

**Request for Bids:  
Land Acquisition Project Assistance  
and Management Services**



Date Issued: 3/4/2024  
Proposals Due: 3/25/2024

## **1. Statement of Need**

The Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT) is seeking one or more private contractors (Contractor(s)) to provide real estate project assistance and management services to NWLT for the purpose of completing land acquisition projects across north central Minnesota.

## **2. Background**

NWLT is a private, non-profit corporation that protects Minnesota's most vital natural lands in order to provide fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences and other conservation benefits in north central Minnesota. NWLT acquires land and transfers these properties into public ownership which are then permanently protected and managed for fish and wildlife habitat, clean water resources, and other natural resource benefits.

NWLT has been protecting land for more than 30 years. NWLT conducts land protection work within six major watersheds in north central Minnesota. Funding in large part comes from State of Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund grants and donations from landowners, private donors, and other organizations.

NWLT is seeking individuals or businesses with experience in purchasing undeveloped land and familiarity with procedures related to the use of grant or dedicated/restricted funds.

## **3. Scope of Services**

### NWLT Geographic Areas of Work

The selected Contractor(s) will assist NWLT in completing land acquisition projects across north central Minnesota. Current projects are located in Cass, Aitkin and Crow Wing Counties and future projects may occur in six major watersheds in north central Minnesota including those shown on page 5 of this document.

### Contract Duration

NWLT retains the sole right to determine the length of contract for any applicant; those decisions will be based on level of experience and existing land acquisition projects. NWLT expects that most projects initiated at the onset of this contract will be completed within 12 – 18 months; however, NWLT also recognizes that some projects will require a longer timeline.

### Roles and Responsibilities: Land Acquisition Project Management

The Contractor(s) will work to purchase land from willing landowners following grant requirements for land transactions using public funds. The Contractor(s) will be expected to:

1. Manage necessary professional services including appraisals, surveys, title investigations and environmental site assessments.
2. Coordinate communications with Counties, Townships, and the public agency receiving the land.
3. Work with closing companies on documents needed to complete the land transactions. Due to the complexities of the land acquisition process, the Contractor will need to work closely with NWLT staff to ensure legal and grant compliance.

4. Upon project completion, write a brief project profile to be used for news releases and social media.

Completion of work must be timely and efficient to meet funding restrictions and landowner agreements.

#### Orientation

NWLT will familiarize the Contractor(s) with its acquisition procedures and will provide all forms, templates and materials necessary for completion of these transactions. NWLT will provide information clearly defining accountability and responsibility for each task required in completing a land acquisition.

#### Qualifications

Minimum qualifications include:

- Direct and demonstrated experience successfully managing projects, especially land acquisition, real estate, or conservation easements projects.
- Direct, demonstrated and effective experience working with private landowners on complex land transactions.
- Strong oral and written communication skills; ability to work effectively with NWLT staff, contractors, and private landowners.
- Knowledge and understanding of Minnesota's natural resources and geographic data, and state conservation plans.
- Reliable transportation and a valid driver's license (NWLT will reimburse for mileage at the federal rate).
- Commercial General Liability, Automobile Liability, Employers Liability, Workers' Compensation (statutory) – Limits of each coverage to be evaluated
- Internet connection, computer, and proficiency with MS Word, MS Excel, Adobe Acrobat, and cloud-based file storage and database systems.
- Ability to work with tight deadlines.

Additional desired skillsets for both roles include:

- Experience utilizing public funding for real estate transactions.
- Familiarity with GIS and related technologies.

#### **4. Time & Effort**

This contract will be a reimbursable time and materials contract. NWLT expects to select one or more Contractors by March 28, 2024, and all Contractors will be notified at that time. The final contract scope, award amount, and duration will be based on grant funding available and criteria set forth earlier in this RFP. Invoices will be accepted monthly.

#### **5. Submission of Proposals**

Contractors interested in providing these services should submit a proposal via email to:

**Northern Waters Land Trust**

Attn: Annie Knight, Executive Director

[AnnieK@nwltn-mn.org](mailto:AnnieK@nwltn-mn.org)

**Proposals must be delivered no later than 5:00 pm on Monday, March 25, 2024.**

Proposals should include sufficient information regarding the Contractor's experience, skill-sets, and ability to perform the activities outlined in the Scope of Services to enable NWLT to make a judgment about the Contractor's abilities. Failure to do so is likely to result in a lower scored or disqualified bid. Bids must include the following:

- 1) **Cost:** Provide an hourly cost of services rate.
- 2) **Qualifications:** Provide a solid overview describing relevant experience; include a resume or curricula vitae, particularly referencing education or experience related to land acquisition or real estate transactions, managing projects using state or other public funds,.
- 3) **Capacity:** Provide an estimate of the number of projects you are willing to take on at a given time (i.e., your desired workload); if you have a minimum level of work, please provide that as well.
- 4) **Location/Travel:** Provide a statement as to your preferred work locations and any travel restrictions you may have (i.e., duration, distance, etc.).
- 5) **License and Insurance:** Provide a copy of a valid driver's licenses for all staff and proof of general, auto and other applicable liability insurance coverage.
- 6) **References:** Include three relevant professional references.

**6. Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be reviewed by NWLT land protection staff and advisors. NWLT will consider all information provided in the bid when making its decision and may consider relevant information from other sources. Specifically, NWLT will evaluate:

- 1) Relevant experience and qualifications
- 2) Hourly cost of services rate
- 3) Information provided by professional references
- 4) Experience with public funding or government grants and related requirements and procedures
- 5) Insurance Coverages
- 6) Capacity and locational limitations

NWLT, at its sole discretion, will select a Contractor(s) whose qualifications, bid and proposal is a) most advantageous to the organization in fulfilling its mission of permanent land protection in north central Minnesota and b) most effective and efficient in the use of dedicated funding provided for this purpose by its donors and the State of Minnesota, as well as other sources.

NWLT reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, the right to waive immaterial project requirements, and the right to issue subsequent Request for Bids; in addition, it reserves the right to

cancel the entire Request for Bids process. NWLT also reserves the right to contact any respondent for clarification after responses are opened and/or to negotiate further with any respondent. However, we intend to evaluate bids without further discussion with Contractors. As such, a respondent's initial bid should contain the respondent's best terms. Northern Waters Land Trust reserves the right to negotiate with any, all, or none of the respondents.

