



MRWCC Producers Leading the Way:

Opportunities for Improved Native Grassland
Conservation and Species at Risk Stewardship within
the Milk River Watershed

Request for Proposals

RFP Issue Date: July 30th, 2021

RFP Closing Date: August 19th, 2021

Attention: Tim Romanow, MRWCC Executive Director



Section A - Proposal Guidelines

1. Purpose

Contractors are invited to submit proposals for the: **Opportunities for Improved Native Grassland Conservation and Species at Risk Stewardship within the Milk River Watershed Project** as specified in Section B Project requirements. The Request for Proposals will be conducted with the objective of maximizing the benefit to the Milk River Watershed Council Canada, while offering contractors a fair and equitable opportunity to participate.

The Request for Proposals shall not be construed as an offer to a contract, but as an invitation for proposals. The Milk River Watershed Council Canada (hereinafter referred to as "the MRWCC") is sending out this Request for Proposals with formal approval of project funding from Department of the Environment and Climate Change Canada (or "ECCC") project funding and internal sources. The MRWCC shall be under no obligation to accept any proposal, including without limitation, the lowest priced proposal.

2. Proposal Guidelines

Each respondent (hereinafter referred to as the "Contractor") is asked to submit a detailed proposal to address the project outlined in Section B of this document. Proposals, including price, shall be valid until September 30th, 2021.

Proposals along with a letter of transmittal signed by a company executive officer are to be submitted electronically by emailing tim@mrwcc.ca with the subject line: [Opportunities for Improved Native Grassland Conservation and Species at Risk Stewardship within the Milk River Watershed project](#) no later than 4:00 pm MDT on **August 19th, 2021**. Proposals received after this time and date will not be considered.

Acknowledgement of receipt of proposal by the MRWCC will be emailed by the end of the following business day after the proposal is received. Applicants are encouraged to phone the MRWCC office at (403) 647-4342 to ensure receipt of submitted proposals if there is any uncertainty.

3. Bid Withdrawals and Amendments

Bids can be withdrawn at any time prior to the bid closing. Requests for bid withdrawal must be signed by the contractor or contractor's agent and submitted electronically (email) to tim@mrwcc.ca with the subject line: [Opportunities for Improved Native Grassland Conservation and Species at Risk Stewardship within the Milk River Watershed project](#). Contractors may submit amendments to their bids at any time prior to the bid closing. Upon receipt, amendments will replace the original submission. Amendments received after bid closing on August 19th, 2021 cannot be accepted.

4. Evaluation Criteria

4.1 Methodology for Evaluation



Proposals will be assessed and evaluated independently by the MRWCC Project Team, based on: the quality and value of the work proposed within the maximum contractor budget of \$40,000 including GST; the approaches to the project, procedures, methods, and analytical tools; past experience of the Contractor; past performance; and the qualifications of the personnel to commit for the term of the project. The MRWCC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

4.2 Required Qualifications

The contractor must outline their qualifications in the following areas:

- Expertise in project management
- Expertise in survey development and execution, including survey recruitment strategies and documentation of the process and results
- Expertise in organizing and conducting focus group meetings
- Knowledge of the relationships or associations of land uses, human population, agricultural best practices, species at risk management, riparian health, ecology, and rangeland management.
- Knowledge of ecological goods and services, and tools of interest to producers to implement conservation strategies.
- Knowledge of the objectives of ECCC's Departmental Results Framework with the expected result(s) of how:
 - Canada's wildlife and habitat are conserved and protected
 - Canada's species at risk are recovered
- Knowledge of the Milk River watershed and management.
- Excellent report writing skills for both a technical, and lay reader audience.

4.3 Guidelines for Proposal Submission

To facilitate the evaluation of proposals, and to ensure each proposal receives full consideration, proposals should be organized in the following format using the following section titles and sequence listed below:

• Letter of Transmittal

• Work plan

Include a description of the approaches to the project, procedures, methods, and analytical tools (See **Section B** of this document to determine what will most likely apply). Provide sufficient information to show that the project requirements are fully understood. If subcontractors or consortium members are used, then describe the arrangements of the group and distribution of the work.

• Work Schedule

Contractors are required to include a proposed work schedule, which will describe all aspects of the project to ensure completion within the defined time frame. Refer to section B for a complete list of project milestones and deliverable dates.

As per the MRWCC grant agreement with the ECCC for this project, all aspects including deliverables and billing must be completed on March 31, 2022. We advise that



the project begin as soon as possible, with producer consultation timed to recognize especially busy times that may compromise survey response rates.

The Contractor will be required to attend a maximum of 2 meetings (in person or virtual conferencing) with the MRWCC Project Team, and communicate regular updates via email or phone to the MRWCC Project Manager.

- Past Experience and Performance**

The Contractor will identify personnel carrying out the work and supply details of their past and current experience. Resumes/qualifications outlining pertinent experience for all team members that will be involved in the project must be included. Time allocations and billing rates of each team member must be included in the proposal. The contractor's ability to undertake the project should be described, including a description of experience with relevant projects. Please include the dates that the projects were undertaken and the names of the key individuals for each project. The contractor will also provide an outline of who will be responsible for the management and the supervision of the services and what their qualifications are.

- Price**

The quoted price (including GST) will include all costs incurred by the Contractor for the project including: service and labor fees, printing of final documents, expenses and other related costs. Project overages are not permitted by MRWCC without consent of the MRWCC project team.

- Appendices**

If the Contractor wishes to include any other material not specifically requested by this Request for Proposals, they may do so by including additional appendices in the Proposal.

5. Questions and Communications

All communication (clarification/questions) between the Contractor and the MRWCC should be done via email to the MRWCC Project Manager: tim@mrwcc.ca or by Phone: 403-647-4342.

6. Proposal Acceptance

This project will be guided by the MRWCC Project Team. This team will review the proposals and may interview one or more of the Contractors. Interviews may or may not be requested at the discretion of the Project Team. The MRWCC reserves the right to, without prior notice, extend the timeline for making the decision.

The successful Contractor will be initially notified via telephone. Confirmation of a successful proposal will be issued in writing (via email). Unsuccessful Contractors will be notified as such via email. Unsuccessful proposal debriefing is available upon request.

7. Schedule of Events



The Following schedule of events is planned of the Request for Proposals and the process review of the proposals:

- Release of Request for Proposals: July 30th, 2021
- Deadline for submission of proposals: August 19th, 2021
- Evaluation of proposals: September 2nd, 2021
- Award of contract: week of September 6th, 2021
- Anticipated completion of producer survey: January 21, 2022
- First draft of final report February 4th, 2022
- Draft/Team review: last week of February 2022
- Close of Project and Financials March 31st, 2022

8. Additional Requirements

The successful contractor is required to attend a meeting (via conference call) with the MRWCC Project Manager and members of the Project Team after the award of the contract to discuss his/her proposal, MRWCC suggested revisions to the proposal, final project schedules, meeting requirements, and preparation of the final contract between the Contractor and the MRWCC.

Section B - Project Requirements

Project Description

- The Milk River Watershed Council Canada will facilitate the contractor's development of this Producers Leading the Way Project. This project is supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada, Alberta Environment and Parks, MRWCC, and Local Municipalities.
- This report will form the main component of the ECCC funded project focusing on Opportunities for Improved Native Grassland Conservation and Species at Risk Stewardship within the Milk River Watershed.
- The Project Team will hire a contractor to identify tools or best practices available or of interest to livestock producers developing strategies to conserve native grasslands and associated species on private and public grazing lands throughout the 4 municipalities within the Milk River watershed.
- The contractor and team will design an approach through focus group meetings and survey to collect producer information to help inform future stewardship programs. The outcomes of this project will maintain or improve habitat for Species at Risk across the Milk River watershed and potentially the entire ECCC – Summit to Sage Priority Place.
- The Contractor will be responsible for:
 - Organizing, hosting, and documenting a focus group meeting of organizations working in the Milk River Watershed (Alberta) to identify strategies that maintain and improve ecological goods and services from native grasslands, and that ultimately may be implemented by livestock producers provided with adequate incentives. The focus group findings will inform survey questions primarily focused on cow calf operators with deeded and lease holdings of



- native and introduced rangeland. The MRWCC will assist the winning contractor with organizing focus group meetings.
- Additional consultation with producers and the community may be required to discuss the project and introduce the survey.
 - Develop producer survey recruitment strategies with MRWCC project team.
 - Survey a minimum of 120 cow-calf producers (with some flexibility to that number if required) within the 4 rural municipalities (Cardston, Warner, Forty Mile, and Cypress) through assorted questions. Survey results, including margins of error, are to be summarized and sub-divided spatially (by municipal division and township) to identify tools of interest and the incentives that may be required for future implementation.
 - Compile a summary report that documents the process, rationale, results and recommendations that may include conservation targets, land management tools, and producer identified trigger incentives that can be applied to municipal or geographic boundaries.

Project Committee Membership

- MRWCC Project Team with additional technical support from various stakeholders and local municipalities.

Timeline

- Release of Request for Proposals: July 30th, 2021
- Deadline for submission of proposals: August 19th, 2021
- Evaluation of proposals: September 8th, 2021
- Award of contract: September 10th, 2021
- First Draft of report February 4th, 2022
- Draft/Team review: last week of February 2022
- Close of Project and Financials March 31st, 2022

Project objectives

- To provide a watershed specific survey of stewardship strategies for Species at Risk and associated habitat within the Milk River watershed (Alberta).
- Provide analysis of survey results at municipal division and township levels.
- To inform future stewardship programs to maintain or improve species at risk habitat across the Milk River Watershed

Project scope

- Convene partner organizations and technical advisors in a focus group meeting. The meeting will potentially identify the following: priority place SAR goals, targets, and implementation tools. The focus group findings will form base questions for the producer survey portion of the project.
- Develop and finalize producer survey recruitment strategies to collect data.



- Analyze survey data and review with MRWCC project team.
- Finalize report and key deliverables of the project.

Reporting

- The Contractor will be responsible for completing a project report on “Producers leading the way within the Alberta section of the Milk River watershed”.
- The report will incorporate the following areas of interest:
 - Ecological goods and services (EGS) provided by grasslands, strategies to maintain or improve grassland conservation and EGS (including habitat for species at risk), incentives currently available or potentially implementable to enable cow/calf producers to improve native grasslands and associated EGS within the Milk River watershed.
 - Updated demographic information pertinent to landowners and supporting State of the Watershed reporting by MRWCC.
 - Identify stewardship programs of interest to producers for future participation in species at risk and native grassland stewardship programs.
 - Participant survey data spatially reported by municipality
- The Contractor can use a standard structure for reporting. or indicate a revised structure with rationale.

Standard reporting structure should include:

- Executive Summary
- Background
- Overview
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

Budget

- The approximate Contractor project budget is as follows:
 - \$40,000.00 – including taxes, funded by ECCC

RFP/Quote

- RFP to be circulated no later than Friday, July 30th, 2021 with a closing of Thursday, August 19, 2021. All proposals will be reviewed by the project team and awarded on or before September 10th, 2021



RFP Reference information links:

Milk River Watershed Council Canada Transboundary State of the Watershed Report

<http://www.mrwcc.ca/index.php/projects/state-watershed-report/>

Overview of the Pan-Canadian approach to transforming species at risk conservation in Canada - Summit To Sage <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/wildlife-plants-species/species-risk/pan-canadian-approach.html>

Municipal Links:

<http://www.cardstoncounty.com/>

<http://www.warnercounty.ca/>

<https://www.40mile.ca/>

<http://www.cypress.ab.ca/>