

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

JOHN BURROUGHS BLACK CREEK TRAIL: ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

THIS SUBMISSION IS DUE ON

DECEMBER 4, 2017 11 AM

Purpose

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail is an 11-mile multi-modal project that will interconnect more than 1400-acres of existing conserved land. This Request For Proposal (RFP) is to select the consultant to complete an ecological study of three properties at the core of the project. This study will gather existing ecological information corridor, map habitats, identify ecologically sensitive areas and rare species, and help to determine the best locations for new hiking trails, parking lots, and other planned improvements for the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail.

Context

Scenic Hudson and the John Burroughs Association have been leading planning and development of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail over the past two years. They have been supported by a Steering Committee made up representatives of the towns of Esopus and Lloyd, regional non-profits, state agencies, and local businesses. The plan for this project was completed Spring 2016, and both the towns of Esopus and Lloyd passed unanimous resolutions of support. The Town of Esopus is now working in collaboration with Scenic Hudson and other project partners to implement this plan.

One of the issues raised as part of the planning process were the potential ecological impacts of the trail on the Black Creek Corridor. The Black Creek is one of the Hudson River's most important tributaries, supporting spring runs of river herring and eel. The corridor surrounding this stretch of the creek is characterized by an intricate topography of ridges and valleys and relatively low development intensity, which have enabled the persistence of a rich complex of upland and wetland habitats. Some of the wetlands form sizeable assemblages and are calcareous, supporting a wide array of plants and animals, including rare and uncommon species. The beauty of this corridor inspires both passive and active recreation, including paddling, hiking, birding, and nature study.

Today, the land along the Black Creek remains one of the most intact natural landscapes in the region. Scenic Hudson and the John Burroughs Association have been working with the towns of Esopus and Lloyd to development of a plan for an 11-mile trail from Illinois Mountain to Black Creek Preserve, along the Hudson River. This multimodal bicycle, paddling and hiking trail will link over 1400-acres of existing conserved land along the Black Creek Corridor while highlighting the focus life, work, and natural world of John Burroughs.

One of the many hopes for the project is to use the landscape that inspired Burroughs as a teaching tool to inspire the next generation of conservationists. However, completing the trail and expanding access could have a negative effect on the landscape if not carefully designed and managed. Hudson River Valley Greenway and Scenic Hudson are providing the finding for this project through grants to the Town of Esopus to help determine where trails and access improvements can be located while minimizing damage to the sensitive ecosystem of the corridor.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The Town is seeking a qualified consultant to complete an ecological survey of three properties at the core of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail and within the Town of Esopus. These properties include (from north to south) Scenic Hudson's former Gordon Property, the John Burroughs Association's (JBA) John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary, and the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Black Creek State Forest.

The main purpose is to help guide the route of new (or newly designated) trails across all three properties and plan for access improvements to the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary (JBNS) and Black Creek State Forest (BCSF). While the Sanctuary is already well-loved and well-used, neither the Gordon Property nor the BCSF have many users. Additionally, none of these properties currently have a formalized parking area and both the Gordon Property and BCSF have limited trail infrastructure.¹ The centralization and collection of additional ecological information for the area will also provide a resource for decision making about any future improvements and for natural resource management planning.

Given that there is relatively little current impact from visitors in this section of the corridor, it is important that any new facilities be designed to add minimal impacts.

The inventory should include, at minimum, the following:

1. Assembly and review of existing data and reports on the biology and ecology of the corridor area
2. GIS-based mapping of natural community types (habitats)
3. Interim report;
4. Field verification of natural community map and on-site survey of potential trail corridor and other planned improvements; and
5. Final Report.

Moreover, while the focus of the survey is the area immediately along the proposed trail and near entrance areas, the inventory should cover as much land as possible to guide conversations about making any expansions to the trail network or further access improvements.

SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES

The following tasks outline the work for which the consultant will deliver:

Task 1: Assembly and review of existing data and reports –The consultant will complete a comprehensive search for existing data and reports (various biological and ecological surveys have been completed by various entities for portions of the Black Creek Corridor area), obtain as many as possible, and review them. These should include the three primary properties and any adjacent conserved lands.

- *Deliverable: copies of all data sets and reports, with short summaries of the main findings.*

¹ The Town of Lloyd has secured permission for the selected consultant to perform survey work on Scenic Hudson and John Burroughs Association Properties. The selected consultant will need to apply directly to DEC for a permit.

Task 2: GIS-based mapping of natural community types – Complete a digital habitat map for the Gordon Property, JBNS, and BCSF. Determine priorities for field verification, including likely locations for sensitive areas or rare species.

- *Deliverable: Interim report on existing data/reports, draft habitat map, and likely ecologically sensitive areas.*

Task 3: Field Verification– Produce a field-verified map, which verifies priority areas (e.g. potentially sensitive habitats, boundaries/features that are difficult to determine remotely); identify sensitive habitats; report on rare and invasive species observed; and examine potential impacts of routes for the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail and future trail expansion.

- *Deliverable: Final Report detailing all findings, recommending any necessary management or protection for parts of the study area, recommending trail routes with least impact, and including a final habitat map. GIS files of the habitat map to be included.*

REQUIRED PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposers are responsible for submitting their proposals to the appropriate location at or prior to the time indicated in the specifications. **No proposals will be accepted after the designated time or date indicated in the proposal specifications.**

Five (5) hard copies of the proposal and a digital version on a flash drive, referencing **RFP- BLACK CREEK TRAIL in a SEALED envelope** should be delivered no later than **11am on December 4, 2017** to:

Holly Netter | Town Clerk
Town of Esopus
284 Broadway
Ulster Park, NY 12487

All inquiries, questions or clarifications to the technical specifications must be made in writing to Peter Barnard, Urban Designer for Scenic Hudson at pbarnard@scenichudson.org by November 17, 2017. Telephone calls are not permissible. All submitted questions and answers will be compiled and posted as an addendum to the RFP on November 22, 2017 through the Empire State Bid System and on the Town's website at <http://esopus.com/>

- Proposers should submit a proposal which includes, at a minimum:
 - Cover letter introducing consultant, the staff assigned to this project and the principal for this project with full contact information;
 - Descriptions of the firm's projects in which they: (a) completed an ecological survey; (b) created a habitat map; and/or (c) provided management recommendations
 - A list of client references with contact information;
 - Scope and sequence of delivered services in detail, including a project timeline;
 - Total project cost (lump-sum), **not to exceed \$15,000**;
 - Identify how the State's MWBE goals (30%) will be satisfied by the consultant or subconsultants.

- Proof that the firm or firms are licensed to conduct business in the State of New York or a statement that the firm or firms will take the necessary steps to achieve such certification;
- Proof that the firm or firms have necessary workers compensation and insurance certificates;
- Disclosure of any current or anticipated work for the Town of Esopus, Scenic Hudson, or any other client work in the Town of Esopus.

The project is grant funded and has a maximum cost of \$15,000. Proposals submitted with budgets above this number will not be considered.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND CONSULTANT SELECTION

The Town of Esopus is open to partnerships among consultants who will bring forth the best study. If a multi-disciplinary team is created, it should be indicated whether or not the team has worked together previously. A strong proposal will demonstrate an understanding of the deliverables with a clear explanation of the consultant’s process for completing the work.

The proposer must demonstrate skills, similar experience, and availability of specialists and professionals on the proposer’s team to contribute to the overall project. The award of this project will be based on the consultant’s experience, references, experience with similar projects, as well as financial proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated and reviewed by a Selection Committee. Criteria for evaluation are as follows:

- Qualifications and relevant experience with respect to the tasks to be performed (15%)
- Quality of similar work presented (portfolio) (15%)
- Quality and completeness of the application (15%)
- Understanding of the proposed scope of work. (5%)
- Applicability of proposed alternatives or enhancements to information requested (10%)
- Clearly stated and detailed scope of services and costs (10%)
- Cost effectiveness of the proposal (10%)
- Successful history of similar projects completed on time, within budget, with references provided (10%)
- Familiarity with the study area (10%)

TOWN’S ROLE IN THE PROJECT

Town staff will assist the consultant with requested information in the Town’s possession and be active participants throughout the project. However, Scenic Hudson will handle direct management of the project. Their Urban Designer, Peter Barnard, will be assigned as the project liaison, and Director of Science, Nava Tabak, will be assigned for technical support.

TOWN’S RIGHT TO MODIFY OR TERMINATE RFP PROCESS

Notwithstanding any other provision of this RFP and without any liability to any prospective tenant, the Town of Esopus reserves the unilateral right to postpone submission deadlines, reject any and all proposals, negotiate with one or more respondents, seek additional input from one or more respondents (but not necessarily all respondents), waive any requirement of this RFP, and modify or withdraw this RFP.