REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Agricultural and Natural Resource Outreach Specialist

Issued by Sustainable Northwest, in partnership with the USDA-ARS and Oregon State University Agricultural Research Station

Issuing Organization	Sustainable Northwest (SNW)
Program Partner	USDA-ARS and Oregon State University Agricultural Research Station
Engagement Type	Independent Contractor
Location	Burns, OR
Reports To	Dallas Hall Defrees, SNW Regenerative Ranching Director
Anticipated Start Date	January 11, 2027
Budget	Contractor work: $240,000
Contract Term	January 11, 2027 – January 10, 2029
Submission Deadline	November 6, 2026

1. Background

Sustainable Northwest (SNW) forges natural resource solutions that benefit nature, people, and local economies. SNW partners with rural communities and Tribal Nations throughout the Northwest on projects that promote healthy forests, farms, and ranches, smart water use, and clean energy. Sustainable Northwest was founded in 1994, to forge collaborative solutions for conserving forests and community healthy.

Today’s challenges have multiplied and become more complex with climate change, catastrophic wildfires, and persistent drought affecting the region. SNW remains committed to the belief that nature, people, and local economies can thrive together.

2. Purpose of this RFP

To provide strong local, regional, and statewide leadership in outreach programming and technical assistance related to the use of virtual fencing and associated data systems in support of sustainable natural resource management and agricultural production. This position is developed in partnership with the USDA-ARS and Oregon State University Agricultural Research Station in eastern Oregon and will serve as a statewide resource for ranchers, land managers, and practitioners seeking to adopt and scale virtual fencing technologies in meaningful and effective ways.

The candidate will demonstrate experience with virtual fencing technology and a strong understanding of how these tools can address natural resource management challenges while improving producer decision-making, operational

efficiency, and grazing management outcomes. The candidate is also expected to possess knowledge of data management practices, technology adoption challenges, and data security considerations.

Virtual fencing adoption is accelerating rapidly across Oregon and the western United States, with strong support emerging from state, federal, and local agencies as well as significant interest from the ranching community. While virtual fencing has substantial potential to improve livestock and land management, it remains an evolving tool that requires applied technical support, guidance on its usage and capabilities, coordinated stakeholder engagement, and producer-informed implementation strategies to ensure successful and scalable adoption.

3. Scope of Work and Expected Outcomes

The successful candidate is expected to develop a locally and regionally recognized precision agriculture and rangeland technology program focused on the adoption and application of virtual fencing across Oregon's diverse rangelands. This position will collaborate with agency resource management professionals, landowners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researchers, and technology providers involved in or interested in virtual fencing applications.

A primary responsibility of this position will be to serve as a trusted technical resource for ranchers and land managers evaluating the use of virtual fencing systems. The successful candidate will assist producers in determining whether virtual fencing is an appropriate tool for their management objectives, support system planning and implementation, help identify measurable indicators of success, and provide guidance on adaptive management strategies over time.

In addition to providing statewide outreach, this position will identify a subset of focal virtual fence projects that will involve in-depth, on-the-ground technical assistance from project planning through implementation, monitoring and the communication of project impacts. As such, this position may require a substantial amount of travel to specific remote ranching operations in addition to travel for workshops and summits in rural communities and Western cities.

This position will also play a key role in facilitating communication between producers and technology vendors by aggregating and communicating producer needs, challenges, and operational feedback to help guide future technology development and improve practical field application.

Additional responsibilities include developing and managing outreach and educational resources related to virtual fencing adoption and application, including producer-led case studies, frequently asked questions (FAQs), technical guidance materials, and web-based educational content. The successful candidate will lead and support demonstration and pilot projects that evaluate virtual fencing applications across varying landscapes, operational goals, and management scenarios.

The position will further support coordination among multiple stakeholder groups to develop collaborative case studies and demonstration projects that document the economic, operational, and natural resource benefits of virtual fencing. Because virtual fencing systems often require substantial long-term investment, this work will help build public and institutional support for continued cost-share opportunities and broader adoption by demonstrating measurable outcomes and practical value to producers and land managers.

Additional responsibilities include leading and participating in outreach and engagement events; building strong collaborative relationships with private and public land managers, livestock producers, NGOs,

researchers, and technical and financial assistance providers; and identifying emerging research, technology, and implementation needs that support broader application of virtual fencing technologies across working landscapes.

4. Eligibility Criteria

- M.S. degree in animal science, rangeland science, natural resources management, agricultural sciences, or closely related field; or B.S. degree in the same fields plus at least three years of relevant experience
- Demonstrated experience working with virtual fencing technology in agricultural or natural resource management contexts
- Experience in cooperative extension, adult education, community-based outreach, or a comparable field involving engagement with agricultural producers or land managers
- Demonstrated understanding of the social, economic, or behavioral factors that influence technology adoption among producers or land managers
- Ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, including producers, agency staff, researchers, and the general public
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to translate technical information into accessible, practical guidance
- Experience collecting, managing, analyzing, and communicating data, with familiarity with data privacy or security considerations relevant to agricultural technology systems
- Demonstrated ability to work independently with minimal supervision and manage competing priorities
- Ability to work collaboratively as part of a multi-agency or multi-stakeholder team
- Valid driver's license or ability to obtain one within 30 days of hire, and willingness to travel

5. Preferred Additional Experience

- Experience with agricultural production systems in the western United States, particularly rangeland or livestock operations
- Familiarity with working in or alongside academic, cooperative extension, or federal agency environments (e.g., USDA, BLM, NRCS)
- Experience leading or supporting demonstration or pilot projects that document and communicate applied outcomes to non-technical audiences
- Experience translating precision agriculture technologies and associated data to producers or land managers in practical, decision-relevant ways
- Knowledge of public lands management, associated regulatory frameworks, and the operational challenges faced by producers managing livestock across public and private lands

6. Evaluation Considerations

Proposals will be reviewed by our Regenerative Ranching team. A Short list of finalists may be invited to interview. The selected contractor will be notified by December 18, 2026.

SNW recognizes that few candidates will meet all requested qualifications. Applicants are encouraged to apply even if their experience does not align with all listed qualifications, and to highlight the skills and experience unique to them in their cover letter. Proposals will be considered based on relevant experience, demonstrated relevant work, communication skills, and fit with the purpose and goals of this initiative.

6. Proposal Submission Instructions

Interested applicants should submit a detailed proposal that includes:

1. Qualifications and experience, including a list of experience and references, particularly those in agricultural management, landowner relations, and knowledge of virtual fencing technology.
2. Description of the approach, methodology, and experience with rangeland grazing management, precision ag, and virtual fencing technologies, and experience of grazing of public and private lands.
3. Estimated time for completing scope of work, including key milestones.
4. A proposed fee structure for contractor services, including any additional costs.
5. Any potential conflicts of interest or other relevant disclosures.

Proposal Submission Deadline:

Proposals must be submitted by November 6, 2026.

Submit to:

Submission via email, with the subject line “Agricultural and Natural Resource Outreach Specialist” to Dassi Owens — dowens@sustainablenorthwest.org

Please note:

- Incomplete submissions will not be considered.
- Please make no phone calls or email inquiries regarding this posting.
- Interview questions will be provided to candidates in advance of any interview.
- References will be requested from finalists.