

#2013-WW-02

PRIORITY INVASIVE WEED AND TERRESTRIAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Questions and Answers

Below are questions that contractors have called in related to this RFP, and the answers. This list will be updated as additional questions are asked.

Updated 12/11/13:

Q1: Specialized machinery: Can a contractor add specialized machinery to the list on the Proposal Forms?

A1: Proposal Form 3 has spots for you to list the types of equipment you use. You can also describe your experience with specialized equipment on Proposal Form 2 in the section on "Experience".

Q2: Does the Conservation District have a lot of projects that need brush cutting and chipping, flail mowing, etc.?

A2: We have a variety of projects. Most are on private lands. We included a lot of different tasks, skills, and approaches in the RFP with the intent of entering into contracts with several contractors so we can select the best fit for each project as projects come along.

Q3: Have you thought about working with a contractor that does fire response/fire suppression on your land? Sometimes the local fire department does the initial response and then a contractor comes in to put out the fire. If you are working with a landowner who burns his fields, who would put out the fire?

A3: The Conservation District has a couple of properties, but the WeedWise project work is primarily on other people's land (farms, rural residences, woodlots). This RFP does not focus on fuels reduction work (except as a secondary benefit of invasives control) and does not include creating a defensible space or firefighting.

Q4: Regarding the *Maintenance - Tree and Brush Chipping with Portable Chipper* - Is the hourly rate for this category inclusive of the operator or is it limited to the chipper itself?

A4: Please include the cost of the operator, materials, and safety equipment. The instructions in the relevant sections of the Proposal Forms say: Unit prices for work tasks requiring mechanized equipment shall include a qualified equipment operator, all materials like oil and gas, and safety equipment.

Q5: The RFP says you'd want a crew mobilized within 4 days. How much notice will you be giving the contractor?

A5: The current RFP is for both Terrestrial Vegetation Management as well as *Rapid Response* weed control work. As such, there may be situations in which we may require immediate action to control an invasive species issue. In such a situation, the Conservation District may need a contractor to respond to a work order within four days of being notified. Therefore, responsiveness is an important requirement for a successful bidder. That said, the District recognizes the logistical and scheduling constraints of our contractors and we can generally provide some flexibility in scheduling work.

Q6: Statement of Work says there may be required pre-work site visits. Are these mostly on the first day of the work assignment, or would they require a trip to the site on a different day before the work begins?

A6: The need for a site visit will be based on the layout of the site, access to the work area, the difficulty of the site, the needs of the landowner, etc. Many of the sites may only require an orientation of the project manager and the crew on the first day of work. More complex sites may require a site visit in advance to review site conditions, project scope, logistical constraints, and other site specific concerns. We want to be sure the contractor and the District have a good understanding of what is expected before work begins.

Q7: We usually have a 6 person crew. Would that number of people overwhelm the sites?

A7: As an independent contractor, you are free to use a crew of any size sufficient to complete the work order in a timely manner. For many of our sites, a 6 person crew will be well suited for our vegetation management activities, but at times we will perform work on small home sites that will be overwhelmed by a 6 person crew. In general, we try to aggregate the work across multiple small sites, to ensure a full day of work for the contractor. That said, there may be times when priority weed control work needs to be completed on a smaller site, which could be overwhelmed by a 6 person crew.

Q8: Rates: per-acre vs. hourly rates:

- **How often does CCSWCD use per-acre rates?**
- **What if the site is 100% covered with bull thistle and will take a lot more work than the typical site? Would the contractor be held to the rate that's on the proposal sheet?**
- **Help us contractors understand how flexible CCSWCD can be in the use of the per-acre rate. Do CCSWCD and the contractor have the discretion to use per-acre or hourly depending on what works best for that site?**
- **How does CCSWCD choose whether to hire on a per-acre basis or an hourly basis?**
- **Would it reflect poorly on a contractor if the contractor asks to use the hourly rate instead of the per-acre rate at a given site?**

A8:

- The District will use common sense when deciding how work should be invoiced, and reserves the right to request that a contractor bill on a per-acre or a per-hour rate. In general, we will request work crews to be billed using an hourly rate, whereas heavy

equipment operators will bill on a per-acre rate. Site specific details play strongly into our decision to request work to be done on a per-acre or per-hour rate.

- For very dense sites, the District would generally recognize the additional labor required to complete the requested work order, and would request work to be billed on an hourly rate.
- We recognize that some sites may be particularly difficult or pose unique logistical constraints. As such, we will provide some flexibility to the contractor to assure fair compensation. The District reserves the right to decide whether work should be billed on a per-acre or a per-hour basis, but that decision is responsive to the needs and feedback of the contractor.
- The decision to assign work on a per-acre or per-hour rate is largely dependent upon the site in question. Larger more consistent sites are more likely to be charged on a per-acre basis than smaller complex sites. Fair and equitable compensation for work completed is an important consideration taken by the District when deciding how to assign work to a contractor.
- It would not reflect poorly on a contractor to request a per-hour basis. We rely upon good communication from our contractors to ensure that work is completed in an effective and timely manner. The District ultimately reserves the right to request work to be completed on a per-hour or per-acre basis, but we welcome input from our contractors, and can generally accommodate requests.

Q9: On the Proposal Forms, there is a question about capacity. What do you mean by “capacity”?

A9: We’re looking for a narrative that describes your services. Things like the size of your crews, the skills your workers have, whether or not your workers have special skills, the equipment you use, your availability (the times of year you are -- or are not -- available, how quickly you can get us on your work schedule), how flexible you are to work at different kinds of sites. We’re trying to identify contractors in a way that we can get a sense of what kinds of projects they will be a good fit for. Some contractors might be best suited for certain kinds of projects, and other contractors might be best suited for other kinds of projects.