REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS No. 22-016

Regional Riparian Spatial Analysis for Restoration Prioritization

ISSUED: February 7th, 2022

CLOSING DATE AND TIME:
Submissions must be received on or before:
3:00 PM (15:00 hrs) Local Time on March 1st, 2022

Submissions and Questions are to be directed to:
Julie Pisani, RDN Drinking Water & Watershed Protection Program Coordinator
250-390-6586 | jpisani@rdn.bc.ca

Questions are requested at least five (5) business days before the closing date.

Proposals will not be opened in public

Instructions to Proponents

Closing Date/Time/Submission Method
Submissions must be received on or before 3:00 PM (15:00 hrs), Local Time, on March 1, 2022.

Submission Method:

By Email: In PDF format with "22-016 Riparian Spatial Analysis" as the subject line at this electronic address:

jpisani@rdn.bc.ca

Please note: Maximum email file size limit is 20MB, or less. The RDN will not be liable for any technological delays of submissions.

Submissions received in any other manner will not be accepted.

Amendment to Proposals
Proposals may be amended in writing and sent via email to the RDN contact person identified on the cover page on or before the closing. Such amendments should be signed by the authorized signatory of the Proponent.

Addenda
If the RDN determines that an amendment is required to this RFP, the RDN will post the Addendum on the RDN (www.rdn.bc.ca) and BC Bid (www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca) websites. Each addendum will be incorporated into and become part of the RFP. No amendment of any kind to the RFP is effective unless it is contained in a written addendum issued by the RDN. It is the sole responsibility of the Proponent to check and ensure all amendments are included prior to submitting their final Proposal submission.

Withdrawal of Proposals
The Proponent may withdraw their Proposal at any time by submitting a written withdrawal email to the RDN contact person identified on the cover page on or before the closing.

Unsuccessful Vendors
The Regional District will offer debriefings to unsuccessful Proponents, on request, at a mutually agreeable time.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to solicit submissions from qualified firms to spatially analyze the current riparian cover levels (functional riparian width) across the region's major watercourses and identify priority areas for restoration of riparian vegetative buffer extent and quality to enhance climate resilience and water protection in the region.

We require qualified professionals with expertise in GIS and ecology to analyze aerial imagery, digital elevation models and remote sensing data, in combination with surface water quality trend data to help support riparian area prioritization.

The desired work start date would be in March 2022 and the project should be complete by end of July 2022.

2. BACKGROUND

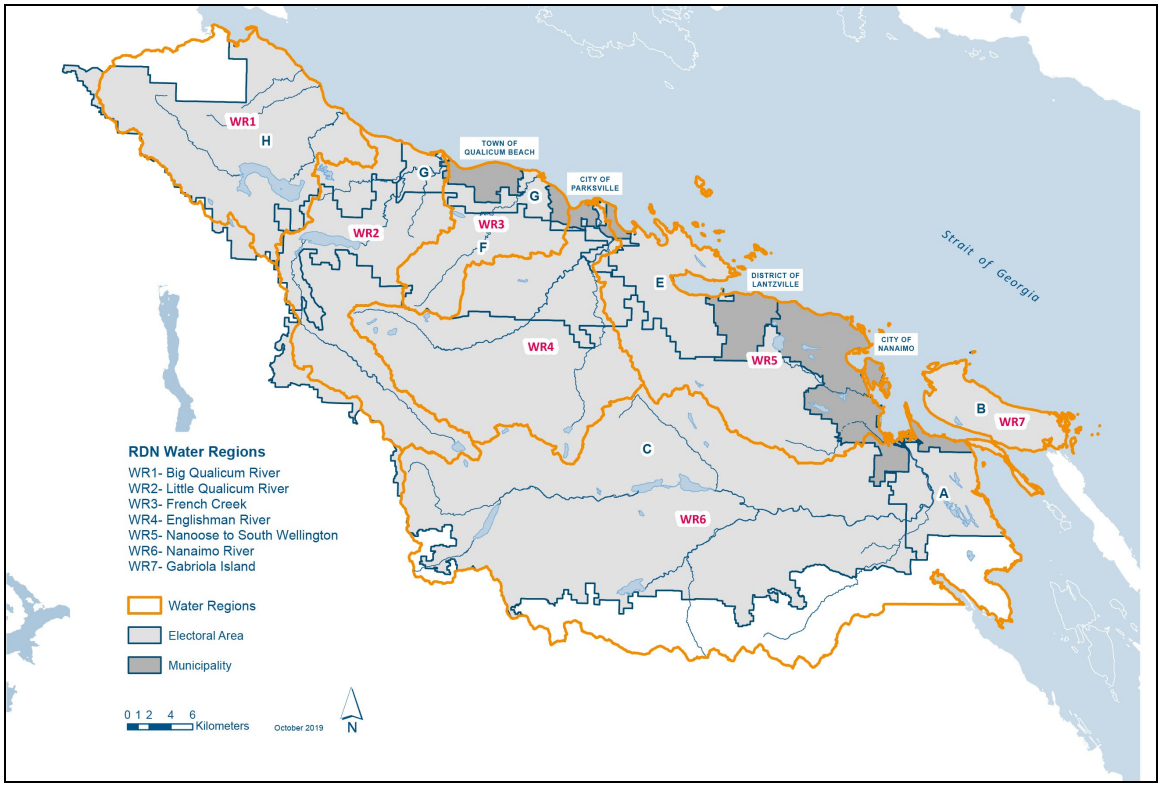


Figure 1: Map of the Regional District of Nanaimo study area

Our region is experiencing increased air and water temperatures, prolonged drought periods, and increased frequency of high intensity rainfall events as a result of climate change. To buffer these extremes, intact and functional riparian areas are required to promote cooler air and water temperatures

in heatwaves, offer water filtration and flood protection during high rainfall events, and provide overall enhanced biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate resilience.

The RDN's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) program has collected surface water quality data through its Community Watershed Monitoring Network for over 10 years. This includes turbidity and temperature data that can indicate where riparian cover may be lacking. Some streams have had physical habitat assessments (Urban Salmon Habitat Program [USHP] surveys) that verify the riparian vegetative extent or lack thereof.

One creekshed (Millstone River) has recently had an Ecological Accounting Process completed for its riparian corridor, assigning a financial valuation of worth to that natural commons asset. Additionally, work is underway in the region to develop rainwater performance targets that help maintain the water balance within our watersheds to mitigate flooding, maintain groundwater recharge, protect water quality and boost climate resilience. Another related ongoing project is a high-level regional inventory of natural assets, being performed by the Municipal Natural Asset Initiative (MNAI).

In order to support watercourse and streamside restoration, the DWWP program currently offers small grants to community groups through the Stewardship Seed Funding initiative. A more comprehensive spatial understanding of priority locations for riparian restoration will guide the application of these funds and others for similar efforts across the region.

The study area is proposed to be the entire region, inclusive of municipalities and Electoral Areas (See Fig. 1). This comprises the upper, middle, and lower watersheds. The analysis should be focused to the major watercourses and smaller watercourses where we have water quality data (approx. 41 watercourses).

It is respectfully recognized that this area is within Coast Salish traditional territory of the K'omoks, Qualicum, Snaw-naw-as, and Snuneymuxw First Nations.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR THIS PROJECT

- **Compile existing data** & **perform primary data collection as required** to map and analyze current functional riparian cover levels across the region's major watercourses.

- **Quantify current riparian cover / vegetative extents in terms of length, width / depth and quality**. Quality should include consideration of vegetation types and diversity, age of stands, height, etc.

- **Present criteria for health / prioritization of areas** based on defensible ecological, geomorphological, cultural, climate change and regulatory parameters, and other parameters as advised.

- **Use that criteria to map areas where the riparian vegetative area is deficient**, to identify priority areas for restoration, enhancement, or improvement.

- **Present the results spatially in a map format as well as tabulated in accompanying tables.** Results should be summarized by both catchment level (watershed / water region) and corridor (watercourse) level, and illustrate current state as well as priority areas for improvements.

- **Create an interactive map tool** to allow decision-makers, practitioners and community members to interact with the results on multiple scales. The interactive map should have the capacity to include relevant supporting data such as water quality monitoring locations, previous restoration sites, fish presence, eagle nest trees, etc.

The project budget is approximately $35,000 & GST.

4. DELIVERABLES AND OUTCOMES

Deliverables

- ✓ **Interactive map tool** that shows the riparian analysis and prioritization, along with all accompanying files.
    - Note: the interactive map tool should be designed and formatted such that ongoing maintenance and updating can be performed by the RDN GIS department once project is complete.
    - The RDN uses Esri ArcGIS, Geocortex and ArcGIS Online and the tool provided as part of this project should be compatible.
- ✓ **Summary report** including map figures, tables, recommendations.
- ✓ **Presentation** of tool to Stewardship Partners (virtually) to demonstrate use and get feedback.

Outcomes

A better overall understanding of the current state of riparian condition at the regional level is achieved thanks to spatial analysis and presentation.

Priority areas for riparian restoration are identified, based on criteria laid out by consultants.

- *Note that site-specific groundtruthing is outside the scope of this project and understood to be a subsequent step when addressing the priority areas.*

An interactive spatial tool helps communicate findings to decision-makers, practitioners and community members, to inform stewardship efforts.

Proposed Timeline

We would like to initiate the project in March 2022, report partial progress to our Technical Advisory Committee in May, receive final deliverables by July and then present to Stewardship Partners so that results might inform possible restoration work to take place within the summer/ fall fish window.

5. REFERENCE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

RDN has the following data layers available to support the spatial analysis:

- Aerial photography (2020, 15cm resolution)
- 2m Digital Elevation Model
- LiDAR data in coastal areas only (approx. 40m inland)
- RAR properties (parcels where riparian assessments have been completed)
- Eagle nest trees
- Water quality monitoring locations (data is stored in provincial EMS database)
- Watercourses (provincial data source; a few stream lines have been adjusted based on Orthophoto interpretation, along with some more recent data from City of Nanaimo)

We expect the consultants to source land cover and vegetation classification data from open Federal and Provincial sources.

There are also a number of reports available that provide important background on surface water quality trends and physical habitat assessments that contain some measure of riparian quality, as follows:

- Surface Water Quality Trend Analysis – RDN Community Watershed Monitoring Network (2011-2017)
- Surface Water Quality Trend Analysis – RDN Community Watershed Monitoring Network (2011-2020)
- Millstone River Ecological Accounting Process – Pilot Project Report 2021
- USHP Stream Surveys:
    - Haslam Creek 2010
    - French Creek 2015
    - Grandon Creek 2015
    - Holden Creek 2016
    - Millstone River 2016
    - Annie Creek 2017
    - Cat Stream 2017
    - Morison Creek 2018

6. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

To assist in receiving similar and relevant information, and to ensure your Proposal receives fair evaluation, the RDN asks Proponents to provide the following information.

Please include with your proposal:

a) Corporate background, history, and areas of expertise;
b) Curriculum vitae of key project team members, reasons why they were selected for this project and demonstrate how they will add value to the project;
c) Layout the plan to accomplish the project including timelines and key milestones;
d) What suggestions does your firm have to add value to the project?
e) Describe how your firm will monitor the project progression and provide regular status reports;
f) Identify challenges, constraints and obstacles in the project and advise strategy to minimize;
g) Describe your quality management process and any certifications;
h) Comprehensive, proposed fee, in Canadian Dollars, in a Schedule of Effort Table, identifying all project contributors, their per hour charge out rates, itemizing individual tasks, hours and all disbursements including travel.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following basis 60% Technical, 40% Financial.

The lowest price proposal will receive full marks. Other proposals will receive reduced scores based on the proportion higher than the lowest price. i.e. Score = Min Cost/Cost x Fee Points.

Proposals submitted should be in enough detail to allow the RDN to determine the Proponent's qualifications and capabilities from the documents received. The selection committee, formed at the RDN's sole discretion, will score the Proposals in accordance with the criteria provided.

The RDN may evaluate proposals on a comparative basis by comparing one proponent's proposal to another proponent's proposal. The RDN reserves the right to not complete a detailed evaluation if the RDN concludes the proposal is materially incomplete or, irregular or contain any financial or commercial terms that are unacceptable to the RDN.

The selection committee may proceed with an award recommendation or the RDN may proceed to negotiate with the highest evaluated proponent with the intent of developing an agreement. If the parties after having bargained in good faith are unable to conclude a formal agreement, the RDN and the Proponent will be released without penalty or further obligations other than any surviving obligations regarding confidentiality and the RDN may, at its discretion, contact the Proponent of the next best rated Proposal and attempt to conclude a formal agreement with it, and so on until a contract is concluded or the proposal process is cancelled.

The RDN reserves the right to award the assignment in whole or in part or to add or delete any portion of the work. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluation committee may seek additional clarification on any aspect of the Proposal to verify or clarify the information provided and conduct any background investigation and/or seek any additional information it considers necessary.

7. GENERAL CONDITIONS

7.1 No Contract

By submitting a Request for Proposal and participating in the process as outlined in this RFP, proponents expressly agree that no contract of any kind is formed until a fully executed contract is in place.

7.2 Privilege Clause

The lowest or any proposal may not necessarily be accepted.

7.3 Acceptance and Rejection of Submissions

This RFP does not commit the RDN, in any way to select a preferred Proponent, or to proceed to negotiate a contract, or to award any contract. The RDN reserves the right in its sole discretion to cancel this RFP, up until award, for any reason whatsoever.

The RDN may accept or waive a minor and inconsequential irregularity, or where applicable to do so, the RDN may, as a condition of acceptance of the Submission, request a Proponent to correct a minor or inconsequential irregularity with no change in the Submission.

7.4 Conflict of Interest

Proponents shall disclose in their Proposals any actual or potential Conflict of Interest and existing business relationships it may have with the RDN, its elected officials, appointed officials or employees.

7.5 Solicitation of Board Members and RDN Staff

Proponents and their agents will not contact any member of the RDN Board or RDN Staff with respect to this RFP, other than the RDN Contact named in this document.

7.6 Litigation Clause

The RDN may, in its absolute discretion, reject a Proposal submitted by Proponent, if the Proponent, or any officer or director of the Proponent is or has been engaged either directly or indirectly through another corporation in legal action against the RDN, its elected or appointed officers and employees in relation to:

(a) any other contract for works or services; or
(b) any matter arising from the RDN's exercise of its powers, duties, or functions under the Local Government Act, Community Charter or another enactment within five years of the date of this Call for Proposals.

In determining whether to reject a Proposal under this clause, the RDN will consider whether the litigation is likely to affect the Proponent's ability to work with the RDN, its consultants and representatives and whether the RDN's experience with the Proponent indicates that the RDN is likely to incur increased staff and legal costs in the administration of this Contract if it is awarded to the Proponent.

7.7 Exclusion of Liability

Proponents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing and submitting a Proposal and for any meetings, negotiations, or discussions with the RDN. The RDN will not be liable to any Proponent for any claims, whether for costs, expense, losses or damages, or loss of anticipated profits, or for any other matter whatsoever, incurred by the Proponent in preparing and submitting a Proposal, or participating in negotiations for a Contract, or other activity related to or arising out of this RFP. Except as expressly and specifically permitted in these Instructions to Proponents, no Proponent shall have any claim for compensation of any kind whatsoever, as a result of participating in this RFP, and by submitting a Proposal each Proponent shall be deemed to have agreed that it has no claim.

7.8 Ownership of Proposals

All Proposals, including attachments and any documentation, submitted to and accepted by the RDN in response to this RFP become the property of the RDN.

7.9 Freedom of Information

All submissions will be held in confidence by the RDN. The RDN is bound by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (British Columbia) and all documents submitted to the RDN will be subject to provisions of this legislation. The successful vendor and value of the award is routinely released.