



GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

GREG BELL
Lieutenant Governor

State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MICHAEL R. STYLER
Executive Director

Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

RICHARD J. BUEHLER
State Forester/Division Director

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Contact: Jason Curry
FFSL Public Information Officer
801-538-7302
or Dave Grierson
Sovereign Lands Program
801-538-5504

News Release - Bridge Proposal Leads to Wider Solicitation

Salt Lake City, Utah -- A recent proposal to build a bridge across Utah Lake has prompted the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL) to solicit bids for all appropriate uses of the land. The land was nominated for use by Utah Crossings Inc. in August, 2009. The official Request for Proposals (RFP) was released to the public on Thursday, February 18. All applications will be analyzed based on the Division's public trust obligation and to ensure the highest and, best use of sovereign lands. The analysis is expected to take place over the next several months.

The bridge proposal has generated a number of questions and significant public interest. The RFP is intended to ensure all possibilities are considered. The RFP seeks alternative proposals for land use projects on a corridor of land that crosses Utah Lake from Vineyard to north of Pelican Point. Proposals are being solicited for development projects that will relate to the presence of the lake and its ecological systems, while preserving and enhancing the lake's value as a recreational amenity.

Applications are being accepted through March 31, 2010. Once the applications are received, a team from FFSL will conduct a thorough analysis in order to determine the issues to be addressed. A multi-disciplinary team of experts and involved stakeholders will then be assembled to evaluate the proposals and make recommendations. The evaluation process is expected to last four to five months. Once the team has made its recommendation, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued in the weeks following that will detail the outcome. A lease may or may not be approved by the team; the group may conclude that none of the proposals are fitting. A final 30-day open appeal period will follow and then if a lease is permitted, it will be issued at that time.

"This analysis is going to be thorough and it's going to be open," said Division Director, Dick Buehler. He continued by saying, "if a lease permit is issued as a result of this process, it will be done in the interest of the public trust."

The Division may issue RFPs for any sovereign land on which a potential for development exists. Due to the complex nature of the Utah Lake proposal, division leaders made the decision to take a broad approach from the beginning. FFSL has not taken a position regarding the feasibility of a bridge across the lake. The process is in its beginning stages and there are many issues to consider.

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