

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR
MADERA COUNTY WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
RFP 2020-01**

ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the intent of the Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources to secure a qualified firm/professional to develop economic structure to create conservation incentives to set land aside for less-water-intensive agricultural uses, dry land farming, or retiring the land for a short or long duration.

DATE OF ADVERTISEMENT: Monday, March 2, 2020

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTAL: Friday, March 20, 2020

1. PROJECT INFORMATION:

BACKGROUND:

Madera County has been referred to as “ground zero” for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The amount of historical overdraft for the County as a whole is estimated at 260,000 acre-feet per year. Of the historical overdraft of 260,000 acre feet per year, at least 160,000 acre-feet per year is attributed to the Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies due to the lack of surface water supply. By obtaining conservation incentives to set land aside for less-water-intensive agricultural uses, dry land farming, or retiring the land for a short or long duration - existing and future water supplies could be used more efficiently and groundwater recharge would be promoted while still ensuring the land remains productive. Madera County has received a grant for a two year study in the amount of \$200,000.00 to conduct the study.

2. PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK:

The proposed planning project would explore the feasibility of adopting an agricultural conservation incentive process within Madera County with the goal of developing two primary items:

- 1) A criteria for identifying and prioritizing agricultural land for its potential to be temporarily rested (not used as irrigated farmland), permanently retired, or retired and restored, and when appropriate, permanently protected.
- 2) An incentive program structured for resting, retiring, restoring, or protecting land via various types of water-centric conservation easements.

Criteria anticipated to be developed by this planning project to identify and prioritize specific parcels of land would include, but are not limited to, weighted rankings that take into account access to surface supplies for recharge (i.e. proximity to canals or to the Eastside/Chowchilla bypass for flood flows), soil quality, water quality, and threat of development/sprawl. Criteria will also be used to prioritize, and subsequently incentivize, the transition of currently-irrigated land with unreliable water supplies, to un-irrigated (rangeland) use, row crops, dry land farming, or permanent crops with lower watering needs, and in some cases, restoration opportunities.

After a series of discussions with local natural resource, conservation, and agricultural organizations, Madera County envisions the development of three (3) types of potential timeframe-based conservation incentives:

- 1) The County would pay an established rate to landowners to temporarily rest their land on a year-by-year basis as the County's Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) transition toward sustainability. These agreements may be of greatest interest to landowners managing permanent crops at the end of their productive life that would like to consider re-planting.
- 2) Create temporary land use restriction/rest contracts ranging from 5-10 years. These contracts may be of greatest interest to farmers considering re-planting and who are at or nearing the end of a generation of farming.
- 3) Permanent easements (in perpetuity) to prevent conversion of land use to development, abandonment, or other uses not consistent with County SGMA goals and Department of Conservation goals.

Additionally, Madera County envisions five (5) categories of land that could be considered:

- 1) Unirrigated land that is currently in use as grazed rangeland and could be incentivized to remain as such via perpetual conservation easement (that would not permit farming);
- 2) Irrigated land that could become unirrigated and dry land farmed;
- 3) Irrigated land that could be restored to rangeland;
- 4) Irrigated farmland that the County wants to remain as sustainable irrigated farmland, especially with prime farmland soils and,
- 5) Unirrigated or irrigated land that is in danger of being lost to development and urban sprawl.

3. Work Plan

Work Plan Summary

High Level Task/Detailed Sub-Task (with Deliverables)	Responsible Party/Parties (City, County, Consultant, etc.)	Timetable (Length of time to complete, targeted date of completion, and identify dependent tasks)	Estimated Cost (Specify if from SALC or from Match)
Task1: Collaborative Outreach <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task A Conduct meetings with community groups <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task B Create a summary of feedback from community groups as a basis for recommendations.	County, Consultant	3 months	\$30,000 from grant; \$10,000 from match
Task 2: Create a map of relevant layers for land prioritization <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task A Inventory existing layers of GIS data <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task B Create map with layers of GIS data	County, Consultant	3 months	\$60,000 from grant; \$10,000 from match
Task 3: Create criteria for land ranking and fee structure <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task A Create system for ranking land <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task B Create incentive structures	Consultant	3 months	\$60,000 from grant; \$10,000 from match
Task 4: Collaborative Outreach <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task A Conduct meetings with community groups to share ranking and incentive structures <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task B Create a summary of second round of feedback from community groups as a basis for recommendations.	County, Consultant	3 months	\$30,000 from grant; \$10,000 from match
Task 5: Completion of final plan <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task A Draft plan <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task B Present plan at Board of Supervisors Meeting	County, Consultant	3 months	\$20,000 from grant; \$10,000 from match

<input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Task C Adopt Resolution signed by board			
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4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ NARRATIVE OF TASKS

Task 1: This task represents an initial collaborative phase of stakeholder work. This phase includes conducting meetings at existing community meetings, including the Farm Bureau, Madera Agricultural Water Association, Fairmead & Friends, Madera Chowchilla Conservation District and the Regional Water Management Group. In these meetings, the initial concepts of both land prioritization, as well as an incentive structure, would be proposed and discussed. At the end of this phase, the consultant would create a summary document of reactions and recommendations.

Task 2: This task involves the creation of a map of related layers. The first part of this task is to conduct an inventory of existing layers and the second part is the creation of the map with existing or able-to-be created layers. Layers proposed for the map would include soil type and ability to recharge, access to surface supplies of water, and prime farmland.

Task 3: This task will involve the creation of criteria for land ranking as well as the fee structure. In order to create the land ranking criteria, the consultant should have the map layers finalized. In the most likely scenario, a point system will be established to award points for quality of soil, farmland, ability to recharge, etc. This criteria would then lead to development of incentive structures that would most likely involve the evaluation of multiple structures.

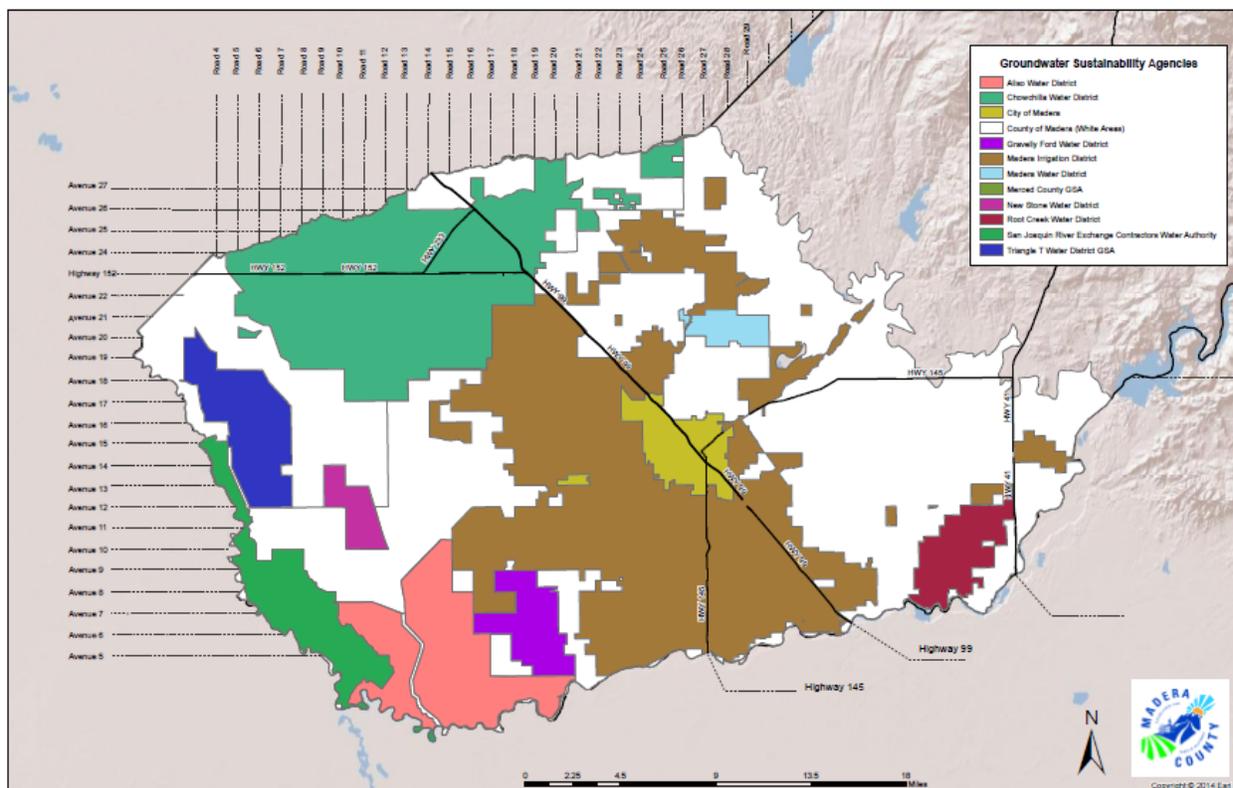
Task 4: This task involves the presentation of the criteria for land ranking and fee structure to the same community groups consulted in Task 1. The feedback would be summarized and incorporated into the final design, if at all possible.

Task 5: This task represents the completion of the draft plan, which includes circulating the draft plan for review by staff as well as a presentation to the Madera County Board of Supervisors and passage of a resolution of acceptance.

5. PROJECT LOCATION

The grant priority areas will be the County of Madera Responsibility Areas. These are mostly referred to as the “White Areas” are in all three Subbasins: Chowchilla, Madera, and Delta Mendota.

Figure 1. Project Area Map (Location of Madera County “White Areas”)



6. SCHEDULE

Work Plan Schedule

(schedule subject to change)

	High Level Task	Start Date	End Date
1	Collaborative Outreach	04/01/2020	06/30/2020
2	Create a map of relevant layers for land prioritization	07/01/2020	09/30/2020
3	Create criteria for land ranking and fee structure	10/01/2020	12/31/2020
4	Collaborative Outreach	01/01/2020	03/31/2020
5	Completion of Final Plan	04/01/2020	06/30/2020

7. ELIGIBILITY

1. In addition to other requirements stated in this document, to be eligible to respond to this RFQ, the Consultant must have successfully completed, within the past three years, similar projects and services to those in this RFQ. Each Consultant shall meet all legal, technical, and professional requirements for providing the requested services.

2. The County reserves the right to make investigations of the Consultants' qualifications or any of its sub-consultants, to contact former employers or clients to confirm qualifications as it deems appropriate.
3. Proposals are to be concise and include only those items that are relevant to the Project Scope.
4. Only one firm shall be identified as the Primary Consultant for each Response. If other firms are part of the same Response, they shall be identified as sub-consultants. A Primary Consultant shall not be a part of any other team as a sub-consultant. Sub-consultants can join any number of Primary consultants submitting a Response to this RFQ.
5. All sealed Proposal packages must be received at the at the Department of Water and Natural Resources, Third Floor, (Public Works & Environmental Health Office) 200 W. 4th Street, Madera, CA 93637, on **March 20, 2020 by 3:00 p.m. PDT**. All Responses received after the due date and time will be returned to the Consultant unopened.

8. QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

1. Written requests regarding information or clarification in reference to this RFQ must be submitted, in writing, within the timeframe identified. Include the project number with each question. Send all questions by e-mail by **March 13, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.** Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) to:
 2. Jeannie Habben
Madera County
Department of Water & Natural Resources
E-mail : jeannie.habben@maderacounty.com
3. Consultants must clearly understand that the only official answer or position of the County will be the one stated in writing. Questions seeking clarification or interpretation of the RFQ must be made in writing via email to the contact persons listed above. No inquiries received after the deadline will be considered. The question asked, along with any written response made thereto by the County, will be distributed as an amendment to the RFQ to all the persons on the bidders list. However, the County is not obligated to respond to any question asked, and the County's failure to respond to any such question will not relieve the Consultants of any obligations or conditions imposed by this RFQ. Written response to the questions will be issued as an amendment no later than seven (7) calendar days before the Proposal due date.
4. If the County finds it necessary to add to, or amend this document prior to the Response submittal deadline, the County will issue written addenda/addendum after the Meeting and distribute it to all the persons on the bidders list. Each Consultant must acknowledge receipt of each addendum by signing the acknowledgement and providing it with its Response.

5. The County shall keep a record of the proposers list. To be on the County's proposers list please contact:

Jeannie Habben
Madera County
Department of Water & Natural Resources
E-mail : jeannie.habben@maderacounty.com

9. FEES AND INSURANCE

Proposals shall include estimated fees (in a separate, sealed envelope) to complete the project as described under Project Scope:

1. Estimated fees must include all labor, materials, equipment, professional services, insurance, travel, profit, and all other costs and expenses for the proposed project.
2. Submit an itemized fee schedule as a basis for all proposed services and any extra services not included in item (a) above, if applicable.
3. Insurance coverage for proposed services shall include general liability and property damage insurance that shall include automobile liability insurance in a combined single limit of not less than \$1 million dollars. Professional Liability Insurance (E&O) coverage of \$1 million is also required.
4. The selected firm shall provide within ten (10) calendar days after the notice of award is issued a copy of their existing liability insurance certificate naming the County of Madera and its officers and employees as an additionally named insured on said policies. Such insurance coverage shall be maintained in full force and effect for the duration of the Contract and must be in a form satisfactory to the County.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

1. All sealed Proposal packages must be received at the Front desk in the Department of Water and Natural Resources, 4th Floor, 200 West 4th Street, Madera, CA 93637, on **March 20, 2018 by 3:00 p.m.** PDT. All Responses received after the due date and time will be returned to the Consultant unopened.
2. Each consultant shall submit one (1) original of each Response, and one (1) electronic copy in PDF. The sections shall follow the order given below. No material other than that listed in this Section shall be included in the Response.

3. Cover Letter – A cover letter (limited to two pages) indicating the interest in providing the services to the County and a statement on why the consultant should be selected for the award. The letter shall include the name of the Prime Consultant and any sub-consultant.
4. Table of Contents – A one-page table of contents identifying the sections and page numbers.
5. Organization Chart – A one-page, proposed organization chart identifying key professionals and sub-consultants, and their area(s) of responsibility.
6. Qualifications – Up to five (5) pages, for resumes of the persons, including the Project Manager, Economist, and a Registered Civil Engineer that will be assigned to the project. The resumes shall include a description of projects providing services similar to those identified in the scope of services, and will identify individuals' roles and responsibilities on those projects.
7. Project Understanding and Approach – Up to ten (10) pages, summary of the approach to be taken for the project. A definitive work program and schedule, including schedule for completion of the major milestones. Identify and include all tasks not under Consultant's control, and provide estimated times based upon prior experience. List any information and tasks expected from the County. Any information or tasks needed but not listed is the responsibility of the winning bidder.
8. Project Experience, Success and References – Up to five (5) pages, a description of projects providing services similar to those identified in the scope of services. The emphasis shall be given to the projects in California AND the tasks performed by the persons identified in the Response. Include in the project descriptions (a) the length of the contract; (b) the scope of services provided; (c) the type of contract (pro bono, retainer, project-based fee, other); (d) specific accomplishments, if any; and (e) a contact name, phone number and e-mail address for each client to serve as a reference. If the consultant team includes sub-consultant(s), there must be at least one project for each sub-consultant.
9. Sealed Fee Proposal – The fee proposal shall be enclosed in a separate, sealed, envelope identified as *"Fee Proposal Madera County RFQ 2020-00 WNR DEPT."*
10. All costs for preparation of proposals shall be borne by the proposer.

11. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

1. The County will select one firm for the outlined Scope of Service on the basis of qualifications and experience. Designated staff of the County will conduct a review and evaluation of all proposals and may, if necessary, invite proposers to interview. The County will review and evaluate proposals against the following criteria:

#	Description	Points
1	Qualifications: Do the qualifications of key personnel to be assigned to working on the Project Scope demonstrate sufficient experience and expertise?	25
2	Understanding and Approach: Based on the information provided and other available information, does the proposer understand the needs and goals and the obligation to minimize costs while at the same time achieving optimum results?	30
3	Project Experience and Success: Has the proposing firm demonstrated that they, or the staff assigned to the engagement, successfully completed services, similar to those specified in the Project Scope section of this RFQ?	25
4	References: Are the firm's references from past clients and associates favorable?	20

2. County staff will review the proposals and select the one that they believe is most advantageous to the County, prior to opening the fee proposal envelope.
3. The County may elect to conduct an oral presentation/interview of the shortlisted firms. In which case, the three (3) highest ranking proposals will be short listed and invited to an oral presentation/interview. Additional details on the oral presentations will be provided to the short-listed Consultants.
4. The fee proposal will be used as a basis for negotiations with the selected Consultant of a final scope of work and proposed fee arrangement. If no acceptable arrangement can be negotiated, the County may terminate talks with the highest-ranked Consultant and initiate negotiations with the next-ranked Consultant, and so forth until a final agreement is reached. This agreement will then be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for approval.
5. The County reserves the right to award the consultant service contract to the firm that, in the sole judgment of the County, can best accomplish the desired results. Selection criteria include, but are not limited to, consideration of the Consultant's qualifications and experience, the Consultant's understanding of and approach to the project, and the negotiated fee for services.
6. This request does not constitute an offer of employment or to contract for services.
7. The County reserves the option to reject any or all proposals received in response to this request for Proposals, wholly or in part.
8. The County reserves the right to retain all proposals, whether selected or rejected.

9. The successful Consultant will be expected to enter into a contract of substantially the same format as the attached sample form.

12. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

A copy of the County's Master Contract template is attached (Attachment A) for review. It is expected that the proposer will be required to comply with the terms of the template agreement including all insurance and indemnity provisions. The County reserves the right to modify the attached Standard Template as it deems appropriate.

Attachments

Attachment A: Madera County's Professional Services Agreement

Attachment B: SALC Planning Grant Application