Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program, Inc.

Request for Qualifications

#P2425-03

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Mapping of Pensacola and Perdido Bays

Questions and Responses

September 26, 2025

1. We understand that images of the project area need to include nearshore estuarine and marine aquatic ecosystems of Perdido Bay, Big Lagoon, Pensacola Bay, East Bay, Blackwater Bay, Escambia Bay, and Santa Rosa Sound, and be collected during one of the two desired schedule windows (Oct-Nov 2025 or Apr-May 2026). Since the imagery dataset will be used for comparison purposes with past (and potential future) imagery, it will be planned to be taken 'all at the same time'. However, due to environmental factors (cloudiness, turbidity, etc.), it may be necessary to collect the imagery data over the schedule window. Is PPBEP comfortable with the imagery collection extending over the schedule window, so long as the imagery quality is comparable and as uniform as possible?

   The request is for imagery collected within the SAV growing season, which is April – October, in this region. PPBEP has extended the window into November and would consider March – May 2026 to provide additional time to collect imagery given the required timeline for this project. Regardless, all imagery must be collected in the same season (i.e. either fall or spring). PPBEP understands environmental factors may prevent consecutive days of collecting imagery; however, the firm should prioritize collecting imagery as close together as possible. If conditions do not allow for imagery to be collected within this window, Program staff will address the issue and decide on next steps.

2. We acknowledge the response provided previously regarding PPBEP's interest in gaining knowledge on mapping technologies through a comparison between aerial and satellite imagery sources for determining seagrass extent. However, we also understand that PPBEP has a general desire to develop a repeatable process to help determine the changes in seagrass acreage over time. Would PPBEP be receptive to considering an approach that attempted to strike a balance between imagery acquisition platforms (aircraft, drone, satellite)?

   Depending on the circumstances, yes, the Program may be receptive to this approach.

3. In an effort to offer the best repeatable approach and competitive price for PPBEP's consideration, would it be possible to consider an image resolution of up to 50 cm for the imagery?

   The request is for high quality imagery (≤30 cm) to align with project goals, previously established standards, and previous map products.

4. We understand that PPBEP desires an eight (8) month schedule. Assuming a November notice-to-proceed, and if the imagery needs to be collected/acquired in the Apr-May 2026 schedule window, then the necessary image processing and analysis period may potentially need to extend beyond this schedule. Is this potentially acceptable to PPBEP?

   All work must be completed, and deliverables received no later than June 30, 2026.

5. Is there a particular policy or limit regarding the rate of indirect costs requested in response to this solicitation?

   Due to grant funding limitations, PPBEP is requesting indirect be capped at 20%.

6. Will the previous orthophotography be made available to the selected vendor to be utilized as control and image mapping?

   Yes, the Program can provide the 2022 mapping TIFF images and corresponding data to the selected vendor.

7. Will any previous ground control be made available to the selected vendor to be utilized as checkpoints?

   Yes, as stated in the RFP, we are partnering with University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Lab to conduct ground truth surveys for SAV presence/absence and species composition. This information will be provided to the selected vendor.

8. Could the PPBEP please provide details on why aerial imagery is required and preferred if there is a more cost effective and reliable methodology to run a supervised model?

   Aerial imagery acquisition is a priority of FWC for SAV trend analyses across the state as part of their Seagrass Integrated Mapping and Monitoring Program and is therefore required by FWC. There has been preliminary comparison work done in this region, but there is still a need for additional studies focused on the use of aerial and satellite imagery methodologies for determining SAV extent.

9. If the firm outsources fix-wing aerials and the aerials are unusable due light glare or cloud cover, would the PPBEP then require the firm to provide the optional satellite imagery task?

   The current time frame identified for this project should be satisfactory for collecting high quality imagery. In the unlikely event the firm is unable to obtain high quality imagery under the required conditions, the Program will evaluate and consult with FWC to determine if satellite imagery can be utilized in leu of aerial imagery.

10. The RFP requests that the proposal introduces a new or improved technique that enhances the project's outcomes. The aerial acquisition and analysis would be the same as the 2015 aerials used by FWC in their 2018 SIMM report. Could the PPBEP provide examples on how the firms are supposed to remain different, but are required to provide the same aerial acquisition approach?

    The project approach must be determined by the firm.

11. Would the ground-truth data also be collected in March or April if the time frame of the aerials has to change?

    Yes, the ground truth survey will be conducted during the same time frame as the aerial imagery acquisition.