



**BIOLOGICAL EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING
NATOMAS BASIN HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

AUGUST 11, 2017

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TO CONDUCT
BIOLOGICAL EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING
FOR THE YEARS 2018, 2019 AND 2020
REQUIRED UNDER THE
NATOMAS BASIN HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN
AND THE
METRO AIR PARK HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN
FOR
THE NATOMAS BASIN CONSERVANCY**

INTRODUCTION

The Natomas Basin Conservancy (TNBC), the Plan Operator of the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP), is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to perform annual biological effectiveness monitoring in the Natomas Basin, located in Sacramento County and Sutter County, California.

This request for proposals (RFP) includes all biological effectiveness monitoring tasks required under the 2003 NBHCP except those specifically excepted below.

Respondents must be fully qualified to conduct all necessary biological surveying and monitoring tasks, hold all pertinent state and federal permits necessary to conduct such activities, demonstrate capacity to perform the work within the specific timeframe and deliver a final work product to TNBC that will satisfy the relevant monitoring requirements in the 2003 NBHCP.

The successful proposal will be determined by the Board of Directors of TNBC. TNBC requires that the project commence January 1, 2018. A three-year engagement for the completion of this work with the option of two one-year renewals is contemplated.

1. BACKGROUND

a. Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan. The NBHCP is the conservation plan required under the federal Endangered Species Act (the "Act") designed to support applications for federal permits under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act for activities covered (the "Covered Activities") under the NBHCP occurring within the Natomas Basin (the "Permit Area"). It also serves a nearly identical purpose under California state law pursuant to Section 2081(b) of the California Fish and Wildlife Code. TNBC also serves as the Plan Operator for the Metro Air Park Habitat Conservation Plan (MAPHCP).

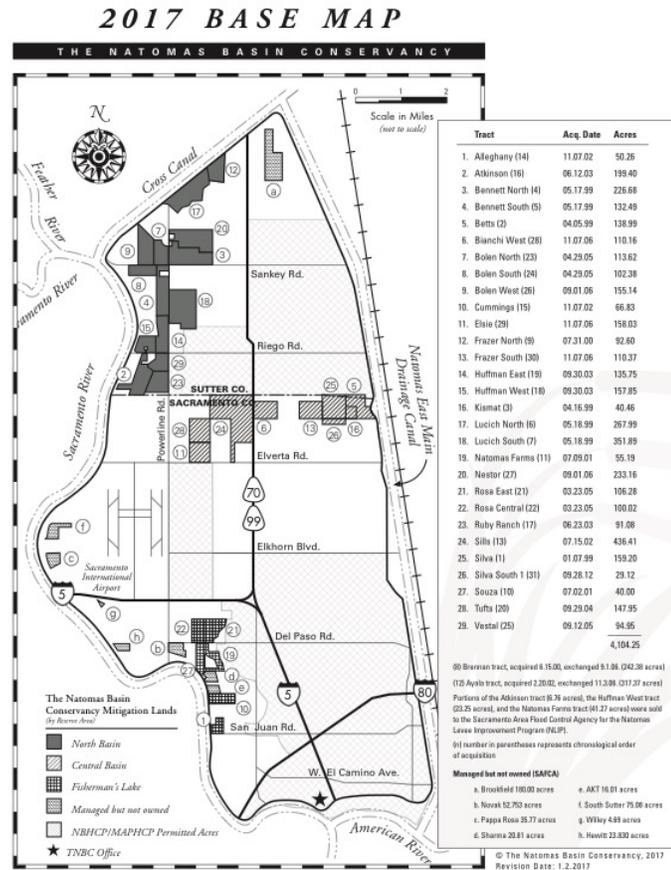
For purposes of this RFP, the NBHCP and the MAPHCP are considered the same, and where the NBHCP is referenced, the MAPHCP should be considered as one and the same.

The purpose of the NBHCP is to promote biological conservation in conjunction with economic and urban development within the Permit Area. The NBHCP establishes a multi-species conservation program to minimize and mitigate the expected loss of habitat values and incidental take of species covered by the Act (the "Covered Species") that could result from urban development, operation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage systems, and certain activities associated with the TNBC's management of its system of reserves. The goal of the NBHCP is to provide mitigation for the impacts of Covered Activities on the Covered Species.

The Permit Area is defined as the 53,537-acre area interior to the toe of levees surrounding the Natomas Basin, located in the northern portion of Sacramento County and the southern portion of Sutter County. The Basin contains incorporated and unincorporated areas within the jurisdictions of the City of Sacramento, Sacramento County, and Sutter County. The southern portion of the Natomas Basin is mostly urbanized, but most of the remainder of the Basin currently remains in agriculture.

The NBHCP has been in operation since December 1997, when the original 10(a)(1)(B) and Section 2081(b) permits were issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, respectively.

As a result of litigation, the NBHCP was revised and new permits were issued in July 2003. TNBC holds federal incidental take permit #TE073667-0 and state incidental take permit #2081-2003-019-02, both issued in 2003. The City of Sacramento and Sutter County also hold permits issued under the same HCP process.



b. The Natomas Basin Conservancy. TNBC is a nonprofit entity serving as “Plan Operator” for the NBHCP. TNBC is governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives appointed by the City of Sacramento, County of Sutter and Metro Air Park Property Owners Association.

TNBC acquires and manages habitat reserve lands and develops and implements Site-Specific Management Plans (SSMP) for each preserve within the Natomas Basin. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provides technical assistance to TNBC on selected topics. Currently, the TNBC owns and operates 29 properties in the Natomas Basin for total land holdings of approximately 4,100 acres (see Exhibit 1, Preserve Map).

2. BIOLOGICAL EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING TASKS

For purposes of this RFP, actual biological effectiveness monitoring is divided into the following primary monitoring tasks:

- Giant garter snake monitoring
- Swainson’s hawk monitoring, and
- other Covered Species and habitat monitoring.

Giant garter snake (GGS) and Swainson’s hawk are the two primary species addressed in the NBHCP that are currently listed under the federal or state endangered species acts and that occur throughout the Basin. They are therefore the primary focus of monitoring efforts. Rigorous and scientifically defensible monitoring protocols have been developed and approved that the successful respondent must adhere to (consult the NBHCP Biological Effectiveness Monitoring Program Document).



3. SCHEDULE AND REPORTING

The successful respondent will be expected to submit an administrative draft each year of the anticipated three-year contract (and up to two one-year extensions, if applicable). The comprehensive Annual Biological Monitoring Report will be submitted in draft by March 15, and a final report delivered by April 1 of each year. The Annual Biological Monitoring Report will be used as an integral component of TNBC’s required Implementation Annual Report, which must be presented to CDFW and USFWS each year by TNBC.

The final deliverable--the Annual Biological Monitoring Report--must satisfy CDFW and USFWS with respect to fulfilling all biological monitoring tasks specified in the 2003 NBHCP.

The final report should be bound, include a cover and table of contents, section dividers, maps and other graphics, maps and illustrations as needed. An electronic version of the Annual Biological Monitoring Report, delivered on electronic media (DVD, thumb drive, etc.), and formatted in Adobe Acrobat PDF as well as Microsoft Word, must also be provided.

In addition to the electronic and hard copy deliverables, two versions of the Annual Biological Monitoring Report should be delivered to TNBC each year of the contract. The first, in which 10 hard copies are required, will be a "public version." The second, which includes 10 hard copies, will be an "agency version." The difference will be that all site-specific information regarding the NBHCP's Covered Species will be excluded from the public version. TNBC will forward copies of the agency version to state and federal Wildlife Agencies, and otherwise use it for internal reference and research. It will not be made available for public viewing.

Submitted Annual Biological Monitoring Reports will become the property of TNBC once received and accepted. TNBC plans to post the public version of the Report, or excerpts of it, on its web site for public access.

4. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

a. Consultant "teams" and subcontractors. The successful respondent may include subcontractors or subconsultants provided the primary contractor accepts full responsibility for managing subcontractors and subconsultants, defends their final results and conclusions, and integrates their final reports into a single Annual Biological Monitoring Report, as required in the 2003 NBHCP, and accepts full responsibility for compliance with the provisions of this RFP.

b. Complete response required. Those responding to this RFP must present a comprehensive proposal. No proposal will be considered which leaves out any portion of the requirements. Those proposing to conduct the biological effectiveness monitoring for TNBC should submit a response to this RFP that includes, at a minimum, the following:



1. *Cover letter.* A cover letter should be addressed to Executive Director, The Natomas Basin Conservancy at TNBC's address (2150 River Plaza Drive, Suite 460, Sacramento, California 95833). This should include the name, address and telephone number of the primary or lead organization that would be conducting the work proposed pursuant to this RFP. This section should also include identification of the legal entity with whom TNBC would be contracting, along with an indication whether this is a corporation, partnership, individual, joint venture or other. The principal investigator, or the senior-most individual responsible for the respondent, must be named. The amount of time this senior-most individual will be assigned to TNBC's project should be clearly presented and may be expressed in percentage, dollar or narrative form. This should be signed by a senior representative of the respondent's company. The cover letter should not exceed one page in length.
2. *Project Understanding and Approach.* The cover letter should be followed with a discussion of the respondent's understanding of the project and general background of the firm and its general relevance on the subject matter. This section should also articulate respondent's approach to implementing the protocols outlined in the Biological Effectiveness Program Document and meeting the requirements outlined above in Section 3 (Schedule and Reporting). This should not exceed two pages.
3. *Statement of qualifications.* This statement should explain the qualifications the respondent has that apply to this RFP. This should include mention of any related projects or assignments the respondent has completed, and not exceed five pages. (Resumes of individuals can be supplementary to this page limit.)
4. *Cost of work.* The respondent should articulate its cost proposal for conducting the work. This should be identified in each of the anticipated years of this effort, and be on a "not to exceed" basis.

Since it is possible TNBC will add land to its holdings during the anticipated years of the monitoring contract, the price proposal should include a formula for handling expanded acreages under this agreement, so that all TNBC land is covered by this contract at all times. **Identifying ways to reduce costs of compliance is a priority for TNBC.** However, full compliance with the monitoring requirements of the 2003 NBHCP and the BEMP must be achieved.

c. Permits. The successful respondent must hold all pertinent state and federal permits necessary to complete the work described in this RFP.

d. Selection criteria. TNBC will select the “best” proposal received based on the respondent’s response to this RFP and the factors identified below. Selection will not necessarily be based on the lowest-cost proposal. TNBC reserves the right to reject all proposals received. It also reserves the right to call in for interviews one or more final candidates if necessary to clarify a matter or for other reasons.

Submissions will be reviewed and considered based on the following criteria:

Critical factors:

1. The expectation that the respondent’s completed work will satisfy requirements of the NBHCP, NBHCP Implementation Agreement and BEMP Program Document.
2. Ability to provide or assemble a competent multi-disciplinary team to meet the terms stated in this RFP.
3. Thoroughness in responding to all items called for in this RFP.
4. Thorough knowledge of the species covered in the 2003 NBHCP.

Desirable factors:

1. Evidence the applicant can prepare concise written reports which facilitate understanding and ease of reference.
2. Demonstrated ability to work with allied parties, including other consultants and contractors working on behalf of TNBC and with government organizations.
3. Qualifications and track record in completing similar projects on time and budget.
4. Reasonable cost to complete the necessary work.

All submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by TNBC’s Board of Directors at an officially-called Board meeting. TNBC staff will review all submissions prior to presentation to the Board and will provide an evaluation to facilitate Board review.

The respondent deemed to have submitted the most attractive response will be invited into negotiations with TNBC in order to finalize a formal agreement so that work may begin on January 1, 2018.

In the event than an agreement cannot be reached with the selected applicant, at TNBC's sole discretion, TNBC shall have the right to negotiate with the next ranking applicant until a final agreement can be reached with a respondent.

Once a final agreement is reached, TNBC's Executive Director and TNBC's legal counsel will finalize necessary contractual arrangements to engage the services of the selected respondent.

COVERED SPECIES INCLUDED IN THE 2003 NBHCP

Aleutian Canada goose <i>Branta canadensis leucopareia</i>	Valley elderberry longhorn beetle <i>Desmocerus californicus dimorphus</i>	Midvalley fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta n. sp.</i>
Swainson's hawk <i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	Delta tulle pea <i>Lathyrus jepsonii ssp.jepsonii</i>	California tiger salamander <i>Ambystoma californiense</i>
Giant garter snake <i>Thamnophis gigas</i>	Sanford's arrowhead <i>Sagittaria sanfordii</i>	Western spadefoot toad <i>Scaphiopus hammondii</i>
White-faced ibis <i>Plegadis chihi</i>	Loggerhead shrike <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Colusa grass <i>Neostapfia colusana</i>
Bank swallow <i>Riparia riparia</i>	Burrowing owl <i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop <i>Gratiaola heterosepala</i>
Tricolored blackbird <i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	Vernal pool fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	Sacramento Orcutt grass <i>Orcuttia viscida</i>
Northwestern pond turtle <i>Clemmys marmorata marmorata</i>	Vernal pool tadpole shrimp <i>Lepidurus packardii</i>	Slender Orcutt grass <i>Orcuttia tenuis</i>
		Legenere <i>Legenere limosa</i>

Source: 2003 Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan, Table I-1, page I-14.

The principals representing the successful respondent may be required to complete and file with TNBC a conflict of interest disclosure statement. The NBHCP requires TNBC comply with the conflict of interest code as defined in the State of California's Fair Political Practices Commission regulations, and certain contractors are required to file a disclosure statement. TNBC's staff and Board make such filings, which are available for review by interested parties. TNBC can make blank conflict of interest forms (FPPC Form 700) available to respondents and prospective respondents upon request.

e. Proposed billing. Respondents to this RFP should outline the basis for billing TNBC for the services required and described in this RFP.

5. TIMELINE AND PROCESS

Written hard-copy proposals must be submitted to TNBC no later than September 20, 2017 by 4:00 p.m. to:

Executive Director
The Natomas Basin Conservancy
2150 River Plaza Drive, Suite 460
Sacramento, CA 95833

A total of 20 copies of the proposal should be submitted to TNBC for review and evaluation. A PDF (Adobe Acrobat) copy on a CD, DVD or thumb drive should also be submitted. TNBC staff will distribute copies to each member of the Board of Directors for review. TNBC may engage disinterested members of the NBHCP Technical Advisory Committee, TNBC legal counsel and others to assist with the evaluation of submitted proposals. Submitted proposals will not be returned to respondents. No faxes or emailed proposals will be accepted.

Planned Timetable and Schedule of Events

Event	Date
TNBC Board approves RFP for release	August 2, 2017
Release and distribution of RFP	August 11, 2017
Responses due by 4:00 p.m.	September 20, 2017
TNBC Board reviews proposals; selects	October 4, 2017
Agreements signed by both parties	October 27, 2017

TNBC's Board of Directors will consider all submitted proposals that meet the standards set forth in this RFP. The Board agenda for the October 4, 2017 meeting will include an action item to accept a proposal submitted in response to this RFP. Respondents will be notified of any action by the Board soon thereafter.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about TNBC and the 2003 NBHCP is available on TNBC's website, www.natomasbasin.org. See also Exhibit 2 below for information on obtaining important documents necessary or helpful in preparing a response to this RFP. TNBC will accept written questions or requests for clarification sent to Jennifer Skupic at jskupic@natomasbasin.org through 4:00 pm September 8, 2017. A compiled list of answers to questions and/or clarifications will be made available to all respondents by 4:00 pm September 13, 2017 on our website. (www.natomasbasin.org, Helpful Documents, RFP)

7. OTHER

a. Cooperation with habitat design, construction and land management consultants. Additional contractors provide design, construction and certain land management and maintenance functions for TNBC. The successful biological monitoring contractor must work closely and cooperatively with TNBC's other contractors and consultants. Since the biological monitoring consultant will be requested to make certain conclusions and recommendations regarding monitoring results, this portion of the biological monitoring contractor's responsibilities must be made in the context and parameters of the 2003 NBHCP.

Biological monitoring findings may indicate changes in the design, construction and land management. If so, any such changes must be made keeping in mind that TNBC is required to adhere to the NBHCP.

If the biological monitoring consultant determines the NBHCP could restrict achievement of its proposed recommendations, the biological monitoring consultant must confer with TNBC staff, and if advised to do so by TNBC staff, also be prepared to confer with TNBC's design, construction and land management consultants. Where there are perceived impediments to implementation due to the parameters in the NBHCP, the biological monitoring consultant will work with TNBC to propose either adaptive management recommendations or a minor amendment proposal to the 2003 NBHCP.

b. Cancellation. TNBC reserves the right to cancel the biological monitoring contract with 30 days notice for just cause. Otherwise, 12 months' notice must be given by either party to cancel an awarded contract under this program. Just cause can include, without limitation, a rejection by either CDFW or USFWS of the results of biological monitoring as being inadequate to comply with the 2003 NBHCP's reporting requirements, or a reasonable determination by TNBC's staff, in consultation with the CDFW and/or USFWS, that a draft report is likely to be rejected by CDFW or USFWS.

c. Full Compliance with Biological Monitoring Requirement in the 2003 NBHCP. Included by reference with this RFP is the "2003 NBHCP Biological Effectiveness Management Program Document" which sets forth the standards by which TNBC achieves compliance. This document is available from TNBC upon request.

Notwithstanding this BEMP Program Document, TNBC expects the successful respondent to fulfill all biological monitoring requirements in the 2003 NBHCP so that the final deliverable report (the comprehensive "Annual Biological Monitoring Report") fulfills the monitoring requirements in the 2003 NBHCP.

The monitoring requirements noted in page VI-17 ("VI. Plan Implementation, E. Monitoring of the NBHCP") in §VI.E.2.b of the 2003 NBHCP will be the responsibility of TNBC's design, construction, land management and maintenance consultants and not the biological monitoring contractor.

These relate to the site-specific management plans prepared for TNBC by others. The same is true for the pre-construction surveys noted on page VI-24 (“VI Plan Implementation, E. Monitoring of the NBHCP,”) in §VI.E.3.2 of the 2003 NBHCP. The Mid-Point Review detailed in the 2003 NBHCP §VI.E.4 will also be completed by others.

d. Acquisition-related cost considerations. TNBC has acquired 29 parcels of land totaling approximately 4,100 acres. However, land acquisition activity is not entirely predictable, and one large development could change this acreage total. Arrangements must be made to incorporate new mitigation land into the annual biological monitoring process. Typically, TNBC contractors quote a dollar-per-acre amount for each added acre.

CONCLUSION

It is the intention of TNBC to establish a productive relationship with a reputable, reliable consultant to complete the NBHCP’s biological monitoring requirements. Compliance with the biological monitoring components of the 2003 NBHCP is a critical aspect of TNBC’s responsibilities as the NBHCP’s Plan Operator.

In order to adequately provide this function for TNBC, the consultant will need to work cooperatively with TNBC staff, other consultants retained by TNBC, as well as relevant staff with the CDFW and the USFWS. Frequent interaction with TNBC staff, and occasional appearances at TNBC Board meetings (at least annually), should be expected. The NBHCP Technical Advisory Committee has meetings as well which may occasionally require the attendance of the biological monitoring consultant. In essence, good communications between the consultant and TNBC will be a critical part of the successful performance on this project.

TNBC expects a comprehensive “Annual Biological Monitoring Report” that is of consistent quality. This includes being tightly edited, well organized and easy to use as a reference tool.



Exhibit 1
Map of TNBC's Land Holdings
The Natomas Basin Conservancy

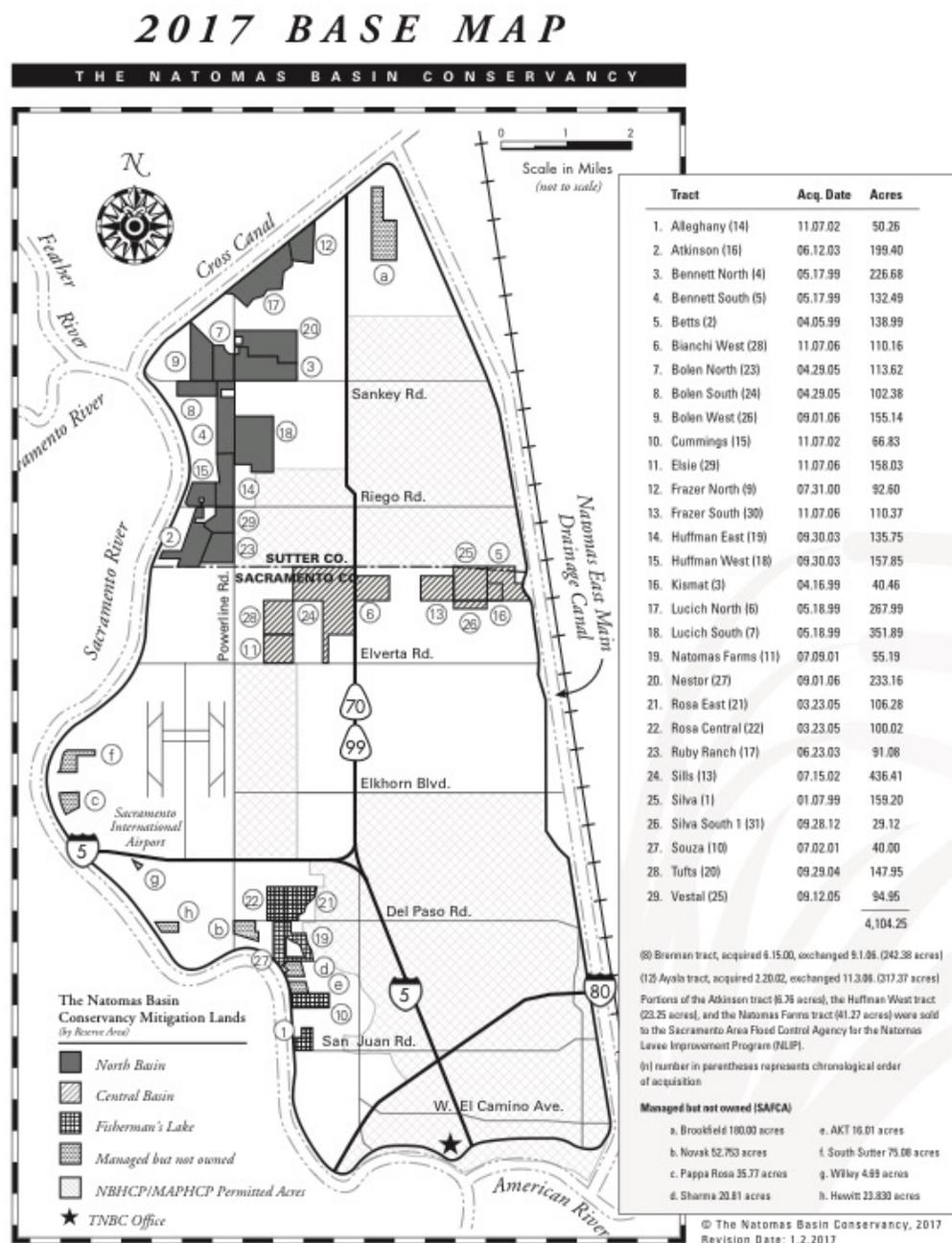


Exhibit 2
List of available resources for RFP proposers

Document name	Description	Source	Availability details
Annual reports	An executive summary of each year's Implementation Annual Report (IAR)	www.natomasbasin.org	Downloadable free of charge.
Current preserve map	One-page exhibit showing Conservancy-owned lands.	In this document as Exhibit 1 as well as at: www.natomasbasin.org	Downloadable free of charge.
Biological Effectiveness Monitoring Report – Public Version	Biological monitoring report from 2002 through 2016. Specific nesting and species sighting information is excluded from this version.	www.natomasbasin.org	Downloadable free of charge.
Biological Effectiveness Monitoring Report – Agency Version	Comprehensive biological monitoring report from 2002 through December 31, 2016. Includes sighting- and nest-specific location information.	Available for review at the Conservancy's office during normal business hours.	Reviewable free of charge; no nest- or site-specific species information can be released.
Biological Effectiveness Monitoring Program document	This is an <i>essential document</i> for RFP proposal submission. It details the manner in which biological effectiveness monitoring will be conducted.	Available upon request from the Conservancy.	A hard copy and/or copy on DVD or CD is available to all RFP proposers at no cost.
2003 Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP)	The comprehensive HCP.	www.natomasbasin.org	Downloadable free of charge.
HCP-related documents	Various documents included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Record of Decision, Set of Findings, Biological Opinion and court documents from the National Wildlife Federation v. Babbitt litigation in federal court, 2003.	www.natomasbasin.org	Downloadable free of charge.
Research and Education Series papers	The purpose of these papers is to promote understanding of the scientific issues associated with implementation of the HCPs. The Series serves as a resource for students, educators, the media and those interested in wildlife in the Natomas Basin.	www.natomasbasin.org	Downloadable free of charge.