

Request for Proposal

Pulpit Rock Conservation Area **Forest Inventory and Stewardship Plan**

Introduction

The Town of Bedford, NH, acting through its Conservation Commission, seeks a licensed professional forester to complete a Forest Inventory and Stewardship Plan for the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area to be completed by July 2, 2018.

Background and Assessment History

The Pulpit Rock Conservation Area is located in the northwest portion of town and is characterized by forested and open space areas with ponds and streams that is open to the public for multi-use, non-motorized recreation. The property is approximately 338 acres in size and is generally bounded on the north by New Boston Road, to the west by the town line with Amherst, to the south by the town line with Amherst, and to the east by Pulpit Road. Primary access to the recreational area is off New Boston Road, which has a parking lot. There is also a second access point located on Pulpit Rd, also with a parking lot. The property can also be accessed from the south via the adjoining Town of Amherst conservation area, and through several smaller access points in town starting in residential areas.

The primary purpose of the Conservation Area is to conserve the natural scenery (including the geologic feature Pulpit Rock), the natural setting of the forest and the wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

The Conservation Area has historically been “managed” by the Pulpit Rock Subcommittee, which is a subcommittee of the Town of Bedford Conservation Commission. This group of concerned citizens has been responsible for annual clean-up days, park entrance information kiosks, and general oversight of the property.

A “Timber Cruise and Management Plan (Foreco)” for this Conservation Area was last completed in 1990 when the area was only 143 acres in size. This covered the northern portion of the current property boundaries. Since that time, the town added additional acreage to the south and east that expanded the current boundaries to a total of 338 acres.

In May 2013, the town granted the Bedford Land Trust (BLT) a Conservation Easement on the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area to assist the town in the governance, conservation, and preservation of the area. The Conservation Easement is included as Attachment A. A Baseline Documentation Report (Moosewood Ecological LLC) was commissioned by BLT, and submitted January 2014, to document the natural ecological resources in the conservation area and to

identify encroachments or current activities that potentially threatened the existing natural resources or that were detrimental to the easement provisions.

A Phase I Archaeological Assessment of the southern portion of the conservation area, including a portion of the property known as Gages' Mill, was completed in 2016 as part of the process to implement recreational trail improvements through an ongoing Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant.

These reports are available to prospective bidders to formulate the proposal.

Purpose

The goal of the Forest Management Plan is to promote good stewardship of the land by developing a useful, easily read, comprehensive document that adheres to town conservation and recreational use objectives and provides management recommendations that are specific to the property, relate to field inventory data, and are consistent with the purposes of the BLT Conservation Easement.

The Conservation Commission is seeking proposals for a forest inventory and stewardship plan that will evaluate and make recommendations regarding forest health, invasive species management, the protection of wetland and historic resources while also balancing recreational trail use. It is intended that this document will represent a comprehensive, long-term plan for the maintenance and enhancement of the natural resources at the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area.

It should be noted that this RFP was partially triggered by the recent discovery, by a state forest pathogen expert, of the presence of the hemlock wooly adelgid and elongate hemlock scale, which potentially could catastrophically impact the area's hemlock forest. The Forest Management Plan will need to include an inventory of the hemlock forest, estimation of infestation, and an invasive species management plan.

Proposal Requirements and Bidder Qualifications

The proposal should include:

- The resume and qualifications of the individuals performing the work and writing the plan;
- A description of the approach to the project (based on the scope of services below), acknowledgement of the scope of services and any additional services that the Bidder might propose as necessary to complete the project work;

- A description of the firm’s experience performing similar work in other communities for similar sized conservation areas and submittal of electronic copies of example reports that have been completed as part of this work product;
- Three client references;
- Estimated date for completion and schedule;
- Cost proposal sufficient detail to show the hourly basis of effort for the major tasks within the project following the respondent’s approach to the project to meet the scope of services. The proposal shall be on an hourly cost basis with a not-to-exceed upper limit; and
- Payment terms and conditions.

The Planning Department shall review and evaluate all proposals in accordance with the criteria and provisions contained herein and the provisions of applicable state and federal laws.

The Town further reserves the right to:

- Not award a contract for the requested services.
- Amend the proposal as mutually agreed by both parties to accommodate specific needs of the community.
- Waive any irregularities of informalities of the proposals.
- Extend the deadline for submission proposals.
- Accept the proposal deemed to be the most beneficial to the public and the Town of Bedford.
- Negotiate and accept, without advertising, the proposal of any other respondent in the event that a contract cannot be successfully negotiated with the selected firm.
- Retain products submitted by the respondents for its own use at its sole discretion.

Proposals may be delivered by any reliable means including mail, in-hand or electronic. Questions should be directed to Karin Elmer at kelmer@bedfordnh.org or (603)792-1320. Proposals are due no later than end of business day (4:30) on March 16, 2018.

Scope of Services

The selected consultant will be required to prepare a comprehensive Forest Inventory and Stewardship Plan for the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area. The plan should address the following typical components of a forest management and ecological assessment plan for a community conservation area:

1. Forest health (focusing on identification of current and potential future threats to the existing forest, which include insect, disease and invasive species, and a management plan to contain, reduce or eliminate any current invasive species);

2. Forest Protection (including wildfire and catastrophic risk reduction and rehabilitation where appropriate);
3. Soil;
4. Water;
5. Aesthetic quality;
6. Riparian and wetlands;
7. Wildlife and fish habitat, including identification of rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species and exemplary natural communities;
8. Forest Recreation and Trails; and
9. A list of landowner objectives for the property consistent with the BLT conservation easement.

The Plan shall include:

1. Composite or separate maps, drawn based on the city's or state's GIS mapping and/or available topographic survey mapping, to include the following:
 - a. Locus Map identifying the location of the property on a USGS topographical map and town tax map.
 - b. Property Perimeter/Survey Map with known boundary information (stone walls, monuments, etc.), significant land and historic features, access points, roads, landings, trails, surface water and adjacent land uses.
 - c. Soils Map based on the latest USDA-NRCS Soil Survey information.
 - d. Forest Type/Stand Characterization Map clearly identify location and extent of tree species and species groups, size classes, stand bounds and their relationship to roads, site boundaries, brooks, trails and other important landscape features including invasive species. Each stand will be identified by number or letter.
 - e. Forest Site Quality Map clearly identify good, medium and marginal growth capability sites within areas where active management of vegetation is recommended, including invasive species or species expected to be at risk for insect/disease in the near future. Identify areas for wildfire catastrophic risk reduction and rehabilitation.
 - f. Work Plan Map clearly identifying the locations of forest blocks recommended for thinning, regeneration, habitat improvements, and access for forest management equipment, as well as other proposed stewardship activities.
 - g. Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat Map identifying the location and extent of significant and critical wildlife habitats and land features such as deer yards, wetlands (marshes, floodplains, bogs/ponds), rare and threatened or endangered species, critical habitat, etc.
 - h. Forest Access and Recreational Use Map including the location of recreation, aesthetics, water, cultural and other resources and the location of potential sites for recreation

opportunities, vantage points, trails, historic sites, natural heritage elements and other pertinent features of the property as applicable.

Electronic copies of mapping shall be provided at the end of the project. It is preferable that all mapping be ArcGIS compatible.

2. Written Report: Discuss the landowner objectives, size of property, location, pertinent historical information and the status and related recommendations for forest protection regarding insects, diseases, invasive species and wildfire and catastrophic risk reduction and rehabilitation. Write stand descriptions and descriptions to threats to forest health.
3. Final Deliverables shall include four bound copies of the report including all maps and electronic copies in PDF format and maps & supporting data in ArcGIS format.
4. The selected consultant will also be required to attend up to two progress meetings during the project with Planning Staff and members of the Conservation Commission, and up to two meetings to present the plan and recommendations and to receive input from the Conservation Commission, BLT, and other stakeholders.