



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Forest Management Plan for Municipal Land

May 2023

Project MOC-FMP-2023

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Request for Proposals

Municipality of the County of Colchester

Forest Management Plan for Municipal Land

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Local Information

The Municipality of Colchester (“Municipality”) is located centrally in Nova Scotia abutting the Northumberland Strait and the Minas Basin in the Bay of Fundy. It borders the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Municipalities of Pictou County, Cumberland, and East Hants, the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, and Millbrook First Nation, a Mi’kmaq community. The region has a vibrant industrial, manufacturing, agricultural, commercial, and residential community with a long history of an economy driven by agriculture and forestry.

Colchester is in Mi’kma’ki, the unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq, whose ancestors have lived on this land for over 11,000 years. Archaeological excavations in Debert have uncovered evidence of a Paleoindian settlement from the last ice age, thought to be a settlement of the first peoples to live in Canada and ancestors of the Mi’kmaq. As stated on the Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre website: “Mi’kma’ki is a vast area. Its diverse landscapes, seascapes, rivers, plants, animals, fish, rocks, and islands are inseparable from Mi’kmaw people, language, stories, history, and spirit.”

1.2 Services Required

The Municipality requires the services of a qualified consulting firm or consulting team to lead the development of a Forest Management Plan for Municipally owned land, **for both immediate and long-term goals**. The consultant will be expected to use principles of *ecological forestry* to guide the Plan’s development, which considers both the forest’s role in the ecosystem and the goods and services it can provide for the community.

A detailed description of project components can be found in Section 2.1 *Scope of Work*.

1.3 Background & Context

The Municipality owns roughly 1,100ha of forested land across Colchester County, concentrated mainly at municipal parks and other recreational sites, the Debert Business Park, and the Colchester Waste Resource Management Park in Kemptown. These forest stands play a vital role in local ecosystems, watershed health, wildlife habitats, and residents’ enjoyment of parks and green spaces. The French River Watershed is of concern to the Municipality, but the majority of land in this area is privately owned so any recommendations on ecological forestry which could be used to educate landowners is of interest.

Forest management to date has been minimal and conducted on an as-needed basis. Debert has been identified as a priority area for forest management, as the Municipality owns large tracts of forested and partially forested land at the Debert Business Park. In June 2021, Council approved a request for a company to do silviculture work on municipally owned land in Debert as a one-time arrangement and identified the need for a forest management plan to inform longer-term decisions about the Municipality’s forests.

In September 2022, post-tropical storm Fiona hit Atlantic Canada landing particularly hard in Newfoundland, PEI, Pictou County, and Cape Breton, as well as parts of Colchester County. Extensive damage to forest stands and innumerable felled trees across the County emphasizes the need for strategic forest management across the Municipality. There is an opportunity for forestry work that would benefit both the health of the forest ecosystem and the local economy and clean energy sector, including for felled trees to be recovered for biomass heating or other uses. Forest management may also help the Municipality's forest stands to become more resistant to, and recover from, natural disturbances (i.e., fire, wind, insect infestation). The Plan can also inform what replacement trees may need to be planted to restore the aesthetic and ecological benefits of the tree stands in municipal parks while fostering a vibrant ecosystem.

As the climate warms, forest management becomes even more important. A recent Climate Change Risk Assessment published by the Province of Nova Scotia identifies that wildfires will be the greatest climate-related threat to the well-being of Nova Scotians by the 2050s, due to warmer and drier summer months. Well-managed, healthy forests can help to prevent forest fires and to limit their spread. Diverse ecosystems with greater biodiversity are also more resilient to invasive species. In general, mixed-species, multi-aged forests are better able to adapt to a changing climate.

Global warming will put pressure on water resources, underscoring the role of forests in watershed protection. Warming ocean surface temperatures in the North Atlantic also mean that severe storms such as post-tropical storm Fiona will land in Nova Scotia more frequently, fed by the warm water and maintaining their strength farther north. Forest management plays a role in maintaining forest health to reduce the number of downed trees as well as in helping to restore forests after an extreme weather event.

1.4 Project Description

This project involves the development of a Forest Management Plan for municipally owned land. It is the Municipality's intention that this exercise and the resulting Plan will lead to improved watershed protection, forest health, carbon sink protection, and conditions for preventing the spread of wildfires and invasive species. The Forest Management Plan will guide future decisions about the uses of municipal forested land, with an aim to protect the integrity of the forest ecosystems and sustain the recreation, aesthetic, and economic value that the forests provide for the community.

The Plan's development will be guided by the principles of *ecological forestry*, whereby forests are treated first and foremost as ecosystems. As stated in the Lahey Report (*An Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia*, 2018):

“Ecological forestry is primarily concerned with the effects of forestry on ecological values such as water, soil, and habitat for all of the species that inhabit and constitute those ecosystems. In place of the philosophy of mitigation, it seeks to align forestry with ecological protection and biodiversity conservation by integrating ecological knowledge (including traditional knowledge), principles, and concepts into how forestry is conducted. ... It seeks to combine the imperative of protecting ecological systems and biodiversity with the social importance of sustaining a productive and profitable forestry industry.”

The ecological forestry concept also provides a framework for categorizing forested lands into three categories based on their intended management type and permitted uses. This framework is called the *triad model*, where the three categories or “legs” of the triad are:

- 1) protected land (for biodiversity);
- 2) high production land (for timber resources); and
- 3) land that forms an ecological matrix (majority of the land), calling for a mix of protection and resource production.

The Consultant is expected to use the triad model, an adaptation of it, or another model that aligns with the principles of ecological forest as a foundation for the Forest Management Plan.

The successful proponent should also be familiar with and utilize other best practices and local standards where applicable, such as the *Code of Forest Practice* and *Best Management Practices/Forest Planning in Municipal Drinking Water Supply Areas in Nova Scotia*, and adhere to any mandatory regulations, such as the *Statements of Provincial Interest* and the *Regulations Respecting the French River Watershed Protected Area* ([Protected Water Area - Municipality of Colchester](#))

1.5 Project Objectives

- To develop a Forest Management Plan for municipally owned forested land that outlines a strategic vision for municipal forests and includes **immediate needs and long-term reestablishment goals**.
- To integrate Western science and Traditional Knowledge about forests and ecosystems using the ecological forestry model.
- To leverage local knowledge and experience from the community.
- To establish a plan that balances the ecological integrity of the municipality’s forests with their economic, social, recreational, and environmental value to the community.

1.6 Project Management

This project is being coordinated by the Manager of Planning Services. Other staff may be assigned to the project as needed. The Consultant will manage the project and ensure that the schedule and budget are adhered to.

2.0 WORK DESCRIPTION

2.1 Scope of Work

The Consultant's responsibilities will include but not be limited to the following tasks:

- a) *Review relevant municipal and provincial policies and regulations, including the Bird Habitat and Wetland Compensation Policy, Central Colchester Municipal Planning Strategy, and Statements of Provincial Interest. These provincial sources must be consulted: [Regulations - Forests - Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection \(novascotia.ca\)](https://novascotia.ca/regulations/forests-wildlife-habitat-and-watercourses-protection); [Regulations - Forests - Forest Sustainability \(novascotia.ca\)](https://novascotia.ca/regulations/forests-forest-sustainability); and the Debert Archeological Standards: https://cch.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/inline/images/debert_testing_standards.pdf*

Copies of the Colchester Trail Strategy and the Municipal Parkland Strategy will be provided.

- b) *Research site history and previous land use and management practices.*
- c) *Consult municipal staff to gain a better understanding of forest management practices to date on the properties and any municipal plans or operations that may relate to or affect the use of forested land. The municipal planning department is currently undergoing a mandatory county-wide plan and by-law exercise and should be engaged to ensure both plans are compatible and complementary.*
- d) *Engage with community members and stakeholders who may be affected by management practices or changes to forest uses or who may be able to offer insights about the forest and its history, such as owners of abutting properties, forestry specialists, park users, local hunters and trappers, protected watershed area provincial management staff, if applicable, and researchers at Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus (related to climate change issues).*
- e) *In keeping with the principles of ecological forestry, engage with organizations and individuals that hold local Traditional Knowledge, such as the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Ulnooweg Education Centre, and community leaders or Elders from Millbrook First Nation.*
- f) *Conduct site visits, as necessary, and collect/assemble data about each forest stand.*
- g) *Utilize GIS to document and display data collected and the results of the project.*
- h) *Evaluate each forest stand through the lens of:*
 - i. *ecosystem integrity,*
 - ii. *Ecoregions,*
 - iii. *climate and global climate change impacts,*
 - iv. *general soil types, capabilities, and limitations,*
 - v. *fire hazard areas and concerns,*
 - vi. *exotic and invasive pests,*

- vii. *invasive tree/weed concerns and land use interface issues,*
 - viii. *critical habitat areas and fragmentation (the need for wildlife corridors)*
 - ix. *threatened, endangered, and species of concern,*
 - x. *water quality and availability, and any other locally relevant factors.*
- i) *Identify goals for each property, in terms of wildlife preservation, soil and water conservation, biodiversity, timber products, and recreational and aesthetic value, etc.*
 - j) *Create a management plan for each property which includes **an immediate plan of action, if applicable**, and long-term operational plans.*
 - k) *Develop a strategy for monitoring and evaluation and updating the plan over time.*
 - l) *Landforms.*

2.2 Deliverables

The primary deliverable of this project is a Forest Management Plan for municipal land that includes:

- a) *An inventory of all municipally owned lands with forest stands 1 hectare in area and greater (can be an accumulation of lots), and which describes:*
 - i. *The area of forested land*
 - ii. *The age and health of the forest*
 - iii. *The type/classification of forest, density, and predominant species of trees*
 - iv. *The extent of biodiversity present*
 - v. *Any ecologically sensitive ecosystems or protected or endangered wildlife species present*
 - vi. *Whether the forest stand is integral to a wetland, watershed, or other ecologically or socially important feature*
 - vii. *Whether the land is close proximity to identified lands with protected status (i.e. Parks and Protected Areas System for NS).*
- b) *A GIS map showing all forest stands, with a list of attributes for each, including forest age, type, species, health, management status, activities, and other pertinent details.*
- c) *The forest management plan for each forest stand, including:*
 - i. *Type of management recommended, with specific details about maintenance, intensity level, cycle length, methods, and other pertinent details.*
 - ii. *Type of non-forestry activities recommended to be permitted on the land and recommended land uses/zoning.*
 - iii. *If using the ecological forestry triad model, which leg of the triad is assigned to the stand (i.e. predominantly for conserving ecological integrity, predominantly for producing timber, or for a balanced combination of conservation and production).*

- d) *A summary of the community and stakeholder engagement process, including who was involved, how they were consulted, and what insights they provided.*
- e) *A summary of any relevant research that was undertaken to complete the Forest Management Plan and a list of sources consulted.*
- f) *An analysis of any economic opportunities that may exist in relation to harvesting wood products.*
- g) *A plan for monitoring and evaluating activities and progress and updating the plan over time. This is to be in the form of an annual schedule of recommended maintenance activities on a per-lot or stand basis.*

2.3 Project Cost

A project budget and corresponding level of effort for the consulting services required shall not exceed \$40,000 plus HST. Should respondents to this RFP feel this budget requires an adjustment, an explanation of any changes should be outlined and justified in the Proposal.

2.4 Consultant's Fees

The proposal shall include a schedule of fees and expenses detailing the hourly rates for project team members, an estimate of the amount of time each member will devote to the project, and the resulting cost *excluding HST*, all subtalled by task. A breakdown of estimated disbursements and expenses *excluding HST* shall similarly be included. Fees and expenses for meetings with Municipal staff and stakeholders shall be included in the proposed total cost.

The Consultant may also wish to propose a payment schedule for work components or milestones. Monthly progress payments, less a ten percent (10%) holdback on the value of the work, may be disbursed by the Municipality in accordance with its policies and practices as outlined in Section 4.9.

2.5 Project Schedule

Request for Proposals issued	May 4, 2023
Deadline for inquiries	May 18, 2023
Submission deadline	May 25, 2023
Award of contract	June 28, 2023
Start-up meeting	Week of July 3, 2023
Project completion	By November 30, 2023

3.0 PROPOSALS

3.1 Proposal Content

Proposals shall contain the following information:

- A brief description of the Consultant’s understanding of project requirements.
- Consultant’s understanding of the scope of work proposed to be carried out, including tasks, steps, and method. The proposal should include an explanation of how the project will follow the principles of ecological forestry and describe any frameworks that will be used for decision-making, such as the triad model.
- A description of the proposed approach to stakeholder engagement and how the Consultant will ensure that all necessary individuals or groups are engaged.
- A statement of any perceived challenges and risks this project may present and how the Consultant intends to mitigate those as part of their process.
- A brief description of the Consultant’s organization (corporate profile) and a list of similar projects carried out recently by the Consultant, together with references.
- Resumes of key personnel to be deployed for the project, as well as an organizational chart for the project team showing lines of responsibility and roles.
- Profile and key personnel of sub-contractors/consultants proposed to be employed for the completion of the project and the scope of work that will be sub-contracted out to them. Sub-consultants shall be subject to the approval of the Municipality.
- A Gantt chart showing the project time schedule. Please include a minimum of one (1) week for each client review and acceptance wherever the time schedule requires.
- Consultant’s fee and cost breakdown as referenced in this RFP.

3.2 Proposal Submission

Proposals marked “Colchester Forest Management Plan” and addressed to the Manager of Planning Services will be received at the Municipal Building, Community Development Department by May 25, 2023, at 3:00PM, local time at the following address:

Municipality of the County of Colchester
Community Development Department
1 Church Street, Truro, NS, B2N 3Z5
Phone: (902) 897-3170

All applicants must submit 3 paper copies and 1 digital PDF copy. The digital copy must be submitted in an appropriately labeled USB drive.

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned unopened. Faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted. Incomplete proposals may be rejected.

The Municipality will proceed with private openings. Consultants will be advised of the results after the Contract has been awarded.

3.3 Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Responses to this “Request for Proposals” will be reviewed by the Selection Committee and other specialists as appropriate. All proposals must comply with all requirements outlined in this document and all submissions will be evaluated and ranked against the following criteria and associated weights:

Evaluation criteria

40% *Consulting team information and experience:*

- team composition and representation by all necessary disciplines of the primary consultant and sub-consultants assigned to the project;
- experience of the proponent and key team members with similar projects and the range of specified services;
- relevant community engagement experience in projects with similar scope and complexity;
- completeness of consulting team and demonstrated experience / expertise of all individual members;
- proposed organizational structure and coordination of the individual team members including reporting relationships, identification of lead members, and communication;
- availability of back-up personnel and/or provision to access specialized skills; and
- results of reference checks for previous projects.

30% *Project approach, methodology, & management:*

- approach to the scope of the services required;
- understanding of project requirements;
- management of project and suitability of the proposed work plan, including work program components, Gantt chart of time schedule, and contribution matrix of all personnel showing anticipated hours of involvement together with individual rates;
- compliance with the Work Description outlined in section 2.0; and
- ability to meet all project timelines.

25% *Proposed costs, value for money, and acceptance of terms and conditions:*

- value for money represented by the proposed level of effort; and
- creative and cost-effective approach.

5% *Proposals:*

- quality and completeness of submission.

The Municipality of Colchester reserves the right to conduct interviews with potential proponents. The Manager of Planning Services will be in touch to arrange a mutually convenient time and platform to conduct such interviews, if necessary.

3.4 Proposal Acceptance

The Municipality reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The Municipality reserves the right to accept a proposal that is not the lowest price or to accept any proposal which it may consider to be in its best interests. The Municipality reserves the right to waive formality, informality, or technicality with the acceptance of proposals for this work. Any proposal not supported by the information requested in this RFP may be rejected. The Municipality reserves the right to negotiate with any Consultant who has submitted a proposal or with other parties as deemed in the best interest of the Municipality. The Consultant whose proposal is accepted by the Municipality is hereafter referred to as the “Accepted Consultant”.

This Request for Proposals is not to be construed as an offer. The Municipality reserves the right to not proceed with any or all aspects of this work without compensation for expenses to consultants.

3.5 Proposal Validity

Proposals shall be valid for acceptance for a period of sixty (60) days from the closing date or such additional time as may be mutually agreed upon in writing.

3.6 Fees, Expenses, & Disbursements

The Municipality wishes to firmly establish the total cost of the consulting work prior to entering into a Contract. The Municipality requires that Consultants supply a detailed estimate of the total cost including all fees, expenses, and disbursements. Actual costs that exceed the estimated total cost without prior written approval of the Municipality will not be paid.

3.7 Inquiries

All questions related to this RFP should be directed to:

Pam Macintosh, Manager of Planning Services
Municipality of the County of Colchester
1 Church Street, Truro, NS, B2N 3Z5
Phone: (902) 897-3170
Fax: (902) 843-4061
Email: pmacintosh@colchester.ca

An addendum will be issued if, in the opinion of the Municipality, it is warranted.

4.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Schedule & Cost

The Consultant shall contact the Manager of Planning Services bi-monthly to provide an update on the progress of the work. A copy of the updated Contract Schedule indicating progress to date shall be produced for the Municipality as requested.

The Consultant shall promptly advise the Manager of Planning Services of any differences or expected changes from the cost and schedule included in their proposal. No expenditures beyond the agreed amount will be permitted without prior written approval by the Municipality. If the Accepted Consultant is of the opinion that tasks being requested are outside the scope of the contract, they must immediately advise the Manager of Planning Services in writing within five (5) working days of the request being made for costs associated therewith to be considered an additional expense.

4.2 Personnel

The Consultant is advised that the Municipality expects the personnel listed in the proposal to perform the work indicated and written permission must be obtained before changing any member of the work team. In the case of personnel being changed, the Municipality requires that the new personnel being assigned have a similar length and breadth of experience relevant to this project as the personnel being replaced and otherwise be acceptable to the Municipality.

4.3 Sub-Consultants

The Consultant is advised that the listed sub-consultants/sub-contractors and their work scope cannot be changed without the written permission of the Municipality. Failure to comply with this provision will be considered a breach of contract and may result in termination of the Contract.

4.4 Confidentiality

Information provided by the Municipality is to be treated as confidential and is not to be disclosed to any third party without the written permission of the Municipality except as necessary to perform the Contract.

4.5 Ownership of Information

The Consultant is advised that all information produced during this Contract, including but not limited to models, design notes, criteria, graphs, figures, maps, specifications, and drawings, is to be considered the property of the Municipality and a reproducible copy and an electronic copy of the final design criteria, notes, models, reports, specifications, and drawings shall be turned over to the Municipality upon completion. This includes a soft copy of all reports in PDF format.

4.6 Consultant's Responsibility

The Consultant shall indemnify and save harmless the Municipality, its officers, and employees from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, and costs of any kind based upon injury or death of a person or damage to or loss of property arising from any willful or negligent act, omission or error on the part of the Accepted Consultant or their servants in carrying out this Contract.

4.7 Insurance

The Consultant shall, without limiting its obligations or liabilities, maintain commercial general liability insurance coverage to a minimum of \$2,000,000, and professional liability (errors and omissions) insurance coverage to a minimum of \$2,000,000 and shall include proof of coverage and level of coverage in their proposal submission.

4.8 Regulations

The Consultant shall comply with all existing Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulations, guidelines and standards and other authorities having jurisdiction.

4.9 Payments

Payments shall be based on invoices submitted monthly by the Consultant and supported in such detail as the Municipality may request. Invoices shall indicate individual person hours, rate and extended amount; individual mileage, rate and extended amount; and expenses by category.

Payment will be made on a net thirty (30) days basis from receipt of invoice provided that the Municipality has approved the work that is being billed. Incomplete or unsatisfactory work will result in reduced compensation to the Consultant as deemed appropriate by the Municipality. No payment made by the Municipality under this Contract shall constitute acceptance of work or products that are not in accordance with the requirements of the Contract.

5.0 SOURCES

Department of Environment and Climate Change. (2022). *Weathering What's Ahead: Climate Change Risk and Nova Scotia's Well-being*. Province of Nova Scotia.

<https://climatechange.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/climate-change-risk-report.pdf>

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Inland Urban Forest Council. (2016). *Urban Forestry management Plan Toolkit*.

<https://ufmptoolkit.net/>

Lahey, W. (August 2018). *An Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia: Executive Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations*.

https://novascotia.ca/natr/forestry/forest_review/Lahey_FP_Review_Report_ExecSummary.pdf

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<https://www.mikmaweydebert.ca/ancestors-live-here/>

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Municipality of the County Colchester. (2002). *Central Colchester Municipal Planning Strategy*.

<https://www.colchester.ca/2296-central-colchester-municipality-planning-strategy-chapter-39/file>

Natural Resources Canada. (2020). *Forest Management Planning*. Government of Canada.

<https://natural-resources.canada.ca/our-natural-resources/forests/sustainable-forest-management/forest-management-planning/17493>