

Gunpowder Valley Conservancy **Request For Proposals (RFP)**

Request for Proposals: Consulting and Facilitation Services for the Clear Creeks Project

Date Issued:	July 30, 2024
Online Information Session:	Aug 5, 2024 at 11:00 AM ET; contact Karen Stupski to register
Deadline for Questions:	August 18, 2024
Proposals Due:	August 25, 2024
Award Notification:	September 27, 2024
Work Begins:	October 1, 2024
Contact Information:	Karen Stupski (kstupski@gunpowdervc.org)

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement: Diverse perspectives are needed to solve the complex issues our world faces. Gunpowder Valley Conservancy celebrates all aspects of diversity and welcomes applicants from all backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, and abilities.

INTRODUCTION

The overall goal of Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC)'s Clear Creeks Project (CCP) is to promote clean water in the Gunpowder Watershed by working with a coalition of partner organizations to mobilize diverse communities to implement stormwater management and habitat restoration projects that are described in Baltimore County's Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPs), including rain barrels, rain gardens, micro-bioretenion practices, Bayscapes, native tree plantings, and stream cleanups. The CCP was initiated in 2013 in the Middle River and Tidal Gunpowder subwatersheds and has steadily expanded to include the Bird River, Lower Gunpowder Falls, Loch Raven east and south, and Little Gunpowder Falls subwatersheds of the Gunpowder. In 2022, GVC organized a Gunpowder Watershed Forum where 68 participants from 43 organizations working towards clean water throughout the Gunpowder watershed came together to articulate a shared vision for the Gunpowder in 2050. (See attachments.) In 2024-2026 the CCP will extend the geographic area where stormwater management and habitat restoration projects are implemented to the entire Gunpowder watershed (480 square miles), engage more diverse partners and communities to work towards our shared vision for the Gunpowder, and co-create a more formal collaborative structure for the coalition that will enable the GVC to mobilize additional stakeholders to implement actions identified in County watershed plans to provide environmental solutions.

The CCP's proven ability to recruit and maintain strong partnerships has significantly contributed to increasing restoration outcomes in the CCP watersheds year on year. In addition to the GVC, the partnership includes government agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, community associations, faith institutions and land trusts. The CCP has been guided by a Steering Committee (SC), composed of representatives from partner organizations, that has met quarterly to review progress, practice adaptive management, gather input on strategies, and secure commitments for future activities. A number of SC members have been continuously active since 2013. As the geographic reach of the

project has grown, new steering committee members have been recruited to represent additional subwatersheds.

In 2024-2026 we plan to further strengthen and expand the CCP partnerships by developing a more formal regional collaborative to work toward common objectives promoting clean water throughout the Gunpowder watershed. Specifically, we will focus on engaging new partners in the more rural areas of the County including agricultural organizations and land trusts, as well as BIPOC-led organizations throughout the watershed. We will engage one or more consultants/facilitators that have experience working with collaboratives to help us design a sound governance structure, identify an efficient organizational structure, and facilitate some of the larger meetings. We are envisioning a structure that has a Steering Committee with a core of key partners leading and smaller working groups that would focus on specific geographic areas within the Gunpowder watershed or on subject matters such as large-scale restoration projects, reforestation, funding, inter-county coordination, etc. However, we would like the consultant to make recommendations and guide our group in creating the structure. We also plan to organize another Gunpowder Watershed Forum for representatives of up to 75 organizations to come together to network, share results and develop strategies together. In addition, since the CCP has proven to be a good model for mobilizing residents to implement restoration actions identified in Baltimore County's Small Watershed Action Plan (SWAPs), we intend for the collaborative to support Baltimore County's work as it develops the next generation of watershed plans and help to set up a structure for ongoing stakeholder participation in the implementation of the plans. The collaborative will also support the other counties in the watershed with their local watershed plans.

See Attachment A for additional background information.

SCOPE OF WORK

There are two aspects to the work. Contractors may bid on one or both of these activities.

1. Work with the CCP partners to develop the Gunpowder Watershed Collaborative. The outcome will be a more formal regional-scale partnership that will enable diverse organizations throughout the Gunpowder watershed to work together regularly to more efficiently and effectively implement actions identified in watershed plans and our shared vision for the Gunpowder in 2050. Specific tasks include:
 - Help the CCP partners develop a collaborative governance plan/structure, using a cooperative process for developing it.
 - Guide development of governance documents such as a charter, mission, values, principles for working together, etc.
 - Assist CCP partners in developing working groups.
 - Facilitate quarterly Steering Committee meetings.
 - Facilitate additional committee and/or working group meetings as needed (up to 12 in the first year to get them started).
 - Connect with GVC staff leadership regularly and meet as needed
 - Recommend and execute additional tasks to support the development of the collaborative.
 - Document outcomes in a report.

2. Provide consulting and facilitation services for the Gunpowder Watershed Forum in Fall 2025 (preferred), a 1-day event that will engage the CCP partners and strengthen the collaborative. This forum is intended to help guide GVC's future actions and grant proposals that involve the collaborative. Specific tasks include:
 - Lead a committee to plan the event, including goals, schedule/agenda, items to be accomplished.
 - Facilitate the event.
 - Document outcomes in a report.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The grant funding for this work has been awarded. GVC's intention is for the contractor(s) to begin the work by October 1, 2024. All work must be completed by March 31, 2026.

REQUIREMENTS

Individuals or entities interested in taking on the scope of work for 1) Developing the Gunpowder Watershed Collaborative should meet the following qualifications:

- Experience with developing, leading, and/or facilitating collaboratives, networks and/or coalitions
- Knowledge of collaborative/network governance and impact models
- Experience with cooperative decision-making processes such as consensus and/or sociocracy
- Knowledge of online tools to help coordinate collaboratives (such as Loomio)
- Strong facilitation skills
- Experience with negotiation, conflict management, and restorative justice
- Effective written and verbal communication skills
- Experience adhering to timelines and practicing adaptive management
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice
- Experience working with marginalized communities in collaborative efforts
- Familiarity with the Gunpowder watershed preferred
- Familiarity with environmental restoration work in the Chesapeake Bay watershed preferred
- Familiarity with collaborative efforts between communities and local governments preferred

Individuals or entities interested in taking on the scope of work for 2) Providing consulting and facilitation services for the Gunpowder Watershed Forum should meet the following qualifications:

- Strong facilitation skills – a team of facilitators would be preferred for interactive activities
- Effective written and verbal communication skills
- Experience with planning large meetings and events
- Experience adhering to timelines and practicing adaptive management
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice
- Familiarity with the Gunpowder watershed preferred
- Familiarity with environmental restoration work in the Chesapeake Bay watershed preferred
- Familiarity with collaborative efforts between communities and local governments preferred

PROPOSAL FORMAT/REQUIREMENTS

Contractor proposals should include the following:

1. Contractor contact information
 - a. Organization name
 - b. Tax and/or incorporation status
 - c. Mailing address
 - d. Physical address
 - e. Name, title, email address, and phone number of point of contact
2. Project understanding
3. Scope of work with project schedule and deliverables
4. Contractor qualifications
5. Contractor experience with similar work, including experience and qualifications of proposed personnel
 - a. Portfolio of 2-3 examples of similar work the organization has done while in a similar capacity as a Prime Contractor. Project examples should include client name and contact information, location, and cost.
 - b. Subcontractors - List of any subcontractors proposed to be assigned to the project, summarizing in one paragraph, for each subcontractor, the proposed role within the project team and relevant qualifications.
6. Itemized cost proposal and total lump sum price
7. Optional: Description of any Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) or Women-owned Business Enterprise (WBE) participation anticipated (preferred but not required)

BID PROCESS

Any questions during the RFP process should be emailed to Karen Stupski (kstupski@gunpowdervc.org). Questions must be submitted by August 18, 2024. Responses will be communicated either privately or publicly, at GVC's discretion, within 2 business days of receiving the questions.

EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated by the GVC's Executive Director, Program Director, Program and Grants Manager, and representatives of Clear Creeks Project partner organizations. Considerations may include qualifications related to the scope of work; reputation; proposed approach to accomplish the work; capacity and commitment to meet the intended timeline; and value of price in terms of rate and number of hours devoted to the project.

BID SELECTION

The project is funded by grants with very little budgetary flexibility. Best value bids will be judged in part on the ability to completely provide the services within or below the budgeted amount of \$25,000 for collaborative development and \$7,000 for the Gunpowder Watershed Forum.

CONTRACTUAL AWARDS

Award of the contract will be announced to the successful bidder on September 27, 2024. All other bidders will be notified of their non-selection by September 30, 2024.

GVC is excited for the opportunity to collaborate on this project and looks forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Karen Stupski

Grants and Program Manager

443-621-6607

Kstupski@gunpowdervc.org

Gunpowder Valley Conservancy

PO Box 9733, Towson, MD 21284

gunpowdervalleyconservancy.org

Attachment A

Additional Background Information

- A. Abstract of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Small Watershed Grant that is funding this project:

Gunpowder Valley Conservancy's Clear Creeks Project (CCP) promotes clean water in the Gunpowder Watershed by working with a coalition of partner organizations to mobilize diverse communities to implement stormwater management and habitat restoration projects that are described in Baltimore County's Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPs), including rain barrels, rain gardens, micro-bioretenion practices, Bayscapes, native tree plantings, and stream cleanups. In 2024-2025 the CCP proposes to extend the geographic area of the CCP to the entire Gunpowder watershed to engage more diverse partners and communities to work towards our shared vision for the Gunpowder. Outcomes will include the annual reduction of est. 369.31 lb Nitrogen, 45.92 lb Phosphorus, and 74,162.89 lb Sediment draining to local streams and the Chesapeake Bay, improved stream health, increased engagement of Gunpowder watershed residents in restoration activities, and the establishment of a regional-scale partnership that will enable diverse organizations throughout the Gunpowder watershed to work together more efficiently to implement actions recommended by County watershed plans. Over 50 partners are actively involved including Baltimore County, Harford County, Carroll County, York County, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, USDA/NRCS, 4 universities, 11 nonprofit organizations, 3 land trusts, 5 businesses, 14 community groups and 10 faith institutions.

- B. [Blog post](#) about the outcomes of the Gunpowder Watershed Forum that was held in 2022, including a [report](#) that articulates our shared vision for the Gunpowder in 2050:

<https://www.gunpowdervalleyconservancy.org/gunpowder2050/>

- C. References on Collaboratives

Tamarack Institute: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca>

Collective Impact Forum: <https://collectiveimpactforum.org>

- D. A list of the Clear Creeks Project partners can be provided upon request.
- E. A recording of the Online Information Session that will be presented on August 5 can be provided upon request.