contact for resolution of any questions regarding project record items. Documents for inclusion in project record shall be named once following project record instructions from The Agency and not be renamed unless necessary to avoid duplication of documents in the project record or updated copies of the record held by The Agency. At the end of the project, The Contractor shall provide a final project record in both digital and hard copy form. The hard copy shall be provided to The Agency in three-ring binders with indices of all documents in each binder. A digital administrative record shall also be maintained following instructions and guidance provided by The Agency.

### 3.2.2 Submit a work plan for Agency review.

Within 30 days of contract issuance, The Contractor shall submit a work plan which is a comprehensive strategy and schedule for completion of all task orders. The work plan shall account for all the tasks within the scope of this task order, deliverables listed below, preparation time, and review time for each draft by The Agency. It shall include an assessment of all the existing data, preliminary identification of additional data needs for the environmental analysis, and preliminary identification of specific technical reports required. It shall follow the schedule found in Section 5.0 of this document.

### 3.2.3 Develop and maintain public participation plan and mailing lists.

The Contractor shall develop a public participation plan that includes objectives for involving the public at specific points in the NEPA process; who needs to be involved (stakeholders/audience) to meet these objectives; and methods for reaching the parties or stakeholders. Public involvement may include public meetings, workshops, small group presentations, field trips, news releases, mailings, newsletters, paid newspaper advertisements, radio/TV announcements, brochures/booklets/pamphlets, and informal contacts.

The Contractor is responsible to coordinate with Agency point-of-contact to ensure that all potentially interested or affected parties are included on the scoping mailing list, including but not limited to public officials, landowners, permittees, environmental affiliations, local public citizens, tribal governments, news organizations, and others. The Contractor will coordinate with The

Agency as needed for development of initial mailing list and update of all mailing lists throughout the course of the project. Updated mailing lists will be approved by Responsible Official before any documents are mailed.

#### Subtasks

- The Contractor shall, in coordination with Agency point-of-contact, develop a public participation plan, to be approved by Responsible Official.
- The Contractor shall update the mailing list after each mailing and following receipt of public comments to create a new, comprehensive mailing list of all interested parties who commented or requested to be on the mailing list for future mailings. Each document distributed to the public shall have an updated mailing list that accompanies it.
- The Contractor shall update the mailing list as needed for changes in names or addresses of public contacts and shall coordinate with Agency point-of-contact for any updates throughout the process.
- The Contractor shall ensure each mailing list is included in the project record attached to or immediately following the letters for which the list was used.

#### 3.2.4 Coordinate development of the purpose and need, proposed action, and range of reasonable alternatives.

The Contractor shall develop a preliminary purpose and need and proposed action. Following public comment periods, The Contractor shall develop a range of reasonable alternatives that address issues and meet the purpose and need of the proposed action, if needed. The Contractor shall develop mitigation measures, if needed.

#### 3.2.5 Collect data and survey information needed for the analysis.

The Contractor shall collect all field data necessary that is not already available. Conduct inventories and surveys required by law or policy, following Agency policy, procedures, and standards. Qualifications and experience of the person(s), companies or corporations collecting field data shall be jointly reviewed by The Contractor and Agency and must be mutually agreed upon prior to beginning the work.

#### 3.2.6 Coordinate development of specialist reports and other effects analysis documents (e.g. BA and SCC).

The Contractor shall coordinate development and reviews of specialist reports and other analyses documents with Agency point-of-contact and Agency resource personnel (two draft reviews and one final review/approval). The effects analysis shall also include discussion of how each alternative addresses the issues identified from scoping.

#### Subtasks:

- The Contractor shall coordinate development of any needed methodologies for the resource specific analysis.

- The Contractor shall provide model runs, data, literature cited, or other materials used to produce the specialist report upon request of The Agency.
- The Contractor shall include a direct and indirect effects analysis of the proposed action and each alternative for each specialist report. The effects analysis must comply with 36 CFR 220.7(b) and include:
  - Only what is necessary to make a legally defensible, informed decision. Effects analyses should focus on: 1) elements of the purpose and need; 2) issues raised during scoping; 3) significance criteria for a FONSI; 4) what is required by law.
  - Rationale, professional judgments, and references to scientific studies that support the conclusions and help shed light on the degree of uncertainty or reliability of effects predictions.
  - Explanations of the action or cause for each effect.
  - Descriptions of location, magnitude/intensity, and general duration of effects.
  - Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the resources discussed.
  - Avoids repetition, focusing on differences in effects between alternatives, so readers may easily contrast and compare alternatives, based on the effects described.
  - Incorporation of scientific material by reference, by summarizing and citing appropriate literature. References will be listed as an appendix to the EA.
- The Contractor shall include a cumulative effects analysis of the proposed action and each alternative for each specialist report. The incremental effects of other past, present, and future projects will be added to the direct and indirect effects of this project, and the overall impact on the resources will be discussed. A list of appropriate past, present, and future projects to consider within the cumulative effects analysis will be obtained through the Agency point-of-contact. If there are no direct or indirect effects to a resource, there are no cumulative effects, but should be stated under the discussion of effects for the resource.
- The Contractor shall include discussion of how each alternative addresses the issues identified from scoping in each specialist report.

### 3.2.7 Coordinate development of the Environmental Assessment.

The Contractor shall develop the environmental assessment, per CEQ regulations and other Agency standards provided and following the template and examples provided by Agency point-of-contact.

Subtasks:

- The Contractor shall complete description of proposed action and alternatives (DOPAA: EA Chapters one and two) and provide to The Agency for review (two draft reviews and one final review/approval).
- The Contractor shall complete a full EA/FONSI with Chapters three and four and provide to The Agency for review (two draft reviews and one final review/approval).
- The Contractor shall provide any model runs, data, maps, literature cited, or other materials used to produce the EA/FONSI upon request of The Agency.
- The Contractor shall produce maps necessary for NEPA documents, using Forest Service templates. At a minimum, the following figures should be included in the NEPA document:



- Vicinity map of the project area with notable landmarks
- Detailed maps of the proposed action
- Maps of alternatives, if developed
- Basic plans using engineering drawings of the proposed activities. Plans should be understandable to the public and include dimensions.
- The Contractor shall coordinate with The Agency to attain a list of projects relevant to cumulative effects and coordinate with The Agency for any other needs in developing the EA/FONSI.
- The Contractor shall track changes to EA/FONSI throughout the revisions process.

### 3.2.8 Plan and conduct public scoping and comment period.

The contractor shall coordinate with The Agency to plan, schedule, and conduct public scoping and comment period, including public mailings and public meetings. Contractor shall place comments received in record and coordinate with Agency point-of-contact to attain all comments.

Subtasks:

- The Contractor shall contact potentially interested groups to determine interest levels in this project when needed.
- The Contractor shall draft and revise scoping and comment letter following templates provided by The Agency.
- The Contractor shall prepare a public scoping package to be sent with the scoping and comment letters. Package shall include information on the project including but not limited to the purpose and need, proposed action, alternatives, current resource conditions, effects of the proposed action, and applicable regulations and how they apply. Maps providing information shall also be included as part of the package.
- The Contractor shall print any EA/FONSIs to send with comment letters as requested by The Agency.
- The Contractor shall prepare a legal notice for the scoping and comment period that the Agency point-of-contact will send to the paper of record.
- The Contractor shall update the mailing list following the scoping and comment period for the upcoming objection period.
- The Contractor shall coordinate with The Agency, when needed, to schedule, prepare for, and conduct a scoping meeting/public open house as identified in the timeline in Section 5.0, and shall coordinate with The Agency for any other public meetings deemed necessary by Responsible Official. Public meetings are expected to occur during a time that is appropriate for most interested parties to attend, such as evenings from 6:30 to 8:30pm or late morning, afternoon, or evening if held on a weekend.
  - The Contractor shall prepare public information documents including but not limited to a meeting agenda, documents providing descriptions and details of the proposed project, maps (both 8X11 size for handouts and larger for presentation purposes), photos and other images, sign-in and comment sheets for individuals attending the meetings, name tags, and any other relevant documents and materials needed for

- the meeting(s). The Contractor shall provide meeting materials to Agency for approval prior to the scoping meeting(s) as outlined in the timeline in Section 5.0.
- The Contractor shall schedule an appropriate location for the scoping meeting(s) to be held following approval of location by The Agency and shall request assistance in securing meeting rooms if needed.
  - For public meetings, The Contractor shall provide key specialists, as deemed appropriate by Agency, to be available for assistance, questions, and conduction of the meeting. The Contractor shall also provide documentation of the meeting as appropriate and shall provide the Agency point-of-contact with meeting notes within five business days following the public meeting.
  - The Contractor shall manage receipt of public comments at the meeting and provide The Agency with those comments upon request.

### 3.2.9 Complete content analysis on all comments received.

The Contractor shall coordinate with The Agency for receipt of all public comments. Contractor shall organize and analyze comments, identifying substantive comments and grouping similar comments (that would have a similar response), following the Agency-provided template, unless negotiated otherwise. Comments shall be coded or labeled for tracking purposes. Comments included for analysis shall consist of quotes from responses illustrating issues or concerns on specific topics. Responses shall be as concise as possible, incorporating by reference parts of the EA/FONSI where the concern has been addressed, if appropriate. If analysis of comments raises legitimate resource concerns not previously considered, the Responsible Official will determine whether additional field surveys, data analysis or specialist reports are needed.

After review of the comments The Contractor, in coordination with The Agency, shall develop alternatives if needed by completing the subtasks outline below:

#### Subtasks:

- The Contractor shall identify key issues made by commenters.
- The Contractor shall, if needed and in coordination with The Agency, develop a range of reasonable alternatives that addresses significant issues and meets the purpose and need of the proposed action (the no action alternative is included).
- The Contractor shall develop possible mitigation measures and monitoring actions as necessary to be reviewed by The Agency.
- The Contractor shall define the evaluation criteria to use in measuring the effects to the key issues to be approved by The Agency.
- The Contractor shall prepare materials for Responsible Official approval.

If analysis of comments identifies issues that might not be avoided or mitigated to less than significant, then the Responsible Official will determine whether to proceed with preparing an environmental impact statement, explore other alternatives that would meet the purpose and need, or cancel the project. In an interdisciplinary manner, The Contractor shall code and index issues and concerns expressed by the public.

### 3.2.10 Coordinate development of final EA/FONSI and Draft Decision Notice (DN).

Once the comment analysis has been completed, The Contractor shall coordinate with The Agency on completing a final EA/FONSI and developing and revising a DN following the template and examples provided by Agency point-of-contact.

Subtask:

- The Contractor shall track changes to EA/FONSI and DN throughout the revisions process.

### 3.2.11 Develop and distribute final NEPA documents and objection period notice letter.

The Contractor shall coordinate with The Agency on completing notification of objection period.

Subtasks

- The Contractor shall draft objection period notification letter following templates provided by The Agency.
- The Contractor shall coordinate with Agency point-of-contact for receipt of tribal objection period notification letters for inclusion in the project record.
- Contractor shall print any EA/FONSIs to send with comment letters as requested by Agency.
- The Contractor shall draft a news release for the objection period.
- The Contractor shall prepare a legal notice for the objection period that the Agency point-of-contact will send to the paper of record.

### 3.2.12 Draft responses to objections received.

The Contractor shall draft an initial response letter to all objectors while The Agency reviews objections. Example response letters may be provided by the Agency point-of-contact.

### 3.2.13 Provide all process materials.

The Contractor shall provide all documents, models, analyses information, maps, etc. created throughout the process to The Agency and provide a final project record including all relevant documents prior to the administrative review or date of signature of the DN. All documentation produced by The Contractor shall follow Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 standards for accessibility and shall follow the templates and examples provided by the Agency as they apply. The format for some documents may be negotiated with Agency point-of-contact.

All GIS data developed by The Contractor shall meet Agency accuracy standards for geographic data. Projection should be Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Zone 13N with a North American Datum of 83 (NAD 83) and shall be provided electronically to The Agency.

## 3.3 Resource Specific Tasks

The Contractor will be responsible for coordinating with Agency resource specialists for clarification, questions, and any other needs required of specific resource specialists to complete the tasks outlined and particularly for development of specialist reports. For specialist reports, The Contractor shall follow templates for formatting provided by Agency point-of-contact and document examples identified by Agency resource specialists for content and structure. The following resource areas have been identified as needing resource reports. Additional resource areas may be identified during the NEPA process.

### 3.3.3 Cultural Resources

See *Appendix A.1 - Cultural Survey Scope of Work* for specific requirements.

*3.3.3.1 Complete a cultural resources survey.*

*3.3.3.2 Complete cultural data analysis.*

*3.3.3.3 Complete a cultural resources specialist report.*

The Contractor shall use the completed cultural resources inventory report, the Forest Plan, Agency letters to Tribes and Tribal responses to the report, SHPO consultation letters, and any other reports, references or data pertinent to the cultural resource clearance to prepare a cultural resources specialist report. If Tribes consulted do not wish to share information regarding traditional cultural properties, sacred areas, etc., then that information shall not be included in the specialist report or the NEPA document. The INFRA number of the cultural resources inventory report shall be cited in this document. The report shall follow templates for formatting and be similar in structure and analysis to examples identified by Agency heritage resources, both provided by Agency point-of-contact.

*3.3.3.4 Prepare a Section 106 report.*

The Contractor shall prepare a cultural resources report that is Section 106 compliant.

### 3.3.4 Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Biology

*3.3.4.1 Complete wildlife field surveys.*

#### Endangered and Threatened Species

- Conduct 2 years of Mexican Spotted Owl survey by a US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish permitted surveyor.
- This Surveyor will need to receive survey points from Forest Service Wildlife Biologist.
- Survey reporting will have to be completed to the USFWS standard and these reports given to the Forest Service on a yearly basis.

[https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/APPENDIX%20D%20-%20Mexican%20spotted%20owl%20Survey%20Protocol%20508%20March%202022\\_Final.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/APPENDIX%20D%20-%20Mexican%20spotted%20owl%20Survey%20Protocol%20508%20March%202022_Final.pdf)

- No other T&E species will need to be surveyed

#### Fish and Wildlife Issues

- Conduct a Northern Goshawk one year survey according to 2006 Northern goshawk inventory and monitoring technical guide. [https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs\\_series/wo/wo\\_gtr071.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_series/wo/wo_gtr071.pdf)
- This Surveyor will need to receive survey points from Forest Service Wildlife Biologist.
- No other wildlife or fish surveys required.

#### Invasive species survey

*3.3.4.2 Complete wildlife data analysis.*

*3.3.4.3 Complete a Biological Assessment (BA).*

*3.3.4.4 Complete a Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) Report.*

The Contractor shall complete a SCC report in accordance with the 2012 Planning Rule (2012 Planning Rule (35 CFR § 219.9(c)).

*3.3.4.5 Complete a wildlife report.*

#### 3.3.6 Noxious Weeds

*3.3.6.1 Complete noxious weeds field survey.*

*3.3.6.2 Complete noxious weeds data analysis.*

*3.3.6.3 Complete a noxious weeds report.*

#### 3.3.7 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum / Scenery Management System

*3.3.7.1 Complete recreation/scenery field survey.*

*3.3.7.2 Complete recreation/scenery data analysis.*

*3.3.7.3 Complete a recreation/scenery report.*

#### 3.3.9 Hydrology

*3.3.9.1 Complete hydrology field survey.*

*3.3.9.2 Complete hydrology data analysis.*

*3.3.9.3 Complete a hydrology report.*

#### 3.3.10 Soils

*3.3.10.1 Complete soils field survey.*

*3.3.10.2 Complete soils data analysis.*

*3.3.10.3 Complete a soils report.*

#### 3.3.11 Designated Areas

The Agency will provide the Forest Plan and any other needed reference material or templates.

*3.3.11.1 Complete designated area data analysis.*

*3.3.11.2 Complete a designated area report.*

### 3.3.12 Management Areas

The Agency will provide the Forest Plan and any other needed reference material or templates.

*3.3.12.1 Complete management area data analysis.*

*3.3.12.2 Complete a management area report.*

## **4 Government Furnished**

### **4.1 Materials**

The Agency shall deliver or make available to The Contractor any requested references, guidelines, manuals, handbooks, examples, and document standards for all NEPA documents and any resource specialist reports and required surveys that The Agency has available. These may be provided electronically or in hard copy. Data needed for analysis that the Agency has shall also be provided. Various documents may be included in the initial project record provided for transfer to Contractor. Materials include but are not limited to the following:

| Materials                                                                                                                                                                                              | Resource Areas           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Guidance documents on meeting Section 508 requirements for accessibility.                                                                                                                              | General                  |
| Access to FS Veg Stand Exam Data (Data Base), FS Veg Spatial, and FS Veg Spatial Data Analyzer                                                                                                         | Silviculture; Fire/Fuels |
| Most similar neighbor data sets                                                                                                                                                                        | Silviculture             |
| Past wildlife survey results and summary                                                                                                                                                               | Wildlife                 |
| Geographic Information System (GIS) and other database information on past and ongoing land uses such as past timber sales, mining activities, prescribed burns, etc. for cumulative effects analysis. | GIS                      |
| List of Noxious weeds, the risk assessment process, BMPs, any information on known species in the area if known, and any available range data needed for analysis                                      | Range                    |
| GIS Recreation Layers including layers for trails, scenic integrity objectives (SIO) and recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS)                                                                       | Recreation               |
| Carson National Forest Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) and associated EIS and ROD                                                                                                                   | NEPA                     |

|                                                                                                                                                                          |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15                                                                                                                                    | NEPA          |
| 40 CFR 1500 to 1508 (NEPA regulations)                                                                                                                                   | NEPA          |
| 36 CFR 218 (Objection Regulations)                                                                                                                                       | NEPA          |
| Initial project record and project records instructions, requirements, and organization, along with an index or content checklist.                                       | NEPA          |
| Applicable laws, regulations, policies, and Agency directives that Agency has available                                                                                  | NEPA          |
| Initial mailing list                                                                                                                                                     | NEPA          |
| Possible references for specialist reports                                                                                                                               | Various areas |
| Templates including but not limited to templates for <a href="#">specialist reports, other analyses and reports (e.g. BA and SCC), cover letters, and NEPA documents</a> | Various areas |

## 4.2 Responsible Official

Responsible Official for this project is the District Ranger for the Questa Ranger District; Carson National Forest. The District Ranger may delegate some responsibilities to the Deputy District Ranger or another Agency line officer. Responsible Official's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Write a project initiation letter;
2. Identify IDT members;
3. Signing off at key points in the NEPA process as outlined in the timeline in Section 5.0;
4. Determining the scope of the environmental analysis and what affected resources will be analyzed;
5. Resolving disputes and making determinations regarding data collection, analyses, issue development, alternatives, document preparation, or other factors related to the NEPA process; and
6. Signing the final decision at the end of the analysis

## 4.3 Agency Point-of Contact

An Agency point-of-contact assigned to the project will serve as the primary contact between The Contractor and The Agency. The point-of-contact may delegate any or all these responsibilities to alternate Agency personnel as deemed appropriate by Responsible Official. The point-of-contact is responsible for:

1. Providing all government-furnished documents needed to successfully comply with agency requirements and standards for NEPA analysis;
2. Coordinating development and revision of all necessary project documents;
3. Monitoring all NEPA-related work activities and evaluating completion of deliverables;

4. Coordinate and maintain internal Agency records and transfer documents necessary for inclusion in the project record;
5. Keeping Agency personnel informed of the NEPA status and progress;
6. Coordinating timely and adequate reviews of draft documents by appropriate Agency specialists;
7. Coordinating timely approvals from Responsible Official during key points in the NEPA process;
8. Acting as a liaison between Agency resource specialists for information requests;
9. Ensuring that the documentation is complete and adequate for the decision to be made;
10. Submitting legal notices to the paper of record and sending a copy of publication to The Contractor for inclusion in the project record;
11. Consulting with Native American Tribes, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer and, if needed, the US Fish and Wildlife Service about the project;
12. Facilitating the scheduling of IDT or public meetings by reserving Agency meeting rooms or sending out virtual meeting invitations, if necessary;
13. Reviewing news releases and sending them to media contacts;
14. Listing the project in the Comment and Analysis Response Application database for receiving electronic public comments;
15. Listing the project on the Schedule of Proposed Actions and uploading documents to the project page;
16. Sending the public notification letters with an information package to interested public parties using the mailing list developed with The Contractor;
17. Coordinating with the Agency administrative reviewer to provide any project documents needed for their final response letter to objectors;
18. Mailing initial and final response letters to objectors; and
19. Responding to any FOIA requests received during and after the NEPA process.

#### 4.4 Resource Specialists

Agency specialists assigned to the project will be responsible for:

1. Providing available information for analyses, modeling, and data gathering and being available to answer questions as negotiated between The Contractor and The Agency;
2. Providing reviews of documents throughout the process as needed and reviewing specialist reports and effects analyses documents and coordinating with The Agency point-of-contact for timely reviews and transfers of information (NOTE: if reviews are not completed by the deadlines outlined in the timeline in Section 5.0 or the most current approved timeline, if adjusted, The Contractor will consider documents approved and proceed with the next steps in the process);
3. Following project record documentation guidance for documents to be provided to The Contractor for addition to the project record; and
4. Attending internal and public meetings, as deemed necessary.

## 5 Deliverables / Schedule



\*Timeframes may be adjusted to reflect other Agency authorizations or approvals such as Regional Forester Approvals for IRAs or Chief's approval for use of emergency authorities.

### Key Deliverables Schedule

| Item No.                     | Responsibility        | Deliverable / Item Title                                                                                                                      | Timeline |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Left-Side NEPA</b>        |                       |                                                                                                                                               |          |
| 1.                           | Agency                | Provide Contractor with initial project record, templates, organizational documents, etc.                                                     |          |
| 2.                           | Agency                | Project Initiation Letter                                                                                                                     |          |
| 3.                           | Agency                | Create Project Page on the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) webpage                                                                        |          |
| 4.                           | Contractor            | Draft Public Participation Plan                                                                                                               |          |
| 5.                           | Contractor/<br>Agency | Final Collaborative Revisions to Public Participation Plan Complete                                                                           |          |
| <b>Scoping</b>               |                       |                                                                                                                                               |          |
| 6.                           | Agency                | Initiate Consultation with Native American Tribes, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer and US Fish and Wildlife Service, as needed |          |
| 7.                           | Contractor            | Draft Scoping Package (Scoping Letter, Legal Notice, Mailing List)                                                                            |          |
| 8.                           | Contractor            | Initial IDT Meeting                                                                                                                           |          |
| 9.                           | Contractor/<br>Agency | Needed Fieldwork Identified                                                                                                                   |          |
| 10.                          | Agency                | Create a CARA website for the project                                                                                                         |          |
| 11.                          | Contractor/<br>Agency | Final Collaborative Revisions to Scoping Package Complete                                                                                     |          |
| 12.                          | Agency                | Send Scoping Letter to Mailing List Recipients                                                                                                |          |
| 13.                          | Agency                | Send News Release to Media                                                                                                                    |          |
| 14.                          | Agency                | Tribal Consultation Letters and/or Meetings                                                                                                   |          |
| 15.                          | Agency                | Upload Scoping Documents to SOPA                                                                                                              |          |
| 16.                          | Agency                | Submit Legal Notice to Paper of Record for Publication<br>Begin 30-Day Public Scoping Period                                                  |          |
| 17.                          | Contractor            | In Person Public Open House                                                                                                                   |          |
|                              |                       | End 30-Day Public Scoping Period                                                                                                              |          |
| 18.                          | Contractor            | Process Public Scoping Comments into Summary Report/Table                                                                                     |          |
| 19.                          | Contractor            | Post-Scoping IDT Meeting to Discuss Issues, Indicators, and Alternatives                                                                      |          |
| <b>Surveys and Fieldwork</b> |                       |                                                                                                                                               |          |
| 20.                          | Contractor            | Spatial Analysis and Field Surveys Occur                                                                                                      |          |
| 21.                          | Contractor            | IDT Field Visit to gain project area familiarization and see specific project sites                                                           |          |
| <b>Draft EA Development</b>  |                       |                                                                                                                                               |          |

|                                         |                       |                                                                                                                                    |  |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 22.                                     | Contractor            | Chapters 1 & 2 of Draft EA                                                                                                         |  |
| 23.                                     | Contractor            | Draft Specialist Reports                                                                                                           |  |
| 24.                                     | Agency                | Review Draft Specialist Reports                                                                                                    |  |
| 25.                                     | Agency                | Send Wildlife BA to USFWS for Informal Consultation and Cultural Report to the State Historic Preservation Office for Consultation |  |
| 26.                                     | Contractor            | Entire Draft EA                                                                                                                    |  |
| 27.                                     | Contractor            | Draft Comment Package (Comment Letter, Legal Notice, News Release, Updated Mailing List)                                           |  |
| 28.                                     | Agency                | Consultation with Partner Agencies Complete                                                                                        |  |
| 29.                                     | Contractor/<br>Agency | Final Collaborative Revisions to Draft EA Complete                                                                                 |  |
| 30.                                     | Contractor/<br>Agency | Final Collaborative Revisions to Comment Package Complete                                                                          |  |
| 31.                                     | Agency                | Update Draft EA and Comment Documents to SOPA                                                                                      |  |
| 32.                                     | Agency                | Send Comment Letter to Mailing List Recipients                                                                                     |  |
| 33.                                     | Agency                | Send Tribal Consultation Comment Letters and/or Meetings                                                                           |  |
| 34.                                     | Agency                | Send News Release to Media                                                                                                         |  |
| 35.                                     | Agency                | Submit Legal Notice to Paper of Record for Publication Begin 30-Day Comment Period                                                 |  |
| 36.                                     | Contractor            | In-Person Comment Period Public Meeting                                                                                            |  |
|                                         |                       | End 30-Day Comment Period                                                                                                          |  |
| 37.                                     | Contractor            | Process Comment Period Comments into Summary Report/Table                                                                          |  |
| 38.                                     | Contractor            | Post-Comment Period IDT Meeting to Discuss Issues if needed                                                                        |  |
| Final EA/FONSI and Draft DN Development |                       |                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 39.                                     | Contractor            | Revise EA/FONSI and Specialist Reports to Address Comment Issues if needed                                                         |  |
| 40.                                     | Contractor            | Draft Decision Notice (DN)                                                                                                         |  |
| 41.                                     | Contractor/<br>Agency | Specialist Reports Finalized and Signed by Resource Specialists                                                                    |  |
| 42.                                     | Contractor            | Draft DN/FONSI Package (Cover Letter, Draft Legal Notice, Draft News Release, Updated Mailing List)                                |  |
| 43.                                     | Contractor/<br>Agency | EA/FONSI Finalized and Signed by Responsible Official                                                                              |  |
| 44.                                     | Contractor/<br>Agency | Final Collaborative Revisions to Draft DN Complete                                                                                 |  |
| 45.                                     | Contractor/<br>Agency | Final Collaborative Revisions to DN/FONSI Package Complete                                                                         |  |
| 46.                                     | Agency                | Update EA/FONSI and Draft DN to SOPA                                                                                               |  |
| 47.                                     | Agency                | Send EA/FONSI Letter to Mailing List Recipients                                                                                    |  |
| 48.                                     | Agency                | Send News Release to Media                                                                                                         |  |

|                             |            |                                                                                         |  |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 49.                         | Agency     | Submit Legal Notice to Paper of Record for Publication<br>Begin 45-Day Objection Period |  |
|                             |            | End 45-Day Objection Period                                                             |  |
| Final DN without Objections |            |                                                                                         |  |
| 50.                         | Contractor | If No Objection is Filed, Final DN/FONSI                                                |  |
| 51.                         | Agency     | If No Objection is Filed, Final DN/FONSI Finalized and Signed by Responsible Official   |  |
| 52.                         | Agency     | If No Objection is Filed, Send DN to Mailing List                                       |  |
| 53.                         | Agency     | Send news release of final DN<br>Process Concludes                                      |  |
| Final DN with Objections    |            |                                                                                         |  |
| 54.                         | Agency     | If Objection is Filed, Conclude 45-Day Objection Resolution                             |  |
| 55.                         | Contractor | If Objection is Filed, Final DN/FONSI                                                   |  |
| 56.                         | Contractor | If Objection is Filed, Draft Response Letters to Objectors                              |  |
| 57.                         | Agency     | If Objection is Filed, Final DN/FONSI Finalized and Signed by Responsible Official      |  |
| 58.                         | Agency     | If Objection is Filed, Response Letters to Objectors Finalized and Signed               |  |
| 59.                         | Agency     | If Objection is Filed, Send DN to Mailing List and Response Letters to Objectors        |  |
| 60.                         | Agency     | Send news release of final DN<br>Process Concludes                                      |  |