



Request for Proposals (RFP)
Proposals are Due February 20, 2026
(5:00 pm PST)

Live Trapping for 2026 Year 3 of Pilot Study for
Mohave Ground Squirrel
RFP MGSWCB 26-4

MGSCC Grant Coordinator:

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Proposals will be disqualified and not reviewed if they are

- ◆ **Submitted after the submittal end time stated above,**
- ◆ **Incomplete, or**
- ◆ **Not meeting the specifications of the scope of work and costs detailed below.**

Introduction

The Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Council (MGSCC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed in January 2023 with a mission to assure the perpetual survival of viable populations of Mohave Ground Squirrels throughout their historical range and any future expansion areas. More information can be found for the MGSCC at our website at mgsconservation.org.

The MGSCC has been awarded several grants related to establishing a long-term monitoring program for the Mohave ground squirrel (MGS; *Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), a California threatened species endemic to the western Mojave Desert of California. 2026 will be the third year of a pilot program designed by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to assist in determining methods for expanding this effort throughout the species' range. As part of this effort, live trapping will be conducted for the purpose of marking and collaring individual animals.

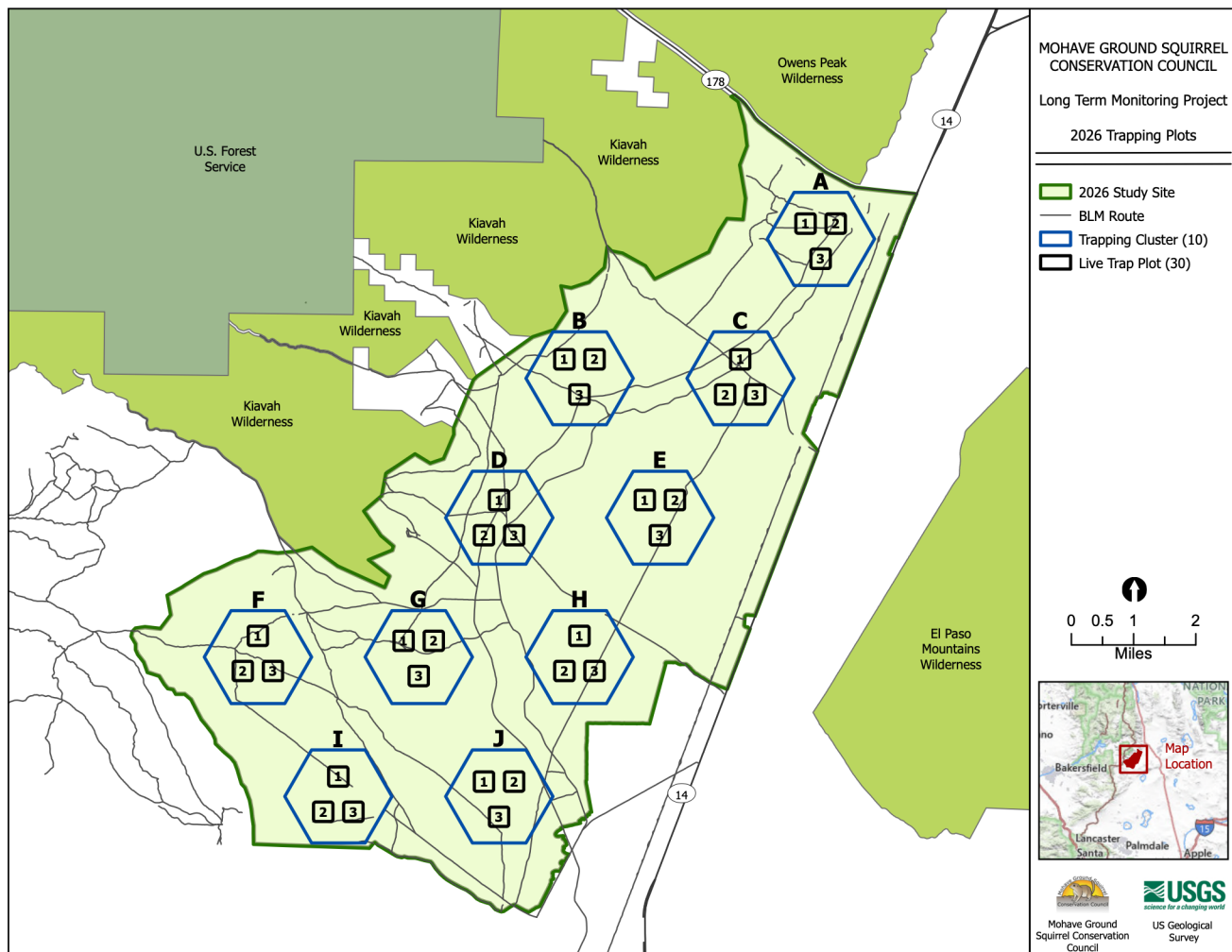
Proposal Schedule

February 6, 2026, 5pm PST	Questions sent to contact(s) above.
February 9, 2026, 5pm PST	All questions and answers to be posted on MGSCC website.
February 20, 2026, 5pm PST	All final proposals due to contact listed above via email.

Performance Period and Locations

During approximately May 6-17, 2026, a total of ten (10) live-trapping areas will be trapped for a period of ten (10) consecutive days, with two days of training and set up prior to starting live trapping (active trapping May 8-17). Assume that trapping will be conducted between the hours of 0600 and 1900 each day.

The figure on the following page shows the location of the study area and the live-trapping areas. Each labelled hexagon represents the area that will be trapped by one trapping team, led by an individual listed in the MGSCC MOU as an Independent Investigator. If individuals are currently listed on other MOUs as an Independent Investigator, they may be added to the MGSCC MOU.



Scope of Work

Trapping Teams

Field teams will consist of either 2 experienced trappers (the Lead Trapper is required to be listed on the MGSCC MOU and the second with trapping experience but does not need to be MGS), or as a 3-person team with the addition of a Field Assistant. MGSCC can provide additional assistants as needed to all teams.

One trapping team will be responsible for trapping within one hexagon as shown on the figure above. One hundred (100) traps will be distributed across either two or three of the interior smaller plots within the hexagon, with specific spacing and layout to be described during training.

Lead trappers will be expected to complete the following activities for each MGS captured depending on the animal's behavior and weight:

- ◆ Sex and age class, weight, any anomalies such as parasites, injuries etc.
- ◆ Fur shaving and additional marking
- ◆ Take tissue samples, ear tag, and PIT tag

Up to twenty (20) MGS may be fitted with transmitters during this project. If a trapping team is authorized for this activity for MGS, then that will benefit the project. Otherwise, MGSCC will provide roving teams to assist with collaring and transmitter activities.

Training and Commitment

All field personnel will be expected to be present at all trainings, and to maintain a high-level of professionalism and cooperation in completing this scope of work. The MGSCC Field Coordinator will remain on site throughout all training and fieldwork to assist in any way needed.

Training and field activities will occur in several stages. Dates presented here may change slightly and will be firm by the time of the kick-off meeting.

Being part of this large team requires commitment to

1. Being present and without distractions (from other projects, etc.) for all trainings and fieldwork (May 6 through 17)
2. Committing to field procedures and data collection as part of the team, including collecting digital and paper data as follows:
 - a. In the time frame requested (i.e. in the field during each trap check)
 - b. QC'ed thoroughly and in the time frame requested (both daily in the field, and as a complete data set after fieldwork is completed)
 - c. Submitted in the time frame requested

Pre-Project Kickoff Meeting

All Lead Trappers will be present for a remote (on Teams or Zoom) kick-off meeting to discuss project objectives and answer any questions related to personnel, equipment, and/or procedures. Lead trappers will be given access to the project's data collection systems in FieldMaps and Survey 123 prior to, or at this meeting. Lead Trappers will be responsible to ensure their team members download project applications and systems and are present at subsequent trainings described below.

Plot Set-up Training and Pre-baiting

Field training will begin at noon on the afternoon two days prior to the start of trapping (May 6). The goal of this training will be to allow for formal training and questions to be answered related to plot set up prior to setup and pre-baiting. Plot set up will then be completed by that evening (2 days prior to trapping) or latest by noon of the following day (May 7, one day prior to trapping).

Trapping and Data Collection Training

Formal training for trapping protocols and data collection will be in-person at the MGSCC project house in Ridgecrest, CA starting at 1pm on the day prior to trapping commencing (aka pre-baiting day and May 7). All field personnel will be required to attend this training from approximately 1-6pm.

Trapping Period

Trapping will commence on May 8 and be completed on May 17. All trapping will adhere to the MOU issued to the MGSCC by CDFW, and the *Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines* (CDFW January 2003; revised July 2010, October 2023). Copies of these documents will be made available to all project personnel.

The following are activities and data to be collected for each animal captured. Other species trapped will also be recorded in Survey 123 but without additional data taken.

1. For every MGS and white-tailed antelope ground squirrel (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*) trapped, the following data will be collected, and tasks will be completed:
 - a. Time trapped and trap number,
 - b. Sex and age class,

- c. Comments on any parasites or other abnormalities observed.
 - d. Emptying bait and scat from traps and re-baiting with each capture.
2. In addition, the following tasks will be completed for each MGS trapped (only by personnel approved for these tasks):
 - a. Recording recaptures by individual animal identification number.
 - b. Individually marked with ear tags and a fur-marked based on a numbering system using non-toxic dye and/or shaving pattern.
 - c. Tasks on initial capture of an MGS
 - Weighing (g).
 - Collecting fecal and tissue samples in marked vials.
 - Marking using one or more of these methods: scientific marker, shaving, ear tag
 - PIT tagging
 - Fitting with a collar and transmitter if the animal meets weight, health and behavioral criteria for collaring.
 - d. Tasks on each recapture of a previously marked MGS:
 - Recording physical markings, collaring, and PIT tag information.
 - Comments on any abnormalities observed.
 - Specific comments on collar and transmitter fit and whether there are any apparent injuries related to the collar, or damage to the collar or transmitter.
 3. After completion of trapping each day and prior to leaving the study site, all traps will be closed with closing times recorded.
 4. Prior to 10am the following morning, all paper and Survey 123 forms will be completed and QCed.
 5. After completion of the 10-day trapping effort, the following tasks will be completed:
 - a. All paper datasheets will be handed to the MGSCC Field Coordinator.
 - b. All scat and tissue samples not previously submitted will be submitted to the MGSCC Field Coordinator.
 - c. All materials that are property of the MGSCC will be returned to the Field Coordinator or the MGSCC house in Ridgecrest and checked in by a member of the MGSCC.

Materials Provided by MGSCC

MGSCC maintains a project field house in Ridgecrest, CA, approximately 30-45 minutes from the study area. The successful contractor will be provided full access to the house, yard, and storage area, which will be shared with a separate camera crew and others working on the project. Amenities at the house include high-speed internet, office with printer, sleeping and shower facilities, fully equipped kitchen, and laundry facilities. Additional materials and information to be provided by MGSCC include:

1. Access letters for this project will be provided to the successful bidder (BLM and private landowners), as well as indications in FieldMaps where access has not been granted on private parcels. Contractor will follow all requirements of BLM and other landowners regarding access.
2. Access to FieldMaps and Survey 123 as needed to complete the scope of work.
3. Digital file(s) of paper datasheets to be completed daily. Additional forms will be available on site.
4. Bait and shades for traps.
5. Marking supplies, PIT tags and PIT tag applicators(s). Extra materials will be available in the field.
6. Vials for collection of fecal and tissue samples.

Contractor Provided Materials

Contractor is expected to provide the following equipment:

1. Traps. Traps will be 12" Sherman™ or comparable in size, either with perforations or mesh, and as required by the MGSCC MOU.
2. Supplies required for measuring and weighing small mammals, all in good working order.
3. Supplies required for taking fecal and tissue samples.
4. Phones or tablets (at least one per trapping team) with the most recent versions of the following applications installed: FieldMaps, Survey 123, Solocator
5. Transportation and food.
6. Insurance, including auto and commercial liability insurance.

Special Considerations

Access through project site will only be by open BLM routes and by foot. Four-wheel drive or similar high-clearance vehicles will be needed to access some sites.

Deliverables

Deliverables include those that are daily, monthly and end of funding agreement as outlined below.

Daily Deliverables

1. Completion of FieldMaps and Survey 123 forms daily.
2. Completion of paper datasheets daily.
3. Notification by phone and/or email to the MGSCC Field Coordinator within 24 hours of any issues affecting this work, including theft or vandalism, with specific information on location and details.

Monthly Deliverables

Invoicing for the previous month within 5 business days of the end of the month.

End of Contract

1. Return of all MGSCC equipment to Ridgecrest house storage area and clearance from an MGSCC member on all equipment being present and in acceptable condition.
2. Final invoicing by July 5, 2026.

Proposal Elements

Note: If personnel have experience and/or have had a MOU with CDFW in the past but do not currently have these authorizations, please explain what authorizations and/or training your team would need in order to complete this scope of work and be added to the MGSCC MOU.

Provide an approach and costing information based on trapping teams of 2 or 3 individuals as described above in the Scope of Work. Approach will describe how many trapping teams the contractor is proposing (between 1 and 10) and describing that their estimate would cover work on any of the plots shown on Page 2. If an estimate would only apply to specific plots, please provide that information. Preference may be given to proposals that cover the full scope of work.

The approach should be no more than 6 pages single-sided, 1.5 line spacing and will include the following information:

- ◆ Approach to completing scope, or portion of scope proposed.
- ◆ All personnel to be used describing Lead Trapper and Assistant(s).

Resumes and/or CVs for all Lead Trappers and Assistants will be included as an attachment and are not included in the proposal page length. Please limit each resume to two pages maximum of most relevant information.

Provide costing as a Not-to-Exceed amount, a specific number of plots proposed on (with a statement that the proposed cost applies to any plot or specific plots). While a detailed costing is not required, please list rates being used, and any discounts provided to MGSCC in recognition of the project being a research effort being conducted by a non-profit for the benefit of a state-listed species.

Additional Information

Retention: MGSCC grants have a retention clause and up to 10% of each invoice may be held in retention until the end of each state fiscal year. MGSCC does intend to pass the same retention to subcontractors in contracts. Retention is returned to MGSCC and then subcontractors at the end of the state's fiscal year.

Evaluation Criteria: Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: project understanding and technical approach, technical expertise, and cost. Each proposer will also be screened for potential conflict of interest.

Intellectual Property and Data Ownership: All intellectual property rights and data generated from this research project shall remain the exclusive property of MGSCC. The contractor acknowledges and agrees that they do not have any ownership rights, title, or interest in any intellectual property or data produced during this project.