REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (RFSQ) No. 23-054

DATE:	August 4, 2023
Project Title:	**Regional District of Nanaimo Parks Biodiversity Plan**

The Regional District of Nanaimo invites qualified and experienced firms to submit Statements of Qualifications to develop a Parks Biodiversity Plan. The plan will consist of an inventory of Regional and Community Park biodiversity concerns, detailed action plans guiding restoration efforts, and formation of a monitoring program to evaluate the success of restoration and emerging biodiversity problems. The plan must consider the goals of the 2022 Parks and Trails Strategy as well as RDN Parks Staff capacity and budget limitations.

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 Regional District of Nanaimo will review submissions received in response to this RFSQ and enter 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 Regional District of Nanaimo 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 Regional District of Nanaimo 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

The RDN Parks portfolio is comprised of over 200 Regional and Community parks which includes a range of amenities, hiking and recreation trails, conservation areas and undeveloped parcels of land. Spread across seven electoral areas, these parks have diverse user groups and unique environmental challenges.

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Parks and Trails Strategy (2022) supports the development of an invasive species management plan for Regional and Community parks, stating

that “an invasive species management plan will offer a step-by-step process to begin to tackle invasive species management and restoration within both regional and community parks.”

The proposed Parks Biodiversity Plan (PBP) incorporates the objectives of an invasive species management plan, with an expanded scope of improving biodiversity and restoration of natural areas. The PBP will align with biodiversity-related goals under the RDN’s Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Action Plan (2020), including facilitating and/or supporting regional initiatives that protect, manage, and restore ecosystems and the overall health and function of our watersheds and aquifers.

To date, invasive species management and restoration initiatives have been limited by the capacity of RDN parks operations staff. The RDN works with community groups and ecological societies who volunteer their time to support biodiversity improvement through invasive species removal, planting, research, and monitoring. The PBP action plans should recognize and support volunteer relationships.

C. Contemplated Scope of Work and Timeline

Anticipated scope of work for the RDN Parks Biodiversity Plan is described below:

- **Conduct an inventory** of the status of invasive species impacting biodiversity in RDN Parks Natural Areas and classify parks into management categories;
    - Individualized – unique strategies needed for areas of sensitivity or interest;
    - Restore and Enhance – management designed to eradicate and restore;
    - Manage and Control – strategies aimed at controlling current infestations and preventing future spread;
    - Monitor and Track – monitoring strategies for infestations impossible to eradicate or control, poor access areas, or areas with no known invasive issues.
- **Develop achievable action plans** for each management category, which are reflective of both parks’ goals, future budgets, and staffing capacity. Some parks may receive individualized action plans to manage unique and complex issues. Action plans may include recommendations on opportunities for public education or volunteerism. Action plans must align with relevant RDN Strategies and initiatives (i.e., Drinking Water and Watershed Protection 10 Year Action Plan, RDN Energy and Climate Change Plans);
- **Develop and implement of a monitoring and tracking program** to capture restoration activities and progress, emerging problems, and evaluation of newly acquired parklands.

Anticipated deliverables of the Parks Biodiversity Plan include:

- Comprehensive report outlining results of inventory, action plans, and monitoring program in PDF and editable format including relevant maps and imagery;
- Anticipated timeline and budget for action plan items both financial and staff / volunteer effort
- Inventory data collection sheets and photos shared in MS Excel or database format (see Appendix 1 and 2 for example data collection sheet and database template);
- All spatial data shared in. gdb, .kml, .kmz or agreed upon format;
- Delivery and orientation of monitoring and tracking system.

Expected start date: September 8, 2023
Expected completion date: December 31, 2023

Budget funds available: $50,000 plus GST

D. Statement of Qualifications and Evaluation

The statement of qualifications should be no longer than ten (10) single sided pages in length (including cover page and appendices). Please include the following:

- Qualifications and areas expertise of the Firm and nominated Project Manager. Please include CV/Resume of the Project Manager and explain how this individual will provide value for the RDN. Describe your Firm's approach to work;
- Experience of Firm and nominated Project Manager in previous relevant work. Provide short descriptions and references of similar projects and assignments completed by both the Firm and nominated Project Manager;
- Explanation of your firm's ability and experience utilizing technology to support with data collection and analysis (e.g., use of drone imagery, LiDAR, spectral analysis, open-source data) as well as any other value-added services;
- A statement of your firm's ability to complete the work within the period 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.

E. Submission Date & Time

Statements of Qualifications must be received on or before 3:00:00 p.m. local time on the 1st day of September 2023 . Late submissions will not be accepted.

F. Questions and Submissions

Questions and submissions should be directed to:

Kaitlin Fader, Parks Operations Coordinator – Natural Areas
kfader@rdn.bc.ca
250-248-4744

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.

H. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Example RDN Parks Data Collection Sheet

Appendix 2 – Example RDN Parks Data Entry Template

RDN Parks Invasive Species Data Collection Sheet

Date Collected: Polygon Number:

Park Name: Data collector:

Coordinates (at centre of polygon): Field Verified? Yes / No

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Top Priority (4)	Notes
Park Location Type	**Undeveloped/ non-public** parcel, remote parks	**Very small, less popular** community parks, strip parks/breezeways	**Developed parks, newly acquired parks.** Parks with joint interest with other organizations	**Most popular parks**, parks with active volunteers, Regional Parks, parks with invasive obligations (part of development permits)	**Please Describe:**
Species Present	**Abundant common invasives** (Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom, large amounts of Ivy)	**Common invasives, less abundant** (Daphne, Holly, Ivy (Small quantities), Garden escapees (Lamium, clematis, grapes, wisteria etc.)	**Listed noxious weeds that are not dangerous to people** (Knotweed, knapweed, hawkweed, shiny geranium etc)	**High Priority** (Early detection, Rapid Response and Priority Invasive Species, Dangerous to humans)	**List Species:**
Potential for restoration	**Removal not possible**, Monitoring and maintenance only	**Tough to remove**, will take repeated treatments, long term monitoring, significant cost to plant, regularly vandalized/dumping	**Easy to remove with only a few treatments** (Easily removed and/or replanted, success expected)	**Easy to remove, only one treatment needed**, only short term monitoring required	
Restoration Type	**Pesticides/ Severe site desturbance**	**Excavation, refill and planting**	**Pulling and planting**	**Manual removal Only**	**Please note any alternative treatments possible:**
Percent Cover (List more in notes if multiple plants present)	**75-100**	**50-75**	**25-50**	**0-25**	
Native Plants Impacted	**None impacted**	**Even mix of Native/Invasive**	**Predominatly invasive**	**Special Plant Communities at Risk** (Red/Blue listed species, unique plants, culturally significant plants)	**List Species:**
Proximity to Values (Nature reserve, park, view point etc)	**No nearby values**	**Values nearby but not affected**	**Values present, minimal or potential damage** (Ivy clinging to walls, blackberry encroaching on trail)	**Significant Damage** (hogweed, knotweed infiltrating water, flag iris impeding drainage, etc.)	
How long has this plant been present?	**Legacy plant** (Has been problematic for decades)	**Well established** (has been present for several years)	**Observed more than 1 growing season** (only noticed a handful of instances)	**First time observation or first season growth**	
Does this plant contribute to fire hazard?	**Not at all** (herbaceous plant in wet environment)	**Probably Not** (herbaceous/ deciduous plants in low fire hazard area)	**Maybe** (semi woody plants in forested environments, evidence of recreation fire use in the area)	**Probably yes. (Scotch broom, gorse, dry woody debris, near emergency route**	
Has this polygon been treated before?	**Never Treated**	**Probably not** (or more than 7 years)	**A long time ago** (3 to 7 years)	**Recent** (within last 3 years)	**Please describe previous treatment:**
Complaints?	**Never reported**	**Reported a long time ago**	**Recent report**	**Frequent regular reports/ Particular public interest**	
External Funding for project?	**No**			**Yes**	
TOTAL					

Park Name	Polygon Number	Date Collected	Leading Invasive	Total Park area (ha)	Invasive polygon area (ha)	Field Verified (Y/N)	Archaeology? (Y/N)	Last inspection/ treatment	Priority Matrix Value	Management Category (Rx)	Link to Data collection sheet	Link to Photos	Link to KMZ
Beachcomber RP	Beach01	29-Mar-23	DAPLAU	10	5	y	y	10-Jan-23	26	Restore	hyperlink	hyperlink	hyperlink
Beachcomber RP	Beach02	30-Mar-23	ILEAQU	10	0.5	y	y	11-Jan-23	20	Maintain	hyperlink	hyperlink	hyperlink
Beachcomber RP	Beach03	31-Mar-23	HEDHEL	10	4.5	y	y	12-Jan-23	15	Maintain	hyperlink	hyperlink	hyperlink