



Southern New Jersey's Leading Watershed Organization

Request for Proposals

**RESTORING THE WILD AND SCENIC
MANUMUSKIN RIVER'S WETLAND ECOLOGY**

Port Elizabeth, Cumberland County, New Jersey

PHASE I

Executive Director

Karla E. Rossini

Board President

Jane Morton Galetto

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT

Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc.

(CU Maurice River)

P.O. Box 474 / 17 E. Main Street

Millville, New Jersey 08332

(856) 300-5331

Contact: Karla E. Rossini

Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org

JANUARY 2024

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

NOTICE is hereby given that sealed bids will be received by Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc. (hereinafter called “CU MAURICE RIVER”) for:

**THE RESTORATION OF
THE WILD AND SCENIC MANUMUSKIN RIVER’S WETLAND ECOLOGY**

Project Period: March 2024 – December 2025

Proposals must be sent electronically and be received by CU Maurice River no later **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024.** Proposals received after the specified times will not be accepted or recognized. The time of receipt will determine the acceptability of proposals. CU Maurice River encourages qualified Women-owned and Minority-owned businesses to submit proposals.

Final decision is expected to be made in March. Project activities may begin as soon as all the required contract documents are in place and a notice to proceed is issued. Fieldwork will begin only after all permitting requirements have been successfully fulfilled. Contract work is to commence by **March 2024**. All project activities must be completed by **December 31st, 2025.**

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Lead:

CU Maurice River is dedicated to protecting the watershed of the Maurice River and the region known as *Down Jersey*, thereby enabling current and future generations to enjoy the environmental, recreational, cultural, and scenic resources of this Wild & Scenic global treasure.

CU Maurice River empowers individuals, organizations, and neighboring communities to promote the region’s enduring well-being and quality of life. CU Maurice River invites participation and fosters responsible stewardship. CU Maurice River supports education, awareness, and informed decision-making utilizing fieldwork, research, and advocacy.

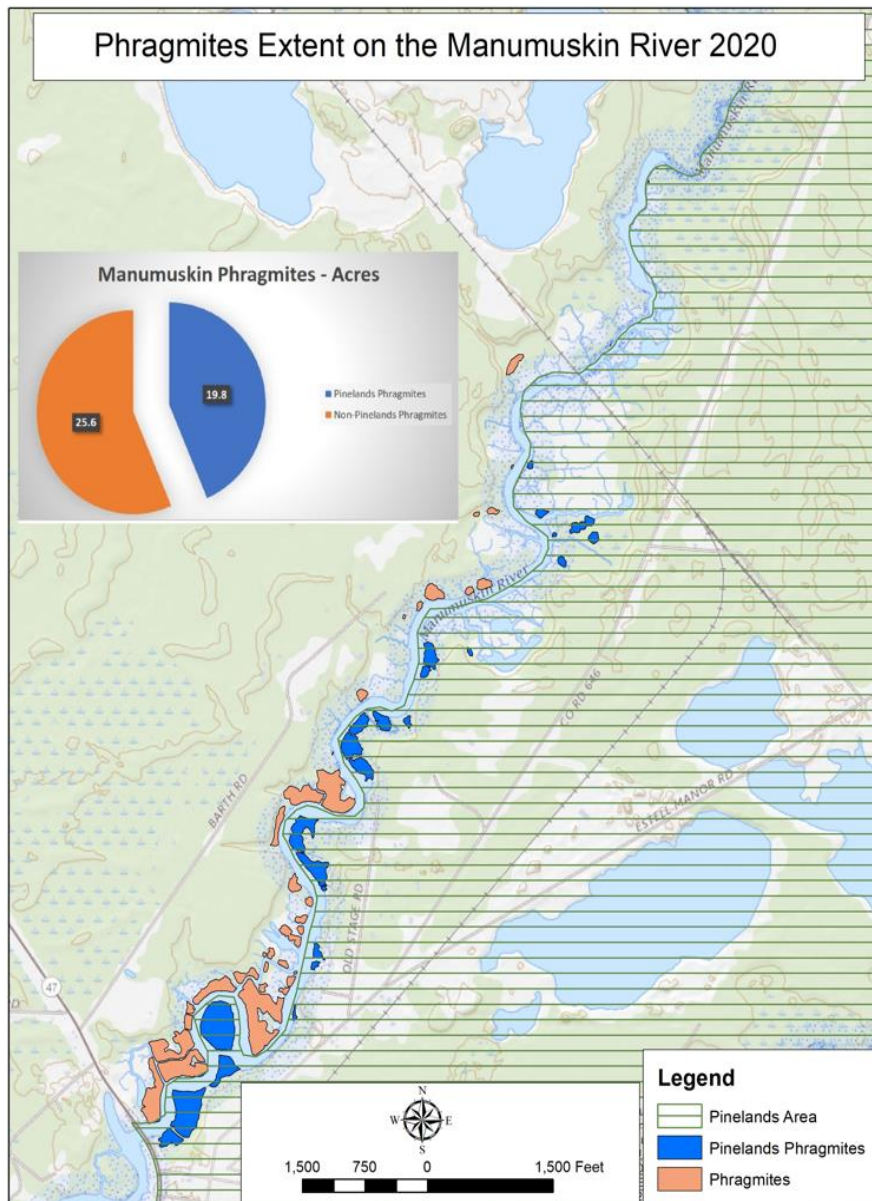
In 1993 by Public Law (PL 103-162), over 35 miles of the Maurice River and its tributaries (Muskee, Manumuskin, and Menantico Rivers) were designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers, components of the National Park System, for their outstanding natural and cultural resources (ORVs). The Wild & Scenic Maurice River is a Partnership River, with a unique management strategy through long-term partnerships between the National Park Service (NPS) and local watershed organizations. CU Maurice River (CUMR) is the Wild & Scenic Maurice River Partner Organization charged with implementing the 2001 Maurice River Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) via a cooperative agreement with NPS.

Due to CUMR’s history of success in river and wildlife management, stalwart advocacy, and outdoor awareness work, in 2005 CUMR was selected to be the sole Wild & Scenic River Program Partner charged with the responsibility of implementing the goals and objectives of the Maurice River CRMP. CUMR is the only organization whose efforts are wholly dedicated to preserving the integrity of the Maurice River Watershed and, as such, has local relationships with Riverfront Property Owners (RPOs) and partners to leverage resources to continue project activities.

1.2 Site:

The project site is located on the Manumuskin River in Port Elizabeth, Cumberland County, New Jersey between Route 47 and the railroad trestle (Phragmites Extent on the Manumuskin River 2020 Map below). All activities in this freshwater tidal habitat will occur on the wetlands along the eastern shoreline located within the Pinelands National Reserve and Wild and Scenic designated area. The project area is made up of 25 parcels owned by 16 Riverfront Property Owners, who have each provided a signed letter permitting property access and authorizing restoration activities.

Wetland restoration within the Pinelands National Reserve requires utmost care due to the area's unique integrity and sensitive nature. Specific permits and approvals must be obtained and ecologically sound techniques implemented with diligence in order to protect the nationally significant, exemplary resource values of the system.



1.3 Need:

The Manumuskin supports approximately one-third of the world's population of sensitive joint-vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*) as well as other rare species including Parker's pipewort (*Eriocaulon parkeri*), Barratt's sedge (*Carex barrattii*), pine barren boneset (*Eupatorium resinosum*) as well as other sensitive and rare flora species. The sensitive joint-vetch stand is the largest viable population left in the world, possibly containing the greatest genetic diversity for this species (NJ Office of Natural Lands Management). NJ's largest stand of wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*) and 53 percent of NJ-recognized endangered species are supported by the Maurice River system, which is an important migratory stopover and wintering area for over 13,000 waterfowl. Large proportions of Virginia rail, clapper rail, black rail, and sora populations depend on the tidal portion of the Maurice River.

Since 1977, NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife has confirmed spawning migrations of adult alewife and blueback herring. The river is one of only three in NJ where striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) still spawn and over-winter. The shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), an endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act, historically inhabited the Maurice River.

A long history of diked farming, the abandonment of farms, and overgrazing by Canada geese has led to wetland degradation and susceptibility to the invasive, aggressive, perennial wetland grass *Phragmites australis*. *Phragmites* destroys critical native flora and fauna habitat, diminishes high quality food sources, and reduces food availability for migratory and native species. Loss or degradation of ORVs within these wetlands poses a serious threat to the ecology of the Delaware Estuary and regional economy. CUMR has conducted a 35-year-long Winter Raptor and Waterfowl Survey that has documented significant and long-term declines in both raptor and waterfowl use of the river. Findings show clear adverse impacts to birds, caused by climate change and exacerbated by the rapid encroachment of *Phragmites* into formerly productive natural habitats. CUMR is working to protect and restore these vital marshes to improve ecological resilience in the Delaware Estuary and the Atlantic Flyway.

According to the EPA's Preliminary Healthy Watershed Assessment, the Manumuskin is the fifth healthiest watershed in NJ and is host to high priority species and habitats. Located in Cumberland, NJ's most economically disadvantaged county, the Maurice River and its tributaries are a key component of the local economy and culture. However, the *Phragmites* infestation is damaging outdoor recreational infrastructure. Visibility is obstructed by the 12 to 20-foot-tall reeds, diminishing the overall ecotourism and scenic experience on this Wild & Scenic Recreational River. As a secondary outcome, *Phragmites* removal will restore recreational ORVs and support the area's ecotourism industry.

CU Maurice River mapped *Phragmites* using NJDEP land cover layers, which documented a 51% increase of *Phragmites* (484 to 730 acres) within the Wild & Scenic designation over a 13-year span (2002 - 2015). To avoid the loss of threatened, endangered, and rare species dependent on the system's wetland complex, the emergent infestation must be halted on the periphery while solutions are developed for the main stem.

1.4 Purpose:

The Manumuskin River has been chosen for the first phase of a plan to stop the spread further upstream into sensitive habitat. CUMR is requesting project proposals to remove a minimum of 20 acres of *Phragmites* on the eastern wetlands and shoreline of the Manumuskin River within New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve where stands are expanding into high priority, pristine, freshwater tidal wetlands. The proposed project addresses Priority 1(8) of the Maurice River CRMP to "protect river resources from the negative impacts of invasive species of flora through monitoring and proper control."

Interrupting the *Phragmites* at the boundaries of healthy wetlands is critical in order to conserve native flora and maintain the suite of fauna dependent on healthy, tidal wetland habitat. The proposed restoration will benefit 16 state- and federally-designated Threatened and/or Endangered species and 18 NJ-designated Species of Special Concern, including adult alewife, blueback herring, Peregrine Falcon, and Saltmarsh Sparrow.

1.5 Outcomes:

- Minimum of 20 acres of invasive *Phragmites* will be treated and removed from the Manumuskin River.
- Native flora communities will be allowed to reestablish on 20 acres.
- Minimum 20 acres along the Manumuskin River will be under improved management.
- 25 parcels owned by 16 different RPOs will be beneficiaries of restoration outcomes.
- 16 homeowners in collaboration with CUMR and the Consultant will fulfill their commitment to maintaining wetland meadow health for five years post-project period through the cost-share agreement.

1.6 Support:

CU Maurice River will support project activities by 1. Assisting with efforts to monitor baseline conditions and track of change via avian, nekton, botanical, and fish surveys, as well as visual monitoring for the presence/absence of *Phragmites*; 2. Coordinating stakeholder and RPO participation and engagement with the project goals and objectives; 3. Fostering wetland stewardship through the organization of project-related educational activities including speaker series and volunteer community science opportunities, 4. Overseeing the 5-year post-project maintenance agreement between the RPOs, CU Maurice River, and Contractor; and 5. Engaging local conservation leaders in project activities and progress analysis.

1.7 Partners and Roles:

CU Maurice River will manage this project. CU Maurice River Staff will be the project lead managing the budget, timeline, contracts, and grant reporting while coordinating work and communication between partners for all phases. The Contractor will be hired by and report directly to CU Maurice River. CU Maurice River Staff will provide oversight for all work with the assistance and input of the project's Advisory Committee which is composed of conservation partners and professionals. CU Maurice River will manage public engagement and outreach, coordinate meetings and educational opportunities, develop outreach materials, and evaluate public support. CU Maurice River will engage its partners in conservation and develop a team of community scientists to conduct baseline studies and measure change in the system resulting from restoration activities.

Riverfront Property Owners on the Manumuskin (RPOs) within the project area support the project's goals and objectives. They have participated in educational Neighborhood Meetings and agreed to a cost-share maintenance responsibility for a period of five years post-project. The proposed 20 acres are dispersed over 37 parcels. Treatment will occur on 25 parcels with Phragmites owned by 16 RPOs (various RPOs own multiple lots). CUMR has received signed letters with project approval, wetland access, and agreement to participate in the cost-share maintenance program. The community supports this project and views itself as a benefactor of the outcome.

1.8 Period:

Project activities will commence with the contract signing between CU Maurice River and the selected bidder. Anticipated start is **March 2024**. All project activities must be completed successfully by **December 31st, 2025**.

1.9 Budget:

This project is funded by a grant to CU Maurice River from the Restore America's Estuaries Program under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). For more information, visit <https://estuaries.org/about/>.

1.10 Payment:

Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis within 45 days of receipt of invoice and completion of deliverables.

1.11 Application Due Date:

Proposals must be sent electronically and be received by CU Maurice River no later than **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024**. Proposals received after the specified times will not be accepted or recognized. The time of receipt will determine the acceptability of proposals.

Final decision is expected to be made in **March** with contract work to commence **in March**. CU Maurice River reserves the right to interview Applicants prior to completion of proposal review.

CU Maurice River encourages qualified Women-owned and Minority-owned businesses to submit proposals as well as companies who propose to work with qualified Women-owned and Minority-owned businesses as subcontractors or consultants to complete the requested services.

1.12 Contact:

Karla Rossini
Executive Director

CU Maurice River
17 E. Main Street (P.O. Box 474)
Millville, New Jersey 08332

Phone: (856) 300-5331
Email: Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org

1.13 Questions:

A web meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 7th, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.** CU Maurice River will provide background on the Manumuskin River Restoration Project and answer questions from bidders. Attendance at the Zoom meeting is not required but all potential contractors are encouraged to participate. Please email the project contact (Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org) if you plan to participate, providing your preferred contact information for follow-up. The final set of questions and responses will be emailed to participants and the RFP distribution list. Participants may also submit questions in advance to Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org.

2. REQUESTED SERVICES:

The goal of this project is to restore the biodiversity and habitat structure in the project area by eradicating 20 acres of *Phragmites* and allowing the native seed bank to revegetate. By returning the freshwater tidal meadows on the Manumuskin River to their natural state, their viability to support the globally rare and endangered sensitive joint-vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*) and American chafseed (*Schwalbea americana*) - as well as other rare species including Parker's pipewort (*Eriocaulon parkeri*), *Carex barrattii*, and *Eupatorium resinosum*, among others - will be restored.

The treatment and removal of *Phragmites* within the State-designated Pinelands National Reserve and the Wild and Scenic designation requires utmost care due to the area's unique integrity and sensitive nature. These conservation zones are under specific regulations that will impact project design, and specific permits and approvals will need to be achieved before any activities commence. The method proposed must ensure precise and thorough herbicide application, avoiding herbicide drift, overspray, or spillage onto desirable and/or sensitive vegetation. Bidders will describe control and removal processes while also defining in detail the precautions to be taken to protect sensitive and other native species from control practices. Special attention in this matter is to be given to the endangered sensitive joint-vetch.

TASK 2.1: PROJECT KICK-OFF MEETINGS

2.1.1 - Meeting with Conservation Partners and Advisors: The Successful and Selected Contractor (the Contractor) will attend one meeting with CUMR's conservation partners and advisors to propose A PROJECT AND PERMITTING PLAN (Project Plan), discuss timeline, describe technical approach (aerial vs. ground application, surfactant use, dosage, timing, etc.), and establish any data or informational needs. CUMR will host these meetings.

2.1.2 - Meeting with RPOs: The Contractor will attend one RPO meeting to inform the group and answer stakeholder questions. CUMR will present a general project overview to the public. The Contractor will present their project design and offer a Q&A session.

2.1.3 – Property Access Agreements: CUMR has received property access agreements from all RPOs within the proposed project area before the grant application was submitted to the funder. If updated agreements are required by the Contractor, CUMR will coordinate this effort. With the purpose of lowering costs associated with mobilization and project logistics, CUMR will work with RPOs to improve site access and equipment storage for the Contractor at this remote site if requested. RPOs have agreed to providing access in the original agreement forms.

2.1.4 – Contractor Develops Final Project Plan Draft: The Project Plan Draft with a Maintenance Plan is submitted to CUMR for final review and approval with input from their Project Partners and Advisors. The Draft details the Contractor’s approach in depth. CUMR sends the Draft back with comments and questions. A Final Draft is developed before the Contractor moves into the permitting phase.

2.1.5 – Monitoring Plan:

Contractor will coordinate with CU Maurice River to develop a monitoring plan. CUMR will implement the plan with Contractor input and guidance. CUMR regularly utilizes staff and volunteers to conduct various flora, fauna, water quality, mapping, and other community science surveys. CU Maurice River staff and volunteers will fulfill project monitoring needs contributing to overall project success, and informing future maintenance activities of the Cost-share Maintenance Program.

Task 2.1 Deliverables – 1. Minutes from two stakeholder meetings, 2. Project partner and stakeholder attendance, 3. Signed updated property access agreements will be obtained for all lots where project activities are to take place, and 4. Project Plan Final Draft is finalized with CUMR, Advisor, and RPO input. 5. Monitoring Plan

TASK 2.2: PERMITTING

2.2.1 - Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Development & Approval: The Contractor will be responsible for drafting and completion of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for the proposed scope of work to be reviewed by CUMR, Project Advisors, and the EPA to comply with EPA and Restore America’s Estuary Grant Program. Both primary and secondary data will be required to be covered within the QAPP. See <https://estuaries.org/snep-watershed-grant/snep-applicant-and-grantee-resources/> for guidance and QAPP templates available for use in this task. All water quality, biological and habitat data generated is required to be transmitted into EPA’s Storage and Retrieval (STORET) Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using either WQX or WQXweb. See: <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx>. Description of this data storage will be part of the QAPP. The Contractor and CUMR will share this responsibility to be completed as noted in subsequent tasks. Task 2 scope of work cannot proceed until the QAPP is finalized and approved by EPA. A minimum of three meetings is recommended for inclusion in the scope of work to review the requirements of the QAPP, review draft QAPP, and discuss final revisions. It is anticipated that at least two drafts of the QAPP will be required.

2.2.2 – Other State and Federal Permitting:

The project site is within the Pinelands National Reserve and the National Park Service’s Wild and Scenic River designation, and hosts T&E species. The Contractor will have designed this treatment and removal project of *Phragmites* in accordance with Pinelands, Wild and Scenic, Threatened & Endangered Species Evaluation and Permitting. The Contractor is to obtain **all** necessary regional, State, and Federal approvals before starting project activities.

Task 2.2 Deliverables: 1. Participation in a minimum of three virtual meetings or calls between Contractor and CUMR, 2. Two drafts and Final EPA approved QAPP, and 3. All other necessary State and Federal regulations have been met and permits achieved.

TASK 2.3: IMPLEMENTATION

2.3.1 – Year 1 of Treatment:

20 acres of *Phragmites* are treated during Year 1.

2.3.2 – Field Reports:

The Contractor will provide CU Maurice River with field reports and Minutes of contractor field team meetings. The Contractor will provide CU Maurice River with photographs of site conditions as directed.

2.3.3 – STORET:

EPA's Storage and Retrieval Data Warehouse (STORET) is updated by CUMR with data collected during this first year of treatment.

Task 2.3 Deliverables – 1. 20 acres of *Phragmites* are successfully treated and removed allowing for the regeneration of native species from the seed bank, 2. Field Reports and Minutes from Field Team Meetings, and 3. Data update in STORET.

TASK 2.4: STAKEHOLDER MEETING

2.4.1 - Meeting with Advisors:

The Contractor will provide project Advisors with an update on project advances. CUMR will host the meeting.

2.4.2 - Meeting with RPOs:

The Contractor will provide the RPOs with a project update allowing time for Q&A. CUMR will host the meeting.

Task 2.4 Deliverables: 1. Minutes from the meetings. 2. Attendance at both meetings.

TASK 2.5: IMPLEMENTATION

2.5.1 – Year 2 of Treatment:

Reemergent stands of *Phragmites* are treated during Year 2.

2.5.2 – Field Reports:

The Contractor will provide CU Maurice River with field reports and Minutes of contractor field team meetings. The Contractor will provide CU Maurice River with photographs of site conditions as directed.

2.5.3 – STORET:

EPA's Storage and Retrieval Data Warehouse (STORET) is updated by CUMR with any new data that is collected during this second year of treatment.

Task 2.5 Deliverables: 1. One year of maintenance treatment is completed, 2. Field Reports and Minutes from Field Team Meetings, 3. Data is updated in STORET

TASK 2.6: POST-PROJECT MAINTENANCE

2.6.1 – Final Maintenance Cost Estimate and Plan:

The Contractor will develop a price-per-acre maintenance plan for the spot treatment of any reemergent stands of *Phragmites* for a minimum of five years post project. This plan will estimate how many acres are expected to be treated per year and provide a cost per-acre of treatment.

2.6.2 – Cost-share Maintenance Agreement:

The RPOs and CUMR will enter into a five-year cost-share agreement with the Contractor to assume the financial responsibility of wetland maintenance for five years.

Task 2.6 Deliverables: 1. Five-Year Maintenance Plan Proposal Approved by RPOs, 2. Signed Five-Year Cost-Share Maintenance Agreement between 16 RPOs, CUMR, and Contractor.

3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

3.1 Proposal format and submission: The application form and proposal narrative are limited to 10 pages total including description of services, budget, and timeline, company experience, project examples, and references (additional tables, figures and maps as desired). Other requested items including the cover page, resumes, licenses and insurances, will be considered outside the page limit. Proposals must use 12-point font and 1” margins. The Bidder shall submit applications electronically. Proposals must be received by CUMR no later than **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024.** **Email Address for Electronic Submission:** Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org

3.2 Application Content

3.2.1 Cover Page

- Applicant Name
- Applicant Organization
- Address, Phone Number, and Email
- Date of Submission
- Proposed Budget Amount (\$)
- Applicant Signature

3.2.2 Application

- a. Proposal Description (60pts)
 - Proposal Narrative (25pts)
 - Proposed Methods to Protect Threatened and Sensitive Plant Communities during Project Implementation (10pts)
 - Budget (25pts) detailed on the Pricing Page provided below.
- b. Qualifications (40pts)
 - Organizational Qualifications and Experience
 - Key Staff, Roles, and Experience
 - Relevant Experience from Past Projects (minimum three)
 - Client References

3.2.3 Conflict of Interest and Mandatory Disclosure Form

Bidders are to complete form provided below.

3.3 Description

3.3.1 Proposal Narrative

Applicants should provide a written proposal of services based on the Requested Services described under Section 2 of this document. This narrative should describe by task and subtask the services to be provided, the timeline for completion of each task and deliverable, and who will contribute to completion of each task. This narrative should include additional detail, or revised scope and tasks or subtasks where warranted, with reasoning and clarification of how the Contractor proposes to complete each item. The Contractor will propose a project timeline that achieves the Tasks in Section 2 by the project end date, **December 31st, 2025**.

Use of practices and procedures that preserve and protect the health of the endangered, threatened, and sensitive flora communities within the system are of utmost importance. The contractor's proposal should give considerable attention to the techniques that will be implemented to eliminate potential for negative impact of chemical drift or overspray on the health of these species.

Applicants must complete the Pricing Page below listing expenses with estimated hours and costs broken down by task and subtask, using salary rates for staff proposed to complete each task and inclusion of estimated expenses for travel, equipment, supplies, etc. Applicants must also submit a budget narrative providing explanation of costs and assumed estimates. Be sure to indicate percent or amount set aside for contingencies.

Additionally, the applicant is asked to provide a preliminary per-acre cost estimate for the Five-Year Cost-share Maintenance Program that will go into effect post-project. It should also approximate how many acres are expected to reemerge each year during the post-project maintenance period. This estimate is preliminary and additional to the initial removal of *Phragmites* during the project period.

3.3.2 Qualifications

This description should include years of relevant company experience and resources to conduct the requested work. Applicants should describe the qualifications of their organization and key staff including experience in providing freshwater tidal wetlands restoration services, invasive flora species control and any other expertise relevant to this RFP. This narrative should demonstrate expertise in invasive species control projects within freshwater tidal zones while taking proactive precautions to protect desirable and sensitive flora species. The successful Bidder will have experience in achieving federal and state permits, as well as familiarity with Pinelands regulations and permitting. Experience in assisting non-profits to engage the public with project goals and objectives is recommended.

The proposal must also provide qualifications for key staff and describe the proposed roles and allocation of their time. Applicants will provide resumes for all key staff. Resumes will not count towards the application page limit.

Proposals must provide a brief narrative description of at least three similar projects conducted within the last ten years and include a list of client references for similar wetland restoration projects that your firm has worked on in the past ten years. CU Maurice River will contact references provided to verify qualifications, and determine overall satisfaction with services provided and ability of the firm to complete projects on time and on budget.

3.3.3 Conflict of Interest and Mandatory Disclosure Form

Bidder is to complete the Mandatory Disclosure Form provided below and include it in their application packet. Bidders must disclose if their firm has been involved in any litigation related to contract disputes in the past 5 years and whether the applicant or any principal has been debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from the utilization of professional licensure or participation in federally or state funded assistance programs. If the Bidder has an issue to disclose, the proposal must include a full explanation and include docket numbers or other descriptive information. The Form provided will not count toward the application page limit.

3.3.4 Additional Documents Required for Submission

Proposals must also include the following attachments. These documents will not be counted toward the page limit.

- Resumes for all key staff
- Licenses
- Insurance documents
- W-9 tax form filled out and signed by the Respondent
- 5% Bid Bond

4. SELECTION PROCESS

The Project Manager will notify the applicant of proposal receipt within 48 hours of submission. The review shall not be open to the public, and the contents of the proposals shall be kept confidential and not disclosed to competing proposers until after the evaluation process is completed. Each proposal will be inspected to determine whether it meets the minimum requirements as set forth in the RFP.

CU Maurice River shall find it unacceptable if the proposer: has less than five years of experience; fails to meet the required deadline; lacks proper licenses or insurances; is debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities (see “Excluded Parties List System” at <http://www.sam.gov>) or currently under criminal indictment; and/or other minimum criteria as defined in the RFP instructions. Failure of a proposal to meet a minimum requirement will disqualify a vendor's proposal from further consideration. The Project Manager shall state in writing the reasons for disqualifying any proposal.

After evaluating the minimum requirements, remaining proposals shall be evaluated by CU Maurice River reviewers based on the evaluation criteria specified in this RFP. CU Maurice River will review the results of this evaluation with a select group of leaders from CUMR's Board of Trustees, its Science Committee, and select members of the project's Advisory Committee. Based on the recommendations of the reviewers and feedback from the project team, CU Maurice River Executive Director will make the final decision on award of contract. In analyzing responses to the evaluation criteria, CU Maurice River shall consider the qualifications of applicants in determining the Successful Bidder, and make any investigations deemed relevant to the selection process.

The minimum evaluation criteria shall be in compliance with specifications and criteria set forth herein: attributes of goods or services proposed, investigations into qualifications, prior relevant experience, and past performance. CU Maurice River will confirm claims of past experience. The means for comparative evaluation are set forth in the proposal specifications and below.

4.1 Proposal Evaluation Criteria: Proposals that meet all submission requirements will be evaluated using the criteria listed below.

4.1.2. Proposed Scope, Timeline and Budget (60 points):

a. Project Narrative:

- Technical approach and ability to meet project end date (35pts)
- Practices designed to protect threatened and sensitive plant communities (10pts)

Bidders will be scored based on the reasonableness of timeline, quality of detail included in the proposed scope of services, and depth of consideration toward the site's sensitive nature and remote location. This timeline and description of services should follow the description of services provided in Section 2, providing additional detail or revisions describing how the Bidder plans to complete each task according to the project end date. Justification should be provided for any revision to the requested services.

b. Pricing Page and Budget Narrative:

- Clarity of cost proposal. (20pts)

Bidders will be scored based on the reasonableness of their budget and overall ability to complete the scope of work on schedule and at or under the not-to-exceed budget.

- Clarity of Post Project Cost Estimate for Maintenance (5pts)

Bidders will be scored on the reasonableness of their projected cost estimate for the post-project maintenance of the site for a period of no less than five years. The projected maintenance cost is to be calculated using the estimated cost to treat one acre by the estimated number of acres of reemergent *Phragmites* to return each year.

4.1.3. Ability to Provide Required Services (40 points):

a. Qualifications:

- Company qualifications and organizational capacity. Availability to begin work in the first quarter of 2024. (10 pts)
- Key staff assigned to this project is experienced in wetland restoration as well as prior work with non-profit clients and ability to work with stakeholders (10 pts)
- Relevant project experience (10 pts)
- References (10pts)

The selected contractor will have outstanding wetland restoration expertise, invasive flora species management, history of success in achieving State and Federal permits, and data collection. Applicants must demonstrate that they are qualified, experienced, can provide high-quality services and products that meet the project needs, and work well with clients, agencies, and the public. They will possess all necessary licenses and insurance to conduct work in the State of New Jersey.

Proposals will be awarded points based on reference verification of past experience and satisfaction with work completed, including input on ability to complete projects on schedule and on or under budget.

4.1.4 Conflict of Interest and Mandatory Disclosure Form

Contractors are to complete the form provided and submit with the application. Findings of debarment may be considered grounds for disqualification for this project.

4.1.5 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)

CU Maurice River seeks to utilize qualified small businesses, disadvantaged business enterprises, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises whenever possible. If a Bidder qualifies, this should be clearly noted in the proposal. This will be taken into consideration but will not warrant award of additional points. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) should be certain to indicate the percentage of work being performed by the DBE if less than 100 percent.

4.2 Award:

Procurement activities will be conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner with fair treatment given to all Consultants. The contract will be awarded to the most advantageous proposal as determined by CU Maurice River.

CU Maurice River reserves the right, upon basis of such evaluations, to reject the Proposal of any and all Bidders who do not, in its estimation, pass based on such evaluations, or to select a Bidder other than the apparent lowest cost proposer if the investigations indicate that such action is in the project's and CU Maurice River's best interest. CU Maurice River reserves the right to waive any formality in the proposal procedure, to cancel this Request for Proposal, or to reject any and all proposals received deemed not in the best interest of CU Maurice River. CU Maurice River reserves the right to re-bid this opportunity if it

determines there were not suitable Proposals due to cost, qualifications, technical approach, or other factors. CU Maurice River reserves the right to award a contract for portions or all of the proposed services (tasks and subtasks). The CU Maurice River Executive Director will award contracts under this procurement.

All documents prepared for the project shall remain the property of CU Maurice River subject to the specific requirements of grant funding. CU Maurice River reserves the right to interview Applicants prior to final award of contract. Consultants selected for interviews will be offered the choice of either a Zoom or in-person interview (at the Consultant's expense). The Consultant will be notified of the day and time at least two (2) days prior to the interview. Following interviews of bidding Consultants, proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Committee. The Committee will rank the Proposals and select the highest ranked Proposal. Selection shall be subject to additional discussions and/or negotiations based on proposals received.

PRICING PAGE

Applicants must complete the Pricing Page below listing expenses with estimated hours and costs broken down by task and subtask, using salary rates for staff proposed to complete each task and the inclusion of estimated expenses for travel, equipment, supplies, materials, etc. Applicants must also submit a brief budget narrative where they will list cost assumptions for each estimate. The percent and amount set aside for contingencies must also be indicated.

CONTROL OF 20 ACRES OF PHRAGMITES + ONE YEAR OF MAINTENANCE (March 2024 – December 2025)

Task	Proposed Timeline	Hours by task	Salary Rates	Labor Cost	Material Cost	Travel Cost
2.1.1 - Meeting with Conservation Partners and Advisors						
2.1.2 - Meeting with RPOs:						
2.1.3 – Property Access Agreements						
2.1.4 – Contractor Develops Final Project Plan Draft						
2.1.5 – Development of Monitoring Plan in Coordination with CUMR						
TASK 2.1 TOTAL: PROJECT KICK-OFF						
2.2.1 – Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Development & Approval						
2.2.2 – Other State and Federal Permitting						
TASK 2.2 TOTAL: PERMITTING						
2.3.1 - Year #1 of Treatment 20 Acres						
2.3.1 - COST PER ACRE	Total Number of Acres:		20	Cost Per Acre Treated:		
2.3.2 – Field Reports						
TASK 2.3 TOTAL: IMPLEMENTATION						

2.4.1 - Meeting with Advisors:						
2.4.2 - Meeting with RPOs						
TASK 2.4: STAKEHOLDER MEETING						
2.5.1 – Year 2 of Treatment (Maintenance of area with reemergent stands)						
2.5.1 -COST PER ACRE	<i>Estimated Number of Reemergent Acres:</i>			Cost Per Acre Treated:		
2.5.2 – Field Reports						
TASK 2.5: IMPLEMENTATION						
TOTALS:						
CONTINGENCY:			Amount:	Percent:		
TOTAL PROJECT COST:						

FIVE YEAR POST-PROJECT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Additionally, the applicant is asked to provide a preliminary per-acre cost estimate for the Five-Year Cost-share Maintenance Program that will go into effect after the initial project period. Approximate how many acres are expected to reemerge each year. This estimate is preliminary and additional to the project’s budget for the initial removal of *Phragmites* and first year of maintenance.

Salary Rates	Labor Cost	Material Cost	Travel Cost	TOTAL COST PER ACRE
Year	EST. # of Acres to be Treated		EST. ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COST	
Year 1- 2026				
Year 2- 2027				
Year 3- 2028				
Year 4- 2029				
Year 5- 2030				
Total Projected Cost				

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND MANDATORY DISCLOSURE FORM

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY AND MANDATORY DISCLOSURES FOR THE CITIZENS UNITED TO PROTECT THE MAURICE RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES, INC. (CU MAURICE RIVER)

Purpose

Achieve a fair competitive bidding process for all bidders. Provide documentation to substantiate this goal. Select a fair Selection Committee. Ensure federal compliance requirements are met.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest -- a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between the private interests and official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust. Persons in a position of trust include staff members, officers, and trustees of CU Maurice River. Conflicts include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. A CU Maurice River trustee that is related to Contractor or Potential Contractor by blood, marriage, domestic partnership, or shared living quarters.
- b. A CU Maurice River staff member that is related by blood, marriage, domestic partnership, or shared living quarters with a Contractor or Potential Contractor.
- c. A Contractor or Potential Contractor relationship by blood, marriage, domestic partnership or shared living quarters with current or potential funder or site owner which may participate in the bid Selection Committee.

NOTE: CU Maurice River Trustees and Staff are listed on www.CUMauriceRiver.org.

1. Please list the names of employees who are part of the Project Team for this Request for Proposals:

2. Are you or any of your employees related to another trustee or staff member by blood, marriage, domestic partnership or shared living quarters? If yes, describe:

3. List any current or proposed business dealings between your firm and the CU Maurice River (as an organization or with specific individuals):

4. List any other relationships, arrangements, transactions, or matters which could create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict:

5. All award sub-recipients must make these additional disclosures required by 2 CFR Part 200 Appendix XII(A)(1-5). The Consultant must disclose all violations of Federal criminal law involving

fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting a federal award of funds, as well as, for example, fines, settlements, or insurance payments made due to the performance of the company's professional services. *Please read the statement below and respond accordingly:*

In the prior 5-year period, based upon the date of submission for this RFP, the Consultant must disclose:

- (1) Debarment, suspension, or other exclusions by any Federal, State, or Local governmental agency that would make the Consultant ineligible to receive funds originating from Federal, State, or Local governmental agencies;
- (2) A Federal, State, or Local civil proceeding that resulted in a finding of fault and liability and payment of a monetary fine, penalty, reimbursement, restitution, or damages of \$5,000 or more;
- (3) Any Federal, State, or Local administrative proceeding (including arbitration) that resulted in a finding of fault and liability and your payment of either a monetary fine or penalty of \$5,000 or more or reimbursement, restitution, or damages in excess of \$100,000; or
- (4) Any other Federal, State, or Local criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding if:
 - i. It could have led to an outcome described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of the above;
 - ii. It had a different disposition arrived at by consent or compromise with an acknowledgment of fault on your part; and
 - iii. Disclosure of information about the proceeding does not conflict with applicable laws and regulations.

Please state which if any of the above provisions apply; attach additional information if needed:

6. Is there any judgment, suit, or claim currently pending against your company? If yes please explain:

Subsequent to a contract award, I consent to disclosing to CU Maurice River any information as described above during the contract award period on a semi-annual basis. I affirm that I have read and understand the CU Maurice River Conflict of Interest policy. I certify that I have accurately disclosed any known or potential conflicts of interest. I will make known to the CU Maurice River any conflicts that arise.

Signature

Title/Position

Printed Name

Date