

Request for Proposals – Crystal River Wild and Scenic Feasibility Collaborative Facilitator

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Crystal River is one of Colorado’s last undammed rivers of size. Flowing from its headwaters in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness to Carbondale where it joins with the Roaring Fork River, this crystal-clear river carves one of western Colorado’s most scenic valleys. The Crystal provides clean water to the valley’s residents, multigenerational family ranches, and an abundant aquatic and riparian ecosystem. Beginning in the 1980’s, citizen groups have sought designation of the river and its corridor under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 2002 the US Forest Service found the Crystal River eligible for inclusion in the national Wild and Scenic River system, which would protect its free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable scenic, historic, and recreational values.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act helps preserve certain rivers and streams with outstanding natural, cultural, or recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Efforts to protect these values will benefit from a stakeholder process that explores the values of the Crystal River that the community would like to see protected, the concerns that they would like to see addressed in any protection campaign, and the facts surrounding the Crystal River and potential protections under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and other potential tools. Due to the long history of this issue, it is known that not everyone connected to the river is of one mind on the topic.

The Crystal River Wild and Scenic Feasibility Collaborative (“Collaborative”) was formed in 2022 as a scoping group to discuss the creation of a facilitated process. The Collaborative envisions creating a structure to enable broad reaching discussion and investigation of the feasibility of such a designation or other protective measures. The Collaborative contemplates the identification and creation of a stakeholder group to commence in fact finding, identification of overlapping interests and concerns, and a robust discussion of shared goals and strategies that would facilitate lasting river protections for the Crystal River, including, but not limited to, Wild and Scenic designation. It is the intent of the Collaborative that the initial phase of the stakeholder process will bring together a robust and representative cross section of interested parties to provide informed input; examine, explore, and investigate river protection; access and rely on experts in river and riparian health; engage experts to provide factual information relevant to protective designations; agree upon rules of engagement; be a process grounded in the highest integrity and inclusiveness; and result in identification of shared principles for protection of the Crystal River.

1.2 SCOPE OF WORK AND OBJECTIVES

The Collaborative is seeking a skilled Facilitator to facilitate stakeholder input on the feasibility of a Wild and Scenic designation in the Crystal River Valley. It is anticipated the stakeholder process will consist of several phases. The initial phase of the stakeholder process will identify shared values and shared goals, as well as outstanding concerns regarding designation of the Crystal River. It will include fact finding and education on mechanisms for river protection, including Wild and Scenic designation. The expected outcome of this phase is education and evaluation of the feasibility of a Wild and Scenic designation, ensuring interested parties have a robust opportunity to engage on the issues. In the future, the process may include additional phases beyond the scope of this RFP, such as identification of interest group representatives, discussions between interest group representatives to develop protection mechanism language, and legal or governmental action to accomplish negotiated protections.

The stakeholder group will be chaired by the local governmental members of Pitkin County, Gunnison County, the Town of Marble, and the Colorado River Water Conservation District. Upon contract implementation, American Whitewater will serve as stakeholder group coordinator working with the Facilitator to set up meetings, develop agendas, and coordinate with stakeholders and chairs.

To achieve these goals, the facilitation scope of work includes, but is not limited to:

- Working with the Collaborative to evaluate and recommend a format for the stakeholder process and a structure to identify goals, objectives, deliverables, and actions for the stakeholders, adjusting as necessary as the process progresses;
- Designing a system for identifying, inviting, and welcoming stakeholders into the process;
- Identifying potential stakeholders missing from the process;
- Assisting stakeholder group chairs in defining governing principles for the process;
- Assisting stakeholders with ground rules, decision making, conflict management, progression of topics;
- Engaging the stakeholders in highly interactive, respectful discussions;
- Steering and facilitating meetings, including preparing agendas and materials;
- Generating minutes of the stakeholder meetings and delivering the minutes to the Collaborative on a timely basis before subsequent meetings;
- Organizing expert presentations as appropriate and necessary;
- Guiding public meetings as appropriate and necessary;
- Working with small groups or subcommittees as appropriate and necessary; and
- Providing technical assistance to the stakeholder group in order to further define future phases and deliverables.

Work conducted under the contract stemming from this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) will directly support Collaborative stakeholder activities in and around locations near the Crystal River including the towns of Crystal, Marble, Redstone, Carbondale and counties of Pitkin and Gunnison. The Facilitator shall review and familiarize themselves with the components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and other key topics in the stakeholder process. The Facilitator shall review and understand the outstandingly remarkable values identified by the Forest Service for the Crystal River segments found eligible for Wild and Scenic designation including both the north and south forks of the Crystal River, beginning at their headwaters and then downstream to the Sweet Jessup headgate. The White River National Forest Wild and Scenic river eligibility appendix is attached to this RFP as Exhibit A. It is anticipated this eligibility determination and river reach is the initial point from which conversations will flow, not a predetermined outcome.

It is anticipated that not all participants will agree on goals, objectives, and actions, but shared interests and concerns should be identified and documented. The Facilitator should be able to move the process toward identifying areas of agreement, while allowing diverse and divergent voices to be heard, considered, and respected. The goal will be to reach a place of mutual understanding, with co-identified, potential paths forward to address the interests and concerns that emerge in the process. The Facilitator will work with the Collaborative group chairs to develop an approach for garnering public input with the inclusion of digital means and methods. While time and location of meetings will vary based upon participants, initial Collaborative polling indicates that meetings are most likely to occur on the 2nd Tuesday or 4th Thursday of the month between 5-7 p.m.

1.3 FUNDING

The value of the initial contract for facilitation services pursuant to this RFP shall not exceed \$50,000. The primary funding for the initial contract has been provided by Pitkin County, Gunnison County, and the Colorado River Water Conservation District. In-kind donations have been proffered by the Town of Marble. It is anticipated a fiscal agent will administer the contract and the fiscal agent will likely be a governmental entity not participating in the Collaborative or in the stakeholder process.

1.4 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The initial phase of the stakeholder process may take up to two years, but the contract for facilitation services pursuant to this RFP is for a one (1) year term, with the possibility, but not the assurance, that the Facilitator could continue if mutually desired by the Collaborative and the Facilitator. After the first year, or upon conclusion of the initial phase of the stakeholder process, whichever occurs first, the facilitator will meet with the Collaborative steering

committee members to provide recommended next steps, wrap-up discussions with the participating stakeholders, and provide a written report inclusive of consensus findings, opinions, and recommendations.

II. RFP LOGISTICS

2.1 RFP COORDINATOR

The RFP Coordinator is the point of contact for the Collaborative for this procurement. Communication and questions regarding this RFP shall be directed to the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Name	Lisa Tasker
Email	Lisa.tasker@pitkincounty.com
Phone	970.920.5190
Mailing Address	Pitkin County Healthy Rivers Program 530 E. Main St., Ste. 301 Aspen, CO 81611

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the Collaborative for this procurement. Applicants are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator and this RFP.

2.2 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

All proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF and will not be accepted in any other format. Each application received will be acknowledged via email. Proposals must be submitted by uploading to BidNet (www.bidnetdirect.com/colorado). The Collaborative may request the highest scoring applicants present their proposals, but a decision is anticipated to be made based on the submitted materials. If a presentation is desired, the Collaborative will contact the applicant to schedule a date and time for their presentations. **Proposals are due no later than 2:00 PM (MT), November 11, 2022.** Please review and follow the Instructions to Proposers, attached, and incorporated here in, as Exhibit B. In the event that any provision of this RFP conflicts with the procedures contained in Exhibit B, the language in this RFP shall supersede and control.

2.3 ESTIMATED SCHEDULE

The Collaborative will endeavor to use the following timetable:

October 13, 2022	Request for Proposals publicly advertised, posted on website (www.bidnetdirect.com/colorado).
October 19, 2022	Question and Answer Period – Proposers’ request for clarification and questions due via email to lisa.tasker@pitkincounty.com by 4:00 PM MT.
October 21, 2022	County’s response to request for clarification and questions posted on BidNet Direct via addendum.
November 11, 2022	Proposals Due – Proposals must be uploaded to BidNet by 2 PM MT to be considered.
November 28, 2022 - December 2, 2022	Proposal Review and Selection – Proposers will be contacted if a presentation is desired to schedule a presentation date and time.
December 2, 2022	Notice of Award and Notice to Selection to Proposers.

III. PROPOSAL CRITERIA

3.1 REQUIRED PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The Proposer shall submit a letter of interest and explain their approach to the facilitation scope of work and objectives outlined in this RFP. The Facilitator is expected to have the capacity and expertise to lead and facilitate a multi-faceted stakeholder program. The Facilitator is expected to present and utilize innovative strategies to guide diverse, collaborative stakeholder groups. The Collaborative seeks to engage key stakeholder audiences, including local governments, cultural, environmental, recreational, business, property owners, and river and river corridor user groups. To support the range in consultation required, the Facilitator’s team should include staff with specialization in community and stakeholder engagement, communications and/or strategic planning with dexterity to facilitate all size groups. When explaining your approach:

- Include a discussion of your understanding of collaborative stakeholder processes, conflict management and resolution, and natural resource management issues.
- Provide information on experience with similar projects demonstrative of your capability to successfully perform the work outlined in this RFP.
- Provide a budget reflecting hourly rate, estimated hours, travel expenses, materials and supplies required to perform the work outlined in this RFP.
- Provide documentation addressing the minimum and preferred qualifications outlined in section 3.2 of this RFP.
- Provide a list of references including three clients for which you acted as a facilitator. Please include a brief description of the facilitation and the outcomes achieved, along with email and telephone contact information for each reference.
- Explain how you will identify and engage underserved communities in the stakeholder process.

3.2 MINIMUM AND PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Please provide documentation addressing the following minimum and preferred qualifications:

Minimum Qualifications

- I. The Facilitator's identified team must have staff or contractors with specialization in community and stakeholder engagement, communications and/or strategic planning, with dexterity to facilitate all size groups.

- II. The Facilitator must have completed at least two (2) public engagement/facilitation projects in the last three (3) years with a natural resource management focus. For two (2) identified projects, the Facilitator shall identify:
 - a. What, if any, significant challenges did Facilitator face during each facilitation;
 - b. What were steps taken by the Facilitator to overcome such challenges;
 - c. A brief summary of the subject matter of each facilitation, including copies of reports generated from those facilitations if not confidential; and
 - d. A brief summary of the resulting outcomes achieved at the conclusion of each facilitation.

- III. The Facilitator must demonstrate they have experience working with natural resource and recreational management issues. Team experience in the Colorado River basin or a similar basin is beneficial.

IV. The Facilitator must demonstrate they have experience working on water rights issues and familiarity with Colorado water rights or shall include a team member, which may be a consultant, with such experience.

V. Facilitator must demonstrate they have the ability to identify subject matter experts in relevant areas of law and policy and work cooperatively with such experts to facilitate factual understanding by stakeholders.

VI. The Facilitator must demonstrate dexterity to facilitate all size groups.

Preferred Qualifications

I. Facilitator that demonstrates experience working with similar, sensitive, protected area designation and place-based management frameworks.

II. Facilitator that demonstrates experience working on natural resource issues which have resolved conflicts over natural resources, moved conservation management frameworks forward, or reached agreements to protect the identified natural resource(s).

IV. PROPOSAL SELECTION AND AWARD

4.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTING

Selection of the Proposers invited to present and/or the selection of the top-ranked Proposer will be based upon the following criteria and relative importance (or as the same may be amended or supplemented by published secondary selection criteria, if any):

1. Approach to Project 40%
 - A. The Proposer shall prepare a brief statement as to their intention to address:
 - i. The Project Scope of Work including the Proposer's approach to conducting the stakeholder process and facilitation.
 - ii. The Project Schedule.
 - iii. Outcome and Performance Measurement.
 - iv. Required Qualifications Met.
 - v. Preferred Qualifications Met.

2. List of Similar Work 20%

A. The Proposer shall submit examples of projects of similar size and scope, specifically with local governments when available.

B. The quality of the Proposer's experience, including the examples of prior facilitation with groups of diverse stakeholders and collaborative organizations, including the provision of organizational alignment advice will be evaluated to determine they demonstrate the Proposer's ability to work successfully with the Crystal River Collaborative.

3. Estimated Cost of Services, including Reimbursable Expenses 30%

A. The Proposer shall list all costs assumed necessary to successfully complete and/or deliver the provided scope of work, services, and/or goods, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- i. Labor and material expenses
- ii. Reimbursable expenses for mileage and/or administrative services
- iii. Miscellaneous expenses

B. The Proposer shall provide a list of standard fees/rates and material markup rates to include with the Contract for any additional services or goods that may not be covered in the awarded Contract; billable only as incurred and as agreed upon in advance by mutual signing of a change order.

4. References 10%

The Proposer shall provide a list, including contact name and information, of three (3) references/prior clients, especially local, state and federal government.

4.2 NOTIFICATION TO PROPOSERS

The Collaborative will notify the top-ranked Proposer of their selection in writing upon completion of the evaluation process. Individuals or firms whose proposals were not selected for further negotiation or award will be notified separately by e-mail. The Collaborative is under no obligation to select a proposal. All costs associated with preparing proposals to this RFP will be bore solely by the proposer.

V. RFP EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT A – White River National Forest Crystal River Wild & Scenic Eligibility Statement.

EXHIBIT B – Instructions to Proposers.