



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Professional Services for Environmental Compliance Documentation Related to Forest Health Grant for the Los Gatos Watershed Collaborative administered by the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council.

Deadline for Submission: 12:00pm, December 21st, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, San Jose Water Company, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Santa Clara County Parks have formed a collaborative partnership known as the Los Gatos Watershed Collaborative to implement forest health treatments on 955.4 acres strategically located throughout the Los Gatos Creek Watershed in the Santa Cruz Mountains. These treatments will thin underbrush and remove dead and dying trees to improve forest health and fire resilience. Additional information can be found on the project at LGwatershedhealth.com.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Three project areas have been strategically spread across lands of:

- San Jose Water (270.7 Acres),
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (353.5 Acres), and
- Santa Clara County Parks (291.2 Acres).
- In addition, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (40.0 Acres) will be working within multiple communities that are adjacent to the large landownerships to carry out a mosaic of forest health treatments across property lines.
- The Collaborative has identified and mapped 915.4 of the 955.4 total treatment acres, (See maps 1-4 and table in Attachment A) the additional 40 acres will be identified as we gain permissions from landowners. Of the 955.4 acres, 947.3 will be funded by the grant and implemented by the SCCFSC, the remaining 8.1 acres are being treated by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

General forest health treatment prescriptions include:

- Mechanized - Masticate stems and downed woody debris 8 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) or less on slopes averaging ~30 - 40%. It is anticipated that the majority of the treatment (862.1 acres) will be accomplished with mastication.
- Handwork – Where mechanized treatment is not feasible, handwork will utilize a similar prescription connecting mechanized polygons in the highest priority areas. It is estimated that 85.2 acres will be treated with handwork.
- Plantation acres-restoration of a prior Christmas tree farm 8.1 acres

The treatments in this grant are built to set the stage for future funding for removal of mid to large diameter noncommercial trees diseased with sudden oak death and/or large diameter Douglas-fir trees overtopping sensitive hardwood and brush species. The long-term goal is to return these forested stands to a condition where more frequent, low severity prescribed burns



can be conducted to create an increasingly diverse and regenerative forest, vigorous with larger trees, increasing the spacing between tree crowns and understory vegetation.

The CEQA process is complete on approximately 300 acres of land within the project, and is anticipated be started on all other areas through the CalVTP program, <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/calvtp/>. CEQA compliance documentation will be completed within the first year of the grant and no later than August 29th, 2022. Project areas with completed CEQA analysis and documentation will be ready for treatments The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is the grant recipient and will act as a hub for the project work plan, working closely with all partners to plan, prepare, and implement treatments on each property. The FireSafe Council will administer the grant and provide general coordination and oversight, manage contractors, and coordinate communications. In addition, they will work with individual homeowners adjacent to the large parcels, to gain access for treatment of the parcels where feasible and assist the homeowners working within their defensible space zones, thus expanding the effectiveness of the forest health work.

EXPERIENCE, BACKGROUND AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE:

Work may require one or more of the following services for a specific parcel for Phases One and Two of the project:

1. CEQA & Planning (Phase One):

A. Inventory existing and needed CEQA documents and technical studies, including, but not limited to recommendation of CALVTP Project Specific Analysis (PSA), NOE, and MND.

B. Database development to inventory and track CEQA compliance with each parcel.

2. CEQA and Planning (Phase Two):

Completion of needed CEQA documents, including CalVTP PSA and Standard Project Requirement (SPRs).

3. Biological (Phase Two):

A. Focused surveys for endangered species and/or nesting birds, seasonally dependent

B. Botanical surveys and vegetation mapping, seasonally dependent

4. Cultural (Phase Two):



- A. Area of Potential Effect mapping
- B. Archaeological Field Surveying for historic and pre-historic resources
- C. Completion of Archaeological Site Records
- D. Archeological Survey Report
- E. Historic Property Survey Report
- F. Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act G. Tribal notification and coordination

5. Produce monthly reports, or as requested, updating SCCFSC on progress of CEQA work, this reporting will be especially important for planning the timing of vegetation management activities (Phases One and Two).

6. Project Area: Forest Health Fuel Reduction Treatment Area Maps and Table, see attachment A.

SCOPE OF WORK:

As a requirement of the grant, SCCFSC needs to have CEQA environmental compliance completed by August 29th, 2022. Once CEQA clearance is completed for a parcel, and CEQA findings are adopted by the respective agency partners, treatment of any individual parcel can begin. Some parcels may also require completion of a CalVTP PSA and/or Standard Project Requirements (SPR) prior to treatment. Therefore, it is critical to the project that CEQA compliance analysis be completed efficiently and organized so that project implementation can proceed sequentially. Ideally, consultant should seek to ensure contiguous parcel environmental compliance where possible to mitigate treatment constraints. Project partners are prepared to share land use, environmental baseline and other information needed by the consultant. This RFQ is to contract the services of a consultant to complete Phases One and Two, securing environmental clearance for all property to be treated. In Phase One, SCCFSC would like the consultant to prepare a plan to coordinate all environmental compliance such that it clearly associates environmental compliance documents with each parcel number, owner, and treatment area, and to develop a plan to obtain clearance for any parcels without clearance.

Phase 1 – to be completed by 2/28/2022

- Inventory existing CEQA documents and clearance status for all parcels within the project.
- Develop a database that clearly identifies and associates environmental compliance documents with parcel number, owner and treatment area. Propose best database to include all links to documents, maps etc.
- Develop a plan to complete CEQA compliance in accordance with CalFire grant guidelines for any outstanding parcels.
- Review Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) and develop compliance strategy and recommendations for each SPR category. For example, this may include recommending measures such as SPR BIO-1: Review and Survey of Project-Specific Biological Resources,



which includes the necessary data review components to fulfill CalVTP compliance (e.g. CNDDDB and pre-treatment reconnaissance level survey).

Phase 2 – to be completed in full by 8/29/2022*

The goal of Phase Two is to have all CEQA documentation completed such that vegetation management treatments can begin. Phase Two would execute the environmental compliance plan developed in Phase One. This would include completing CEQA documentation for outstanding parcels, understanding that documentation requirements and methods may be inconsistent among partners. Phase Two would include Project Specific Analysis for lands not already evaluated under CalVTP. The CEQA clearance must comply with the requirements in the grant guidelines, attached.

*In some cases, SPRs may be completed after 8/29/2022. SPR implementation dates are contingent upon treatment timelines and survey requirements that extend through the March 2025 project period (e.g. pre-activity surveys and multi-season botanical surveys may need to be completed at any time during the grant period).

- Maintain the database that clearly associates environmental compliance documents with parcel number, owner and treatment area. This is the database developed in Phase One to be used and maintained by the consultant through length of the grant period ending March 2025.
- Complete Project Specific Analysis (PSA) as required for lands not currently covered by CEQA.
- Implement Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) as required by CalVTP and prior to treatments
- May include protocol-level botanical and wildlife surveys, seasonally dependent
- Archaeological surveys per the CalVTP SPRs
- Phase Two work may be concurrent with Phase One in cases where SPRs should be initiated prior to completion of CEQA documentation or CEQA work has already been completed. As an example, MROSD has completed a vast majority of necessary CEQA work or is in final stages of completion, whereas SJW needs a complete CEQA review from the outset of the project. Please see Attachment A for detail of treatment areas and ownership.



SCHEDULE:

To the extent achievable, the following schedule shall govern the Request for Proposals. The SCCFSC reserves the right to modify the dates below, and will notify all known respondents of any schedule changes.

1. RFP released: November 19th, 2021
2. Deadline for submission of interpretation and/or questions: 12:00pm, December 1st, 2021.

All questions should be submitted via email to: Stephen Harrington, sharrington@sccfiresafe.org and cc. Eugenia Rendler education@sccfiresafe.org

3. Answers to questions released by December 10th, 2021 or as clarification research promptly allows.

Firms interested in this RFP may email Stephen Harrington, sharrington@sccfiresafe.org to be included on an email list to receive answers to questions and any RFP Addendum(s) generated.

4. Responses/Statement of Qualifications due: 12:00pm, December 21st, 2021.

Responses shall be submitted by email to, as a single PDF file containing all required contents. Hard copy responses will not be accepted.

5. Interviews conducted: TBD, only if necessary.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Responses shall be submitted by email to Stephen Harrington, sharrington@sccfiresafe.org and cc. Eugenia Rendler education@sccfiresafe.org as a PDF file containing the following required contents. Hard copy responses will not be accepted. Responses are due December 21st, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

1. Cover Letter (no longer than 1 page)
The cover letter should convey a clear understanding of the requirements and objectives, and why the respondent is uniquely qualified to be awarded a contract.
2. A tentative plan and schedule for the project as outlined in Phase One and Phase Two.
3. Respondent's Qualifications
Indicate clearly which technical services your firm proposes to provide, using the terminology and numbering listed in the Experience, Background and Technical Knowledge. Please give us your background and experiences that relate to the



assessments needed in Phase One and Phase Two. Provide qualifications that are related to the technical aspects of Phase Two, specifically biological and cultural resource issue areas.

4. Proposed Respondent Team

Please include the qualifications, training, and certifications of the Project Manager, and all other staff who will perform the services outlined herein. Include a resume for each listing: education, experience, and expertise in this type of work. Firm employees preferred for services outlines. Subcontractors permitted but will be subject to the same qualifications and insurance requirements as primary firm.

The Contractor warrants that it will not assign any employee, independent contractor or agent to perform services under this Agreement, unless Contractor has completed a background check and deemed that employee, independent contractor or agent suitable for performing such services under this Agreement. The background check must minimally include criminal conviction information for the past seven years. In assigning any individual to perform work on the Project, and in conducting background checks, the Contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including, but not limited to, applicable employment laws and health and safety regulations. All fees associated with the background checks shall be the responsibility of the Contractor. The Contractor shall immediately remove any employee, independent contractor or agent performing services under this Agreement: (i) if it becomes known to the Contractor that such person may be a danger to the health or safety of others, or (ii) at the request of the SCCFSC.

5. Fee Schedule

6. Conflicts

This section should identify whether respondent anticipates it would need to obtain conflict waivers from any existing clients and how respondent anticipates addressing any potential conflicts with respect to any member agencies.

7. References

The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) public agency clients who have contracted with the respondent for services similar to those described in this RFQ within the last five years. These references should be direct managers or agency principals that can clearly speak specifically to consultant's performance.

8. Debarment or other Disqualification:

Respondent must disclose any debarment or other disqualification as a supplier or vendor for any federal, state or local entities. Respondent must describe the nature of the debarment/disqualification, including where and how to find such detailed information.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council requirements for all our contractors are to carry liability insurance in the minimum amounts of \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 aggregate and



name Santa Clara County FireSafe Council as additional insured at 14380 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga CA 95070. Furthermore, we require this coverage to (1) be primary and non-contributory and (2) have a waiver of subrogation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The following criteria will be used by the SCCFSC in evaluating submissions:

1. Experience and demonstrated competence of the identified key areas of service outlined in the Qualifications section of this RFP.
2. Please specifically highlight experience with the Cal VTP and PSA process.
3. References: The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) public agency clients who have contracted with the respondent for services similar to those described in the RFQ within the last five years. These references should be direct managers or agency principals that can clearly speak to the consultant's performance.
4. Comprehensive consultant fee schedule.
5. Thoroughness of submission.

The SCCFSC reserves the right to award a contract based on written responses only, however oral presentations and written questions for further clarifications may be required of some or all of the respondents.

RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS:

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm of the conditions contained in this request for proposal unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the agreement between the SCCFSC and the firm selected. The SCCFSC reserves the right without prejudice to reject any or all proposals.

The Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative Forest Health Grant is a collaboration between these public and private entities and is a part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment. particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefiting residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income



households across California. For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at: www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov. The public can monitor project communications and updates by visiting the Lost Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative website at: LGwatershedhealth.com.