



Request for Contract Agronomist Qualifications and Bid

The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) is seeking the services of a qualified Agronomist to provide specific services for a multi-year project. The selected agronomist will work under contract with HRWC staff and professionals from several other partner organizations to develop and execute a limited-term program offering “Pay-for-Performance” (PfP) incentive payments to agricultural producers who commit to implementing practices on their farms that result in water quality improvements.

Project Description

HRWC and its partners are developing a three-year “pay for performance” program targeted at agricultural producers within critical agricultural subwatersheds to fund the establishment of conservation practices that reduce sedimentation and nutrient loading to the Huron River Watershed and downstream to Lake Erie. It is anticipated that these practices will result in the annual removal of 10.5 tons of phosphorus from entering Lake Erie. The unique partnership utilizes Whole System Farm Plans to encourage participation and provides incentives to pay producers based on the amount of phosphorus loss reduced. This project is specifically focusing on the agricultural lands in Washtenaw County and a portion of Livingston County.

Agronomist Responsibilities

- Assist HRWC staff to identify producers who may be interested in the program
- Assist HRWC staff in collecting information on area farm lands related to past subsidies, production choices and other relevant factors
- Work with HRWC to produce a joint marketing plan
- Develop a market analysis and plan to use in evaluating the local market for alternative crops
- Participate in and lead discussion at farmer meetings and workshops to promote the program
- Meet individually with interested producers to determine interest in the PfP Incentives program and develop whole system farm plans that integrate PfP practices and incentives, and other incentives (such as NRCS’s EQIP) opportunities with commodity rotation, pricing and opportunities
- Work with HRWC and other project partners to develop an farmer survey to collect information on interested producers and practices they are willing to employ
- Work with producers to complete program applications
- Work with models on the team and HRWC to set incentive prices and select producers and practices
- Following selection, work with selected producers and relevant incentive program staff (e.g. HRWC, NRCS, Conservation District) to develop any necessary technical project designs
- Provide other technical assistance as needed to participating producers and HRWC staff
- Assist HRWC to monitor practices and evaluate success

Minimum Qualifications

- The ideal candidate will be able to show extensive experience in working with farmers on sustainable agriculture practices and agri-business development.
- Relevant experience with farming practices common to working farms in Washtenaw County.
- Training as a professional agronomist and any relevant and current certifications
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- Ability to travel frequently throughout Washtenaw County and parts of Livingston County over the next two years to meet with interested farmers
- Schedule flexibility to begin work on the project in January 2019

Compensation

This position is contractual between the successful candidate and the HRWC at a rate to be established through this bid process. A contract will be established for at least two years, or the duration of the contract. A Professional Service Contract signed by both parties will document the terms of the independent contractor status. Benefits are not provided for independent contractors. HRWC budgeted a maximum of \$68,500 for this work.

DEI statement: The HRWC is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within the work place, and thus is committed to prohibiting discrimination against volunteers, clients, and applicants on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental handicap/disability, social economic class, ethical values and/or political beliefs, parental status, veteran status, arrest record, organization membership, or any other characteristic protected by law.

HRWC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Physical Demands: The physical demands described here are representative of those a contractor may encounter while performing the essential work. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential work.

--Project work may entail all-weather physical activity, including in-water work, and the use of basic hand and field tools. No farm work is anticipated, but farm field and stream observation will be necessary.

--Some evening and weekend work required

--Must maintain a valid driver's license

How to Bid

A complete bid will consist of a resume, c.v. or other qualification materials, past project references, and a cover letter that outlines your specific interest in the work, how you would approach the project, and any other relevant qualifications. The letter should also include your bid of an hourly billing rate (comprehensive of benefits, per diem and other extras) and any other relevant compensation needs. HRWC does not expect a comprehensive proposal, but prefers a concise summary letter. Please send bids to the contact below.

Ric Lawson
Watershed Planner/Project Manager
Huron River Watershed Council
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(734) 769-5123 ext. 609

Electronic submissions are preferred.

Applications will be accepted until January 8, 2019 or a qualified applicant is identified.

Huron River Watershed Council Background & Mission

HRWC's mission is to protect and restore the river for healthy and vibrant communities.

Founded in 1965, the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) is southeast Michigan's oldest environmental organization dedicated to river protection. HRWC is a nonprofit coalition of residents, businesses, and local governments. HRWC bridges political boundaries by building partnerships between and among communities, community leaders, residents, and commercial enterprises. HRWC monitors the Huron River, its tributaries, lakes, and groundwater, and leads programs on pollution prevention and abatement, wetland and floodplain protection, citizen education, and natural resource and land-use planning. Since we were formed, the HRWC has served as a place where local units of government and citizens have discussed problems and sought solutions to critical issues affecting the River.

HRWC's foundation is based on science with strong monitoring programs for water quality, stream flows, benthic macroinvertebrates and natural areas. From this foundation, HRWC's 13-person staff and volunteer corps of 500+ identify problems, direct protection and restoration activities, and work with stakeholders to solve problems.