

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

RFP Issue Date:	August 24, 2018
RFP Closing Date:	September 21 2018, 11:59 pm MST
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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

2.1 Project Outcomes

The objective of this project is to enable agencies within the CCE to effectively and efficiently conserve and restore whitebark and limber pine by establishing the necessary methodology through a proof of concept. The proof of concept is only for whitebark pine. Future work may expand the geographical scope of whitebark pine distribution and include limber pine. The proof of concept will test the feasibility of the methodology across the entire CCE by: (1) assessing the relative conservation value of whitebark stands (both extant and suitable habitat) within a subset of the CCE area (i.e. the Project Area), and (2) prioritizing conservation and restoration actions needed to

ensure the persistence of the species across the landscape. Additionally, a final report will capture the methodology, analysis, and objectives and outcomes for potential actions for the Project Area along with recommendations for expanding the process to the entire CCE landbase.

The deliverables of the Project are broken into three phases, including a data review and assessment phase, an analysis phase, and a reporting phase. The Proponent is being asked to submit a work plan detailing their proposed approach and fixed cost for each phase.

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. An in person meeting in the first half of November with the High 5 Working Group in Kalispell, MT or nearby location will be required for Phase 2 of the project. Pending funding and satisfactory work, further phases may be determined and offered to the Proponent.

Project Area – The Project will be conducted for whitebark pine only (i.e., not limber pine) on a subset of the CCE area that includes lands owned by the Confederated Kootenai/Salish Tribes and lands administered by Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest.

2.2 Project Phases

The project consists of the following three Phases:

Phase 1: Data Review and Assessment.

During the first phase of the project, the Proponent will work closely with the Technical Review Team to identify the key ecological, biological, and cultural criteria that will define whitebark 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 work with existing spatial data sets and information sources that can be used as proxies for the criteria in determining the relative conservation value of whitebark stands within the Pilot Project area.

The consultant will work with the Technical Review Team to access and collate existing CCE datasets, QA/QC (quality check) the data as necessary, identify information gaps, and consider calls for additional data. Data used for the project 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.). The data 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 collation, the Proponent will work with the Technical Review Team to determine if all 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: Most, but not all, of the relevant datasets have already been compiled individually in one location for a parallel effort, the National Whitebark Pine Restoration Strategy. These data will be made available-

Phase 2a: Assess the relative conservation value of whitebark across the Project Area.

To efficiently and effectively identify the locations of whitebark 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 Project Area 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, 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 are maps of relative conservation value for whitebark, across the Project Area. 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 Proponent 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 Restoration Strategy – Phase 3 is the documentation phase of this project. The Proponent 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.

2.3 Project Deliverables

1. Data – Provide any spatial and/or tabular data sets used 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.
4. Attend in-person the annual High 5 Working Group meeting in Kalispell, MT or nearby location in the first half of November 2018.

2.4 Project Timeline

The timeline for the Project is:

- Award Contract – Week of September 24, 2018
- Complete Phase 1 – October 19, 2018
- Workshop Phase 2 – Between November 5 and 16, 2018; exact date to be determined in first half of September
 - In-Person meeting in Kalispell, MT or nearby location to present and discuss draft maps and criteria, and work through examples of how criteria will be used for implementation
- Complete Phase 2 – December 21, 2018
- Complete Phase 3 – February 15, 2019

2.5 Project Oversight

The Proponent will report to Brad Jones and Melissa Jenkins, Contract Managers. However, all workplans and deliverables will be reviewed and approved by the Technical Review Team.

2.6 Bid Selection

The Contract Managers 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. The fixed cost should include a description of an estimated range of time required for the effort. This is a transboundary initiative and costs can be stated in either US or Canadian currencies but please specify.
- 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 Brad Jones at brad.jones@gov.ab.ca by September 21, 2018 at 11:59 MST. All questions should be directed to this same email address. It is the intention of the High Five Working Group to award the contract during the week of September 24, 2018.