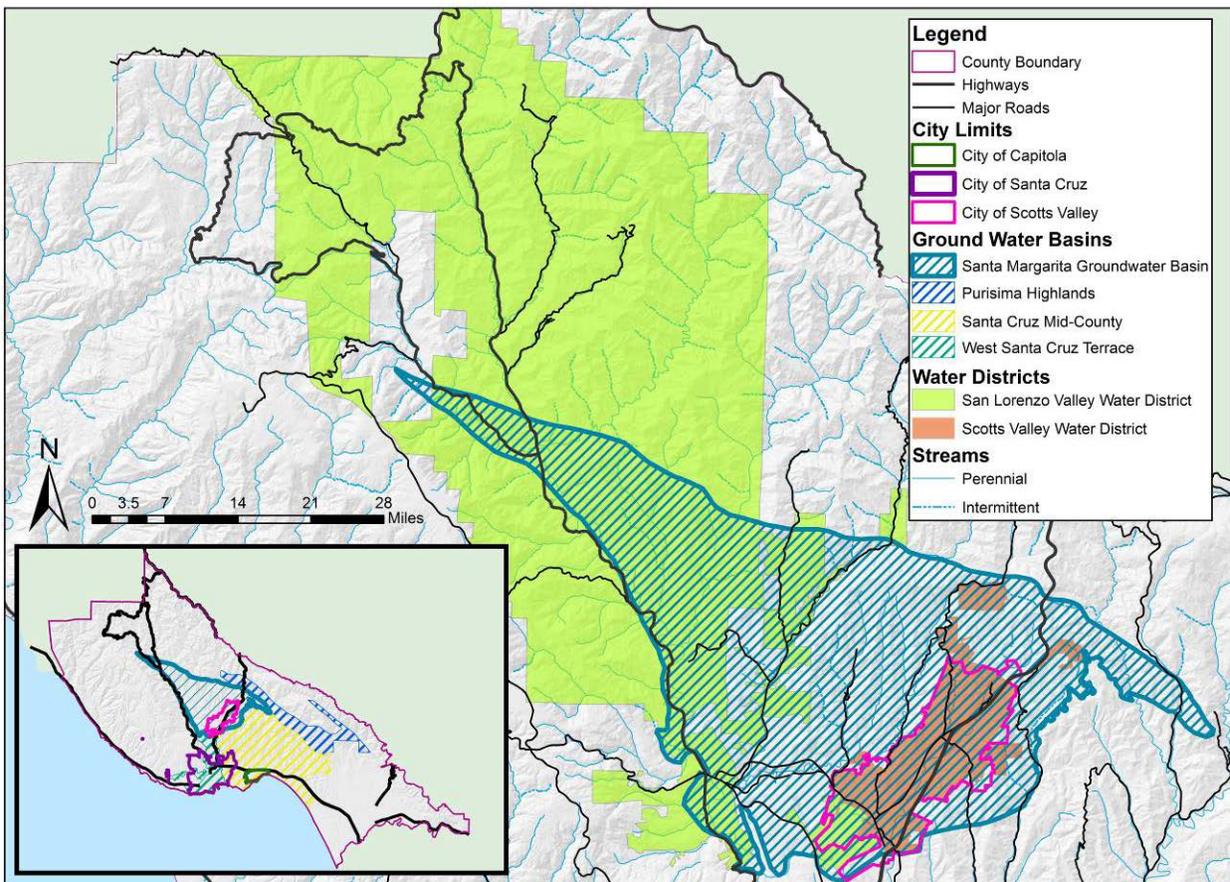


SANTA MARGARITA Groundwater Agency

Request for Qualifications for Technical Consultant for Groundwater Sustainability Plan Development



Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin

Statements of Qualifications Due: February 4, 2019

I. Request for Qualifications

The Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA or Agency) is soliciting Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) from qualified companies to prepare a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin.

The Agency is using a collaborative process for developing the Groundwater Sustainability Plan, involving the members of the Board and staff of the agencies who are represented on the Board.

The SMGWA has not yet determined the specific approach and extent of work that will be required to prepare a successful GSP for the Basin. The Agency will consider recommendations made as part of the SOQ submittals, including those based on responder's experience elsewhere.

II. Background – Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

A. Requirement for Groundwater Sustainability Plan

California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) became law on January 1, 2015. SGMA provides local agencies with the tools to manage groundwater basins in a sustainable manner over the long-term and allows for limited state intervention when necessary to protect groundwater resources. It requires the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) to establish a definition of sustainable groundwater management, coordinate the formation of local groundwater sustainability agencies, prioritize basins with the most urgent needs (ranked as high and medium) and set a timeline for the completion and implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). GSPs will replace groundwater management plans that were developed under AB3030 which included some of the GSP elements but did not include State mandated sustainability indicators or mandatory deadlines to reach sustainable groundwater management goals. In contrast, SGMA requires medium and high priority basins to make measurable progress toward sustainability, to report that progress annually, and to achieve ongoing sustainability. The Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin is most likely a medium priority basin (to be confirmed by DWR in early 2019), and therefore must prepare a GSP by 2022 and achieve sustainability by 2042.

B. Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

In 1994, the Scotts Valley Water District developed and implemented a groundwater management plan under the provisions of AB 3030. A year later, the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee was formed to cooperatively manage the groundwater in the basin. The members of the committee consisted of Scotts Valley Water District, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, Lompico County Water District, City of Scotts Valley and County of Santa Cruz.

In June of 2017, the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) was formed through the adoption of a joint powers agreement by the member agencies: the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, the Scotts Valley Water District, and the County of Santa Cruz. Each member agency appointed two directors to the eleven-member SMGWA Board of Directors. The five remaining directors include two representatives of private well owners, a representative of the Mt. Hermon Association Community Water System, a representative of the City of Scotts Valley, and a representative of the City of Santa Cruz.

By August 2017, all directors had been appointed and the board commenced their regular bi-monthly meeting schedule. The board elected officers, adopted bylaws, selected an attorney, adopted a budget for fiscal year 2018, established basic principles for its operations and has begun the education process for the board and interested members of the public about the groundwater resources and the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, including the requirement to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 2022.

III. Project Tasks and Activities. Qualifications.

The Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency is looking for a consultant to provide services to prepare a Groundwater Sustainability Plan including (but not limited to) the following activities:

- Collect, process and validate technical (hydrogeological, geological etc.) data
- Improve the current groundwater model by implementing the recommendations from the model evaluation study recently completed by EKI/HydroFocus which include:
 - Expanding the model grid to cover the entire basin
 - Converting the model from a quarterly time step to a monthly time-step
 - Updating methods of calculating recharge and evapotranspiration
 - Updating model calibration, including calibration to stream baseflow
 - Expanding the model period
 - Considering and incorporating comments (if deemed necessary) by the technical experts
- Convert complex concepts into user friendly information for distribution to various stakeholders
- Prepare materials and make presentations to the board and committees
- Develop and present materials, concepts and analyses aimed at general public audiences, in support of the community engagement efforts and in collaboration with other consultants
- Provide subject matter expert services and strategic consultation to staff
- Coordinate with DWR to ensure GSP alignment with SGMA
- Prepare a GSP that meets DWR's regulatory requirements, coordinate the community review process of the plan, and submit the final plan to DWR

Anticipated tasks supporting those activities include but are not limited to:

- Description of the basin setting
- Enhancements to the hydrogeologic model
- Description of current and historic groundwater conditions and relationships to surface water and groundwater dependent ecosystems
- Development of the basin water budget

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- Identification of potential management areas
- Development of sustainability criteria (undesirable results, sustainability goals, minimum thresholds and measurable objectives)
- Refinement and consolidation of existing groundwater and surface water monitoring programs
- Identification of representative monitoring wells for sustainability indicators
- Analysis of the potential for various projects and/or management actions to contribute to basin sustainability
- Development of projected hydrology including climate change effects on rainfall, temperature, evapotranspiration, and recharge
- Implementation of MT3D or MODPATH if needed to better understand the effects of management practices on existing contaminant plumes
- Identification of specific projects/activities necessary to maintain or achieve sustainability
- Development of GSP monitoring and reporting system

These tasks entail the consultant working with a wide variety of interested and involved parties in compiling and verifying data, disseminating information, writing and presenting GSP plan sections, gathering and responding to comments and preparing progress reports.

Depending on the qualifications of the candidate firms, the Agency could contract with more than one consultant and include coordination of services among consultants in the scope of work.

Qualifications

- Strong understanding of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience with compiling and authoring similar public agency plans within agreed-upon scope, schedule and budget
- Knowledge and experience working with hydrological models
- Knowledge and experience assessing groundwater surface water interactions and impacts to groundwater dependent ecosystems
- Ability to produce clear and effective written and graphic products
- Strong technical writing skills
- Capability to bring a diverse and competent team (including subcontractors if needed) addressing all necessary disciplines
- Creativity in working with diverse stakeholders to arrive at mutually acceptable outcomes

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- Willingness to collaborate and aptitude for effectively working with various subject matter experts and agency representatives
- Demonstrated skills in oral and written communications, including expertise in presenting technical topics to a variety of technical and non-technical audiences
- Experience in working with large, multi-faceted teams and partners
- Familiarity with the region, its characteristics and complexities is desirable

IV. RFQ Process

A. Process

Interested parties are requested to submit their SOQs on or before 4:00 p.m., February 4, 2019. SOQs will be evaluated by the Selection Committee comprised of SMGWA board members and SMGWA support staff using the criteria established in Section VI. The highest rated candidate will be asked to prepare a proposal for the purpose of negotiating a contract. Where no clear front-runner is determined, top ranked candidates may be asked for supplemental information and may be invited to interview with the Selection Committee. During the interview, the candidates may be asked to:

- Make an oral presentation, and/or
- Respond to a pre-determined set of questions

Equal time and opportunity for resubmittals will be given to all responsive candidates should additional information be requested by the Agency. Any interviews will be scheduled on a mutually agreed upon date and will be at no cost to the Agency. The Selection Committee will use all available information to rate the candidates based on their ability to best meet the needs of the Agency.

B. Timeline

The tentative timeline for the selection process is as follows:

January 21, 2019	Deadline for questions from candidates
February 4, 2019	Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) due
February 18-22, 2019	Interviews with top candidates
February 28, 2019	Selection process completed; start negotiations with the highest ranked candidate
March 28, 2019	Scope of work finalized; contract approval

C. Information Disclosure to Third Parties

SOQs are a matter of public record and are open to inspection under the California Public Records Act. If any respondent claims any part of its SOQ is exempt from disclosure and copying, they must indicate it in the transmittal letter. By responding to this RFQ, respondents waive any challenge to the Agency's decision in this regard.

If any SOQ contains confidential information, the respondent must clearly label and stamp the specific portions that are to be kept confidential. The respondent is urged to identify the truly confidential portions of the SOQ and not simply mark all or substantially all of the response as confidential. Notwithstanding the foregoing, respondents recognize that the Agency will not be responsible or liable in any way for losses that the respondents may suffer from the disclosure of information or materials to third parties.

D. SMGWA Rights and Options

The SMGWA, at its sole discretion, reserves the following rights:

1. To reject any or all SOQs or information received pursuant to this RFQ;
2. To supplement, amend, substitute or otherwise modify this RFQ at any time by means of written addendum;
3. To cancel this RFQ with or without the substitution of another RFQ or prequalification process;
4. To request additional information;
5. To verify the qualifications and experience of each respondent;
6. To require one or more respondents to supplement, clarify or provide additional information in order for the Agency to evaluate the SOQs;
7. To hire multiple individuals/firms to perform the necessary duties and range of services if it is determined to be in the best interests of the Agency; and
8. To waive any minor defect or technicality in any SOQ received.

E. Questions/Clarification Request

The respondent will, in the SOQ, identify the Project Manager and key staff. The Project Manager will be the primary contact for the Agency.

For the SMGWA, the primary contact is Piret Harmon (831-600-1902, pharmon@svwd.org)

During the SOQ process, interested parties are requested to direct all questions to the SMGWA's primary contact listed above. Final date of the inquiries is January 21, 2019. All substantive clarifications will be posted on the website alongside with the RFQ.

V. Submittal of SOQs

The SOQ must provide the information requested and be organized into sections as follows:

- Cover Letter
- Company Qualifications
- Conceptual Project Approach
- Key Project Staff Experience and Qualifications (including subcontractors)
- Client References
- Current Fee Schedule

Describing the experience and qualifications addressing the tasks and anticipated activities as listed in Section III will assist evaluators in considering the range of potential services that may ultimately be included in any contract.

A. Cover Letter

The SOQ must include a cover letter attesting to its accuracy, signed by an individual authorized to execute binding legal documents on behalf of the proposing firm. The cover letter shall

provide the name, address, email, telephone and facsimile numbers of the proposed Project Manager, who will serve as the primary contact for the company.

B. Company Qualifications

Provide a description of your company's recent and relevant experience with SGMA and related groundwater matters such as; basin condition assessments, groundwater modeling, sustainable groundwater management, community outreach and facilitation of multi-agency processes.

C. Conceptual Project Approach

Include a discussion of your company's ideas with respect to implementing the project in a cost-effective and timely manner. Present your perspective on key priorities, milestones, schedule, potential risk factors and their mitigation.

D. Key Project Staff Experience, Qualifications and Availability

Include a listing of all key personnel (including subconsultants when applicable) involved in performing the work and their respective time allocations to this project. A description of their background, qualifications, and recent similar experience and responsibility must also be included. Clearly specify the individual designated as the Project Manager.

E. Client References

Provide client references, including contact person and current telephone numbers. References should focus on projects in which the personnel listed in Item D had relevant responsibilities.

F. Current Fee Schedule

Provide a current fee schedule for the classification and activities anticipated to be employed in this Project. The Agency will rely on this fee schedule when negotiating the scope of work and budget (based on time and materials) for the contract.

VI. Evaluation Criteria and Selection

The SMGWA will evaluate each candidate's experience and expertise in preparing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan. Companies will be evaluated on the information presented in the SOQ. Final selection may be based on the SOQ as well as any supplemental information or interviews conducted. Evaluation factors used to select the top-ranking candidates will include the following:

1. Qualifications as they relate to this project (50%).
 - a. Candidate's range of experience on similar projects and with the full range of duties that may be included in a contract.
 - b. Qualifications of proposed key personnel on similar projects and with the full range of duties that may be included in a contract.
 - c. Communication skills (written and verbal)
 - d. Fee schedule
2. Apparent ability to provide the required services in a timely matter (25%).
 - a. Accessibility of team.
 - b. Flexibility and readiness to complete specified work.
3. Candidate's reputation for successful completion of similar efforts, integrity and competence (15%).

4. Completeness and quality of the SOQ (10%).

Contract negotiations will begin immediately with the top ranked candidate after the evaluation process. If an agreement on scope and cost is not reached within thirty (30) working days, the next highest ranked candidate will be contacted and negotiations with that candidate will begin. This process will continue until an agreement is reached or it is decided to re-advertise.

The SMGWA reserves the right to determine the extent, duration and limit of the services. Such services will be described in an overall work program to be developed by the top ranked candidate and approved by the SMGWA promptly upon notification of selection. Any deviation from the scope and general work-hour duration of the work program must be approved beforehand in writing by the SMGWA.

VII. Response Format

The Statement of Qualifications in digital format are to be submitted by the stated deadline. Statements of Qualifications should be no longer than 40 pages, including resumes and attachments.

Parties interested in being considered for this project are requested to submit their Statements of Qualifications by February 4, 2019 to:

Piret Harmon, Authorized Representative
Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency
C/O Scotts Valley Water District
2 Civic Center Drive
Scotts Valley, CA 95066
pharmon@svwd.org