

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (“RFP”)

Crown of the Continent Whitebark Pine and Limber Pine Restoration Strategy

**Crown of the Continent Hi5 Working Group, a project of the
Crown Managers Partnership**

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| RFP Issue Date: | February 12, 2018 |
| RFP Closing Date and Time: | Feb 25, 2018 by 11:59pm MT |
| Contract Manager: | Regan Nelson |
| Telephone: | (206) 349-1032 |
| Email: | regan@crownconservation.net |

1. INTRODUCTION

The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem (CCE) is one of North America's most ecologically diverse and intact ecosystems. Overlaying this extraordinary landscape is a complex arrangement of borders that delineate lands managed by numerous federal, provincial, state and local governments, tribes and First Nations, private landowners, industry and conservation interests, each with their own objectives and mandates. Recognizing that no single agency has the mandate or the resources to focus on the ecological integrity of the entire region, the Crown Manager's Partnership was formed in 2001 to provide a venue for cooperation and stewardship of the CCE. In March 2016, the Crown Manager's Partnership, in partnership with the Crown Conservation Initiative, the Wilderness Society, and the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation, convened a workshop to investigate how governments, agencies, organizations, communities and individuals could work together to address the precipitous decline of whitebark and limber pine in the CCE. The result was agreement to establish a working group, inclusive in nature, to work towards the shared objective of conserving and restoring five-needle pines in the CCE.

Restoration protocols, tools, and technologies are available and being implemented for whitebark pine and, to a limited extent, for limber pine by individual agencies, each conducting this work independently. However, consensus exists that the pace and scale of restoration must be dramatically increased and sustained if these species are to persist within the CCE. Cooperation and partnership among all interested jurisdictions is essential to achieve this level of restoration. For this reason, a High Five Working Group was formed to prioritize and advance collective efforts to effectively monitor, conserve, and restore five-needle pines in the Crown of the Continent.

The primary short-term outcome of the High Five Working Group is to develop a Crown-wide whitebark and limber pine restoration strategy that will identify priority conservation and restoration locations and potential actions across the CCE. The landbase is complex and a "one size fits all" outcome for all partners is not anticipated, but rather an effective process that enables managers to deliver restoration actions on their landbase. Proponents are invited to submit Proposals for the provision of Services in accordance with the specifications and terms and conditions set out in this RFP.

Further information about the High Five Working Group can be found online at <http://crownmanagers.org/cce-high-five-working-group/>

2. PROJECT SCOPE

2.1 Project Outcomes

The overall objective of this project is to enable agencies within the CCE to effectively and efficiently conserve and restore whitebark and limber pine, by: (1) assessing the relative conservation value of whitebark and limber stands (both extant and suitable habitat), and (2)

prioritizing conservation and restoration actions needed to ensure the persistence of these species across the landscape. Additionally, a final report will capture the methodology, analysis and purpose and need for potential actions across the landscape.

The deliverables of the Project are broken into three phases, including a data collection phase, an analysis phase, and a reporting phase. A “proof of concept” Pilot Project is required as an initial deliverable, in order to test the feasibility of the project across the entire CCE. The Proponent is being asked to submit a work plan detailing their proposed approach and fixed cost for each phase including the Pilot Project.

The project will be overseen by a Technical Review Team, comprised of agency representatives from the High Five Working Group with technical expertise in the conservation and management of whitebark and limber pine. The Technical Review Team will review the proposed scope and budget for each of the three phases prior to approving the work. Pending funding and satisfactory work, further phases may be determined and offered to the Proponent.

2.2 Project Phases

The project consists of the following three Phases, including a Pilot Project:

Phase 1: Data Sourcing and Securement – During the first phase of the project, the Proponent will work closely with the Working Group Restoration Strategy Project Team to identify the key ecological, biological, and cultural criteria that will define whitebark and limber pine stands of conservation value. Criteria may include, at a minimum, variables related to stand health, stand composition, stand size, stand location, proximity to other stands, areas of cultural and/or traditional significance, the industrial footprint, etc. Once these criteria are approved by the Technical Review Team, the Proponent will identify existing spatial data sets and information sources for the United States and Canada that can be used as proxies for the criteria in determining the relative conservation value of whitebark and limber pine stands in the CCE.

The consultant will work with the Crown Managers Partnership to access and collect existing CCE-wide datasets, QA/QC (quality check) the data as necessary, identify information gaps, and consider calls for additional data. Data may include base layer polygons (e.g. species occurrence, range, habitat), health data, parent and plus tree locations, disturbance history (e.g. fire, mountain pine beetle), and other relevant species, habitat data and infrastructure (e.g. roads and trails, etc). Geospatial data that is collected will be stored in a geodatabase for use in Phase 2 analyses. The Proponent should specify in their workplan the data storage capacity they can provide. The Technical Review Team can assist the Proponent in securing server storage space if needed. Upon completion of data sourcing, the Proponent will work with the Technical Review Team to determine if all original criteria can be included in the Phase 2 analyses, or if modifications are needed to deal with data gaps.

Existing data gaps should be noted in writing, along with the type of data collection that would be necessary to fill that gap.

Note: Some but not all of relevant whitebark and limber pine existing data has already been identified and collected by previous consultants to the Crown Managers Partnership. In addition, efforts are underway by the USDA Forest Service to gather and QA/QC datasets related to whitebark pine in the United States, and the consultant will be able to access these datasets as they become available.

Phase 2a: Assess the relative conservation value of whitebark and limber pine across the CCE – To efficiently and effectively identify the locations of whitebark and limber pine that contribute most to the successful conservation and restoration of the species, the Proponent will assess the relative conservation value of extant stands and suitable habitat across the CCE based on the criteria agreed upon in Phase 1. Prior to conducting the analysis, the Proponent must secure approval from the Technical Review Team of a conceptual model that demonstrates 1) how the criteria will be weighted, and 2) the data that will be used for each criteria, and 3) how areas where data is lacking will be treated in the assessment. The outcome of Phase 2A is two maps of relative conservation value, one each for whitebark and limber pine, across the CCE landscape. Proponents are encouraged to look at the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee’s Whitebark Pine Strategy and the Pacific Northwest Whitebark Pine Strategy for instruction on how these strategy’s assessed and ranked stand condition and relative conservation importance in these landscapes.

Phase 2b: Develop decision criteria to prioritize areas of importance for conservation and restoration activities. Building on Phase 2a, the consultant will develop decision criteria, taking into account the relative conservation value maps developed in Phase 2a, and subsequently prioritize stands for conservation (e.g., protection of existing stands from threats) and restoration (e.g., activities that restore stands through planting, thinning, or contributing to genetic diversity). The decision criteria that will inform the prioritization process must be approved by the Technical Review Team. Proponents are encouraged to look at the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee’s Whitebark Pine Strategy and the Pacific Northwest Whitebark Pine Strategy for instruction on how these strategy’s developed decision criteria to determine priority areas for conservation and restoration activities.

Phase 3: Whitebark and Limber Pine Restoration Strategy – Phase 3 is the documentation phase of this project. The Consultant will prepare a report that summarizes the data and methodology developed for Phases 1 & 2, and describes (using map and text) the series of recommended conservation and restoration

actions in priority areas. Again, respondents are encouraged to look at the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee's Whitebark Pine Strategy and the Pacific Northwest Whitebark Pine Strategy for instruction on potential restoration strategy document substance and format.

British Columbia Pilot Project – To provide for proof of concept, the Proponent's first deliverable will be to carry out Phase 1 and Phase 2a for whitebark pine only (i.e., not limber pine) in the province of British Columbia. The Technical Review Team will make available pertinent data for British Columbia. By completing Phase 1 and 2a for British Columbia initially, the Technical Review Team will ensure that the project as envisioned is feasible and will return a product that meets the needs of the High Five Working Group.

2.3 Project Deliverables

1. Data – Provide any spatial and/or tabular data sets gathered for use in this project. Data must be provided in ArcGIS geodatabase format (*.GDB) in UTM Zone 11 NAD83 (CSRS) and/or MS Access as appropriate. The geodatabase must be accompanied by written documentation of the data source, permissions granted to use the data, and any limitations or conditions of data use in this project.
2. Maps and modeling data – Provide conceptual models and maps generated as a part of this project. These will be provided as spatial layers including appropriate geodatabases.
3. Report – Provide a draft restoration strategy in MS Word and, following review, a final report in PDF format.

2.4 Project Timeline

The timeline for the Project is:

Award Contract – Week of February 26, 2018

Complete BC Pilot Project/Proof of Concept – March 31, 2018

Complete Phase 1 – June 30, 2018

Complete Phase 2 – September 30, 2018

Complete Phase 3 – November 30, 2018

2.5 Project Oversight

The Proponent will report to Regan Nelson, the Contract Manager. However, all workplans and deliverables will be reviewed and approved by the Technical Review Team.

2.6 Bid Selection

The task team will select the winning bid based on the following criteria:

- Relevant experience with GIS analysis and developing priority area criteria to

support species at risk conservation strategies;

- Familiarity with existing data sets and information sources (United States and Canada), including data sharing agreements and protocols (task team will support);
- Proposed Approach;
- Cost; and
- Experience in whitebark pine and limber pine conservation and management;

2.7 How to Submit a Bid

Bids should include the following components:

- A cover letter indicating interest in the project, experience pertinent to the project, and credentials for conducting the project as described.
- A workplan detailing the proposed approach, timeline, and fixed cost for each phase, including the British Columbia Pilot Project. The fixed cost should include a description of an estimated range of time required for the effort.
- Two references that can provide insight into the Proponent's work experience and ability to stay on task and on budget.

All bids should be submitted to Regan Nelson by no later than Thursday, February 22nd, 2018 at 14:00 MST. Please send bids to regan@crownsconservation.net. All questions should be directed to this same email address. It is the intention of the High Five Working Group to award the contract for this project during the week of February 26th, 2018.