REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (RFSQ) No. 23-049

DATE:	August 17, 2023
Project Title:	**MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE FOR MOUNT BENSON REGIONAL PARK**

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) invites qualified and experienced firms to submit Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) to prepare a management plan update for Mount Benson Regional Park.

A. Intent

This Request for Statements of Qualifications (RFSQ) is issued to determine the most qualified and experienced service provider that can meet the Regional District of Nanaimo's requirements, expectations, and timeline.

The RDN will review submissions received in response to this RFSQ and enter into discussions with the top-ranked respondent to negotiate the terms, scope, timeline, and cost based on the actual scope of work required (the Work). Should these negotiations fail to result in a contract for the Work, the RDN may then elect to negotiate with the next highest ranked service provider and so on until an agreement is reached or the process cancelled.

In any event, the RDN shall not be bound to enter a contract with any Respondent to this RFSQ and, at its sole discretion, may elect to collapse this process.

B. Background

Mount Benson Regional Park (MBRP) was acquired in 2006, in partnership with Nanaimo and Area Land Trust Society (NALT). As part of the contribution agreement between the RDN and NALT, the RDN committed to work with NALT on a park conservation covenant and management planning. The intent of the MBRP Conservation Covenant is to protect, preserve, conserve, and maintain wildlife habitats and ecologically sensitive areas of the land, while permitting use of the land for regional park purposes in accordance with the management plan as amended from time to time.

A ten-year management plan for Mount Benson Regional Park was completed by the RDN and NALT and officially approved by the RDN Board in 2010. The plan outlines 25 management policies, and 24 action items and identifies Natural Environment and Conservation Zones that represent development and activity types and locations throughout the park. A five-year review

of the management plan was completed in 2015 by NALT and RDN in accordance with plan policy. The review findings and plan updates were approved by the RDN Board in 2015.

In 2022 the RDN acquired two new land parcels adjacent to the east edge of the park, adding 78.9 hectares of land to the park. The management plan update will also investigate recreation and conservation opportunities for these new lands.

The management plan update will review and build on existing policy and plan direction from the 2010-2020 Mount Benson Regional Park Management Plan, address emerging issues, and provide direction for the newly acquired parcels.

The 2022-2032 RDN Parks and Trails Strategy identified new goals and actions related to the planning of regional parks. The management plan update should support implementation of these new goals and actions.

C. Contemplated Scope of Work and Timeline

The scope of work may include the following:

- Plan and conduct a public and stakeholder engagement process to determine if the existing management vision, principles, goals, policies, and actions should be revised, and if new policies or actions should be created. All policies and actions must comply with the terms of the NALT Conservation Covenant.
- Advise on innovative approaches to engaging First Nations. RDN staff will facilitate the engagement activities. This engagement will seek to understand the Indigenous context of the land within and surrounding the park, and may explore opportunities for managing cultural heritage features, developing interpretive signage and educational programming, and accommodating indigenous cultural uses within the park.
- Determine new management policies and actions to support the goals and actions of the 2022-2032 RDN Parks and Trails Strategy, which includes:
    - increasing collaboration with First Nations on park planning and interpretation
    - prioritizing sensitive ecosystem preservation
    - enhancing trail connections
    - identifying park amenities for all ages and abilities
    - increasing volunteer stewardship programming
    - improving educational programming and activities
    - considering invasive species and wildfire risk

- Conduct a field assessment of the two land parcels recently added to the park. Identify sensitive ecosystems and conservation values and recommend options for restoration of disturbed areas.
- Conduct a trail assessment of the entire park and provide recommendations on existing and proposed trails. Identify a trail connection through the newly acquired parcels from Westwood Lake Park in the City of Nanaimo to the summit of Mount Benson.
- Review and update park management zones based on field assessments and public engagement results.

Public Engagement Program

The RDN's Public Consultation Policy A1.23 measures a successful project as one that provides for meaningful and on-going public involvement. A key role of the consultant is to develop, lead and interpret a community engagement process that contributes to the project's objectives. The public engagement process must use a varied approach to obtaining input to maximize participation. Engagement with First Nations will be based on the principles of cultural awareness, adaptability, accountability and building reciprocal relationships.

Expected Outcome of the Management Plan Update

The updated management plan must deliver a prioritized set of goals and actions that will provide the RDN with guidelines for planning, decision-making, and management of Mount Benson Regional Park for the next ten years.

The Consultant will provide a complete electronic copy of the management plan, including any appended materials, as well as pdf copies of public engagement materials. The Management Plan and any supporting reports or materials provided will become the property of, and for the sole use of, the RDN.

Timeline

The following is the proposed schedule for the development of the Management Plan Update:

August 2023	RFSQ for Project Consultant issued
September 2023	Submissions review and award of contract
October 2023	Consultant's project work is underway
Nov. 2023 – July 2024	Consultant's project work continues Development of draft management plan

	Public and Stakeholder engagement underway
August 2024	Completion of final draft management plan
September 2024	Management Plan draft to RDN Board for approval. Presentation to board by RDN staff.

Reference Information

Existing plans and documents will be used as the foundation for the Plan to ensure a coordinated, consistent approach. Some of the supporting documents are listed below:

- Mount Benson Regional Park 2010-2020 Management Plan
- Mount Benson Trail Network Map (attached)
- Mount Benson Regional Park Conservation Covenant (will be provided to successful consultant)
- NALT Covenant Site Monitoring Reports (will be provided to successful consultant)
- Map of Mount Benson Regional Park and Benson View Regional Trail
- RDN Parks and Trails Strategy 2022-2032
- RDN Public Engagement Policy A1.23
- RDN Public Engagement Strategy & Toolkit (will be provided to successful consultant)

D. Statement of Qualifications and Evaluation

The statement of qualifications should be no longer than ten (10) single sided pages in length (not including cover page, cover letter and appendices). Please include the following:

- Explanation of your understanding of the project.
- Qualifications, ability, and experience of your firm with similar projects, including 3 references from within the past 5 years of other Park Management Plan projects the consultant has completed, preferably in a Regional District setting.
- A list of key personnel outlining their experience and role. Please include CV/Resume of the Project Manager and explain how this individual will provide value for the RDN.
- Experience of your firm and project manager on parks and trails projects involving:
    - Collaboration with First Nations on parks planning and interpretive planning
    - Trail network planning in mountain environments
    - Sensitive ecosystem preservation

    - Park amenities for all ages and abilities
    - Invasive species management
    - Wildfire risk management
- A list of key sub-consultants (if applicable), including their company and staff experience specifically related to their role.
- A statement of your ability to complete the work within the timeframe described.
- A statement of your firm's approach to advancing equity and sustainability in corporate operations and service provisions, including any certifications in this regard.

Statements of Qualifications (the "SOQ") will be evaluated by the Regional District of Nanaimo on a consensus basis and assigned a score out of 100 based on the above evaluation criteria. Any or all SOQs will not necessarily be accepted.

Level of Effort and Budget

The RDN has allocated $70,000.00 + GST for the completion of the management plan update, including all fees, expenses, sub-contractors, and consultation.

E. Submission Date and Time

SOQs should be submitted electronically in pdf format by 3:00:00 p.m. local time on the 14th day of September 2023. The RDN reserves the right to accept late submissions.

F. Questions and Submissions

Questions and submissions shall be directed to:

Jonathan Behnke
Regional Parks Planner
Recreation and Parks Services
Regional District of Nanaimo
jbehnke@rdn.bc.ca

Deadline for questions is five (5) business days before the closing date.

G. Addendums

If the RDN determines that additional information is required, the RDN will post an Addendum on the RDN (www.rdn.bc.ca/current-bid-opportunities) and the new BC Bid (www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/) websites. It is the sole responsibility of interested vendors to check for additional information prior to submitting their response.

Mt Benson Trail Network (as GPSd)

Harrow Road
Witchcraft Lake
KILPATRICK RD
BENSON VIEW RD
RIDGEPOINT DR
ARBOT RD
BENSON VIEW BLVD
Westwood Lake
CITY OF NANAIMO
Benson View Regional Trail
wakesian
outer bypass
basket case
doubletrack
cts
pink unicorn
Pili's Way
Old Road Trail
Gordie's Trail
Fossil Trail
Rafe's Way
Ridge Trail
Cougar Bluff Loop
Mount Benson Regional Park
Gail's Trail
Rocky Road Trail
Te'tuxwtun Trail
1019m
ELECTORAL AREA C
2931
2935
2915
2940
2910
2900
2880
2840
2658
2645
2800
2640
2765
800m
600m
400m
500m
600m
900m
800m
700m
200m
300m
300m

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

Bridge Point
Garbage Can
Parking
NMBC Signposted Trails
RDN Trail
Other Recreational Trail
RDN Trail (Internal Only)
Gravel Road
Regional Park / Trail
City of Nanaimo Parkland
SRW / Easement
Electoral Area Boundary

0 100 200 300 400 Meters

1:12,500

August 2023

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