

INVITATION TO RESPOND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape Conservation Plan

Audubon Mid-Atlantic (AMA) in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) invites qualified firms to respond to a Request for Proposals for facilitating and drafting a Conservation Plan for the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape (KRCL).

Complete proposals (electronic copy in PDF format) are due no later than June 30, 2021, 4:00 PM EST. Proposal documents shall be emailed to Jeanne Ortiz, jeanne.ortiz@audubon.org. Additional copies may be mailed to the address below.

Questions regarding technical aspects and specifications of the bid should be directed to Jeanne Ortiz:

Jeanne Ortiz, Program Manager Landscape Conservation
Audubon Mid-Atlantic
The Discovery Center
3401 Reservoir Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19121
Phone: 215-519-5648
jeanne.ortiz@audubon.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Section 1. General Information
- Section 2. Project Description
- Section 3. Contract Information
- Section 4. Proposal Requirements
- Section 5. Evaluation Criteria

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

The Kittatinny Coalition is embarking on an updated Conservation Plan for the KRCL, and we are seeking a consultant to facilitate the plan and its adoption by the Steering Committee and KRCL stakeholders. At a minimum, the Conservation Plan is to include the conservation project i.e. the Work Scope; the Conservation Landscape's key interests; partner priorities and areas of overlap and potential integration; conservation goals and strategies included in the Strategic Plan; climate mitigation and adaptation strategies; an approach that is diverse, equitable, inclusive and just; and be in alignment with the 2020-2024 PA Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan. See attachment for a baseline Conservation Plan outline.

1. Complete proposals must be emailed no later than June 30, 2021 at 4:00 PM EST. If sending additional copies through the mail, send to: Jeanne Ortiz, Senior Program Manager Landscape Conservation, The Discovery Center, 3401 Reservoir Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19121.
2. AMA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to select the proposal that it judges to be in the best interest of AMA and the Kittatinny Ridge Coalition.
3. All proposals shall remain effective subject to AMA review and approval for a period of 90 days from the deadline for submitting proposals.
4. If only one proposal is received, AMA may initiate negotiations with the firm submitting the proposal or seek additional proposals on an informal or formal basis during the 90-day period that proposals must remain effective.
5. The proposer is encouraged to add to, modify or clarify any of the scope of work items it deems appropriate to obtain a high quality plan at the lowest possible cost. All changes should be listed and explained. However, the scope of work proposed, at minimum, must accomplish the goals and work outlined below.

SECTION 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND

AMA is seeking a consultant to facilitate and draft a Conservation Plan for the KRCL in partnership with the Kittatinny Coalition Steering Committee. The Kittatinny Coalition is a diverse alliance of organizations, businesses, agencies, academic institutions, and municipalities working together with one voice and one goal, to protect the globally important and locally cherished Kittatinny Ridge. The primary partners are the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Audubon Mid-Atlantic (AMA), the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The Kittatinny Ridge is the name of a long mountain ridge that runs over 250 miles from southern New York State, through northern New Jersey and eastern and south-central Pennsylvania, to Maryland. It is known locally in eastern Pennsylvania as Kittatinny or Blue Mountain, in central Pennsylvania as Blue, First or North Mountain, and in Franklin County as Front Mountain or The Tuscaroras. The Ridge was named "Kittatinny"

meaning ‘the endless mountain’ by the Lenni-Lenape tribe of Native Americans that inhabited this region. The name is appropriate as the mountain extends nearly uninterrupted through New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The Kittatinny Ridge is nationally important as a critical habitat linkage in the magnificent Appalachian Forest that stretches the length of the East. The Ridge provides a critical connection between the rich forests to the north in the Highlands and New England, and the lush forests to our south, such as the Southern Appalachians.

In Pennsylvania, the Kittatinny Ridge extends 185 miles from western Franklin County on the Mason-Dixon line to the Delaware River in Monroe County. The Kittatinny was formed 225 million years ago by the geologic forces that gave Pennsylvania the unique ridge and valley character that still marks the landscape today. The Ridge is the first prominent landscape feature you encounter as you move north or west from Philadelphia, marking the entrance into the Ridge and Valley region, adjacent to the populated “Great Valley.”

Spanning 12 counties the Kittatinny Ridge is one of Pennsylvania’s most climate resilient landscapes; provides clean and reliable drinking water; offers extensive hunting and fishing opportunities; shelters many endangered and threatened species; is a Global Important Bird Area; part of a migration corridor used by tens of thousands of hawks, eagles, and falcons each fall; and hosts a wide range of hiking and camping adventures, including the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The natural system services, recreational revenue, air filtration, and open space and water real estate values are worth, on average, one billion dollars annually to the local economies, in addition to the eco-tourism income from the many visitors to the region’s parks, trails, and game lands.

For more information about the KRCL visit www.kittatinnyridge.org.

B. SCOPE OF WORK

The KRCL Conservation Plan is a collaborative project between DCNR, AMA, ATC, and TNC. AMA is DCNR’s designated “External Lead” for the KRCL and will be managing the Conservation Plan project.

Several organizations formed the “Kittatinny Coalition” in the late 1990’s and have been collaborating over these past 30+ years. Over time partners convened; awarded grants; planned and mapped; sought county support for the project from municipalities, hunting groups, hiking groups, etc.; held public meetings; and published studies and literature. The first Kittatinny Ridge [Conservation Plan](#) was drafted in 2006 to document the Ridge’s assets, challenges, and action needed to conserve it. Over the years, partners have successfully raised awareness about the importance of the Kittatinny Ridge and Appalachian National Scenic Trail, protected land, supported scientific research, and improved local land use regulations, culminating in the Kittatinny Ridge being designated a DCNR Conservation Landscape in 2018.

The Kittatinny Coalition adopted a [Strategic Plan](#) in 2020. The Plan outlines an organizational structure for the Kittatinny Coalition; roles and responsibilities of key partners; methods for engaging additional Kittatinny partners in the KRCL, including nature centers, land trusts, colleges and universities, the military, and local, state, and federal representatives; and a purpose, guiding principles, goals and strategies for the next five years. The Plan includes some conservation priorities expressed by stakeholders during the process.

The Kittatinny Coalition is now embarking on an updated Conservation Plan for the KRCL, and we are seeking a consultant to facilitate the plan and its adoption by the Steering Committee and KRCL stakeholders. At a minimum, the Conservation Plan is to include the conservation project i.e. the Work Scope; the Conservation Landscape's key interests; partner priorities and areas of overlap and potential integration; conservation goals and strategies included in the Strategic Plan; climate mitigation and adaptation strategies; an approach that is diverse, equitable, inclusive and just; and be in alignment with the 2020-2024 PA Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan. See attachment for a baseline Conservation Plan outline.

In collaboration with the Kittatinny Coalition Steering Committee, specific tasks include but are not restricted to:

- Working with Kittatinny Coalition Steering Committee members to develop the Conservation Plan process.
- Designing, implementing, compiling and analyzing internal and external information collected via a comprehensive stakeholder survey.
- Organizing and facilitating at least three meetings of Kittatinny Coalition Steering Committee members.
- Organizing, facilitating, and analyzing input from at least three external stakeholders meetings.
- Drafting and providing a final digital copy of the Conservation Plan.
- Providing all map layers in a format compatible with AMA's ArcGIS Online system.

Meetings with the Steering Committee will be held via Zoom or in the Middletown/Harrisburg area, to be determined pending the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. External stakeholder meetings must be held in different parts of the Kittatinny Ridge, ensuring input from all regions and convenience to attendees. Some travel may be required.

SECTION 3. CONTRACT INFORMATION

A. CONTRACT TERM

The contract shall commence upon receipt and execution of the contract and shall terminate December 31, 2022.

B. PAYMENT TERMS

Payment shall be made on a reimbursement basis for actual services performed in accordance with the Contract. All invoices for this contract **MUST** either be:

1. Emailed to jortiz@audubon.org or
2. Mailed to the following address:

Jeanne Ortiz
Senior Program Manager
Audubon Mid-Atlantic
The Discovery Center
3401 Reservoir Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19121

C. TRAVEL

Travel reimbursement shall be at or below state rates found in the most current version of the Commonwealth's Management Directive 230.10, Travel and Subsistence Allowances, and shall require the same documentation as required of state employees.

D. BUDGET

The budget for this project is \$50,000. A portion of these funds may be used as match to State and other public grants.

All, or selected, firms submitting proposals may be invited to give an oral presentation explaining their proposal.

SECTION 4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

A. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

This letter should include:

- A statement indicating understanding of the work to be performed.
- An affirmation of the firm's qualifications for professionally and expertly conducting the work as understood.
- The firm's contact person concerning the proposal and a telephone number where that person can be reached.
- A clear statement of the firm's, and/or the principals of the firm, relationship(s) with, or knowledge of any officials or employees of the **National Audubon Society, the John James Audubon Center, and Audubon Mid-Atlantic** and the nature of this relationship or knowledge.

Note: FAILURE TO CLEARLY STATE AND FULLY DISCLOSE ANY OF THE INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL SHALL BE GROUNDS FOR Audubon Mid-Atlantic TO REJECT THE FIRM'S PROPOSALS AND WILL BE GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF ANY CONTRACT ENTERED INTO BETWEEN National Audubon Society AND THE FIRM WITHOUT PAYMENT OF WORK COMPLETED.

B. PROFILE OF FIRM

The Contractor must have and describe experience and abilities in:

- Drafting Conservation Plans.
- All tasks described in Section 2 above.
- Working with multiple stakeholders, including government, non-profit, for-profit, the military, and colleges and universities.
- Integrating internal and external stakeholders into one comprehensive initiative.
- Defining the strengths of partners and key stakeholders, most effective ways to apply them.

C. CONTRACTOR REFERENCES

After the bid opening, and prior to awarding the contract, the AMA has the right to request references (names, addresses, and telephone numbers) of similar work performed in the previous two (2) years as proof of qualifications to perform the work outline in this contract.

D. EXPLANATION OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED

The proposal must include a detailed description of the procedures and methods that will be employed to complete the work requested by this RFP. This is important because the methods and procedures proposed will receive primary consideration in evaluating the proposal. Examples or links to similar work will be helpful and may be included.

E. WORK SCHEDULE

A project work schedule must be provided including timeframes for each major work element, target dates for public meetings, and dates for completion of draft and final documents.

F. COST

Full cost information should be provided that shows the minimum number of hours to be provided by each person assigned to the proposed work by the firm's organizational levels. The proposed hourly rate for billing shall be included for each person. The hours of work and cost shall be itemized for each major work element of the proposal. An itemized estimate of reimbursable expenses must be included. The total amount of maximum payment must be stated.

The method for billing must be indicated. AMA will make payment on a periodic basis as substantial portions of the work are performed. Regardless of the billing method used, ten percent (10%) of the total contract price will be withheld until the final product is received.

SECTION 5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Decisions about this project will be led by a team comprised of DCNR, AMA, ATC, and TNC representatives.

All proposals will be evaluated based on the technical and professional expertise and experience of the firm, the proposed method and the procedures for completion of the work and the cost of the proposal. The apparent ability of the firm to be independent and objective in performing the requested work will also be considered.