



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS TO PROVIDE:

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO
THE SAN LORENZO VALLEY
WATER DISTRICT

FUEL REDUCTION
MANAGER FOR
FIRE/VEGETATION
MANAGEMENT PROJECT

RESPONSE DUE: 3:00 PM on
June 30, 2021

**San Lorenzo Valley Water
District 13060 Highway 9
Boulder Creek, CA
95006
(831) 338-2153**

I. INTRODUCTION

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD or District) is soliciting Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) from qualified Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs), certified arborist, or other qualified consultants to oversee layout and implementation of vegetation fuel reduction, adherence to all Federal, State, local regulations, and development of site-specific management prescriptions. The Project scope of work and vegetation management methods and recommendations are included as 'Attachment A; relevant portions of Chapter 4: Vegetation Treatment Methods and Section 5.2: Defensible Space and Fuel Reduction, and Material Upgrades'. Projects will occur within the SLVWD District Service Area (refer to Figure 1).

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District will enter into a Professional Services Agreement with the selected fuel reduction manager will provide the following:

- Develop site-specific management prescriptions (Rx's) for fuel load reduction activities based on site visits to assess conditions, consistent with the goals and activities summarized below and provided in further detail in the grant agreement and work program. Refer to Figure 2 for example vegetation and sites.
- Ensure project compliance with all Federal, State, local, and SLVWD regulations as well as California Forest Practice Rules.
- Conduct or organize a cultural records search and site walk, as needed.
- Conduct any needed preparatory field work prior to project activities. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, marking vegetation, project boundaries and property lines, cultural avoidance areas or special treatment areas.
- Provide crew orientation and enough oversight to ensure project specifications are being met. Fuel reduction manager is not expected to remain on-site during all work or make daily site visits during crew work.
- Provide a map or GPS coordinates indicating where fuel load reduction activities need to take place in accordance with the terms of the grant.
- Provide monthly summary reports to the District on the status of the project.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

San Lorenzo Valley Water District is a water supplier established in 1941 and serves several communities within the 136 square-mile San Lorenzo River watershed. The District owns, operates, and maintains four permitted water systems divided into three service areas. Each service area provides supplies from separate water sources. The North Service Area includes the unincorporated communities of Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Ben Lomond and Lompico. The South Service Area encompasses portions of the City of Scotts Valley and adjacent unincorporated neighborhoods. The Mañana Woods subdivision became part of the South Service Area as a result of the District's annexation of the Mañana Woods Mutual Water Company in July 2006. The Felton Service Area was acquired by the District from California American Water in September 2008 and includes the town of Felton and adjacent unincorporated areas.

The District's legal boundaries encompass approximately 62 square miles (refer to Figure 1). Land uses include timber, State and regional parks, water supply watersheds, rural

residential, low-density urban residential and commercial, quarries, agriculture, and other open space. Within these boundaries, the District's four service areas have a combined area of approximately 26 square miles and individual areas as follows: North Service Area (20.9 square miles) and Lompico (2.5 square miles), South Service Area (0.8 square mile), and Felton Service Area (2.2 square miles). Their individual water supply systems are referred to as the North, South, and Felton Systems. The District owns one contiguous piece of land of approximately 1,620 acres for water supply and watershed protection on Ben Lomond Mountain, 252 acres in the Felton/Fall Creek watershed, and another 325 acres in the Zayante Creek area.

The San Lorenzo River watershed supports a wide variety of natural plant communities, which in turn support a diverse range of wildlife species. Plant communities include redwood forests, chaparral, the rare sandhills, grassland, oak woodland, and riparian woodland. Many of these plant communities can be found on District-owned lands. Many of the plant species composing the sandhills community are disjunct coastal species, isolated in the sandhills miles from the coast. These disjunct coastal species often exert different morphologies from their coastal counterparts. The sandhills also contain forms of species that are common elsewhere in the state but have strikingly different forms or habits in the San Lorenzo River watershed. Sandhills chaparral communities have undergone the most dramatic shift in structure due to plant succession in the absence of fire, attributed to increased canopy closure. Invasive plants like broom and acacia are converting open canopy habitat into shrublands (McGraw, 2020). Canopy gaps important for maintaining plant diversity are likely also important for the unique sandhills fauna, which is impacted by canopy closure due to fire exclusion (SLVWD, 2009). Invasive and non-native species like European annual grasses and herbs are abundant in the sandhill habitats and are out competing native plants. The nearby Olympia quarry has contributed to the invasion of non-native plants. Woody invasive species, such as French broom, Portuguese broom, and silver wattle have a significant negative effect on the sandhill habitat and associated endemic plants and animals (McGraw, 2020).

On August 16, 2020, the CZU Lighting Complex (CZU Complex) began burning in Santa Cruz County. The wildfire spread eventually ended up burning over 86,000 acres, destroying hundreds of structures, and the majority of SLVWD lands west of the Highway 9 corridor. The fire resulted in direct damage to SLVWD infrastructure, immediate and potential delayed vegetation mortality, hazard trees, and created potential erosion issues.

III. WORK SCHEDULE

Work is anticipated to begin as early as July 2021. Work periods will generally be limited to Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and/or in accordance with local equipment operating period limitations. No work will be scheduled on weekends and state holidays nor will work be performed on Red Flag Warning days.

IV. RESTRICTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR RPF-DEVELOPED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

RPF-developed prescriptions should be focused on vegetation management and removal via gas or electric powered mowing equipment (weed whackers), riding or tractor mowers, hand crew with chainsaws and chipping equipment, and pole saws or pruners. No herbicide use is permitted unless pre-approved for use by the SLVWD representative. Other machinery, such as masticator units, will be permitted only with permission of District and described in the proposal.

Fuel reduction manager shall ensure that contractors chipped or removed all excess debris caused by the cutting or removal ladder fuels or dead and downed materials so there is insufficient fuel to sustain or allow the spread of fire. No piles of chipped or slash materials will be permitted by RPF-developed prescriptions.

V. QUALIFICATIONS

The fuel reduction manager hired must have an or work with an active license in California. As well as have or work with a current certificate from CAL FIRE as a Certified Archaeological Surveyor.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The fuel reduction manager will oversee contractor and design projects in a manner that does not damage non-target plant materials, site improvements, structures, facilities, utilities, and natural or cultural areas from damage, both above and below ground. Any damages noted by the fuel reduction manager shall be reported immediately to a SLVWD representative.

The fuel reduction manager will be responsible for briefing work crews prior to initiation of a project to discuss forest practice rules, describe flagging (e.g., cultural avoidance, and other environmental protection), and general environmental compliance. Project layouts and prescriptions shall be designed to avoid buffer zones determined by SLVWD's representative to protect amphibians, birds, or other specific areas of concern. The RPF will be responsible for flagging of known or discovered cultural sites as outlined. Avoidance buffers may be identified before or during work activity.

- *Protection of Biological Resources – Migratory Birds:* A SLVWD representative will be responsible for nesting bird surveys and marking avoidance buffers, where needed.
- *Protection of Biological Resources - California red legged frog, California giant salamander, and other special-status amphibians:* The California red legged frog is a federally protected species that requires aquatic habitat, such as ponds, water bodies or riparian habitat, such as may be found near the project areas. The California giant salamander and Santa Cruz black salamander are protected species that may occur in leaf litter or under rocks in moist upland habitat and both have a low potential to occur on paved roadways during dispersal.
- *Protection of Biological Resources – Other Special-Status Plants or Wildlife:* Several other special-status plants and wildlife are known to occur on SLVWD lands. Any marked plant must be avoided and instructions provided by the SLVWD representative followed to ensure that these species are not harmed or crushed during work. A SLVWD representative will be responsible for marking avoidance buffers for special-status plants or wildlife, where needed.
- *Protection of Cultural Resources:* The RPF will be responsible for requesting an archaeological records search and will review the records, topographical map, and airphotos to identify known cultural resources and areas of cultural sensitivity that require checking in the field. Known cultural resource will be located and flagged in the field for avoidance. While flagging the project work areas, the RPF will look for cultural resources, focusing on higher sensitivity areas. Any newly identified resource will be flagged for avoidance and recorded. As noted above, the RPF will conduct a tailgate with workers to ensure avoidance of known and previously undiscovered cultural resources.

RPF prescriptions should ensure retention of duff and up to 1 inch of forest litter to reduce soil displacement and invasive plant establishment within the treatment areas. RPF shall determine whether and where erosion control measures should be applied by Contractor, such as wattles, fiber rolls, erosion blankets, wood chips, and down logs where duff and 1 inch of forest litter have been removed during fuels management operations.

The fuel reduction manager should prescribe appropriate erosion control measures before rain events for all areas of ground disturbance in the project area that may result in soil erosion during the rainy season. Erosion control measures will be applied at the cost of the Contractor, not the fuel reduction manager. Any area of off-road vehicle travel must be pre-approved by the SLVWD Representative.

VII. CLEAN UP

At completion of project, the fuel reduction manager will determine if any rehabilitation is needed and will oversee contractor's rehabilitation of all and any portions of project site area that is/are affected by the work performed. Rehabilitation requirement includes but may not be limited to tire, equipment or track marks, collateral damage to trees and garbage or other project-generated non-vegetative debris left on site by workers.

VIII. FIRE HAZARD AND PREVENTION

The fuel reduction manager will be held responsible for any and all fire ignition(s) caused by the RPF and their employees.

Work scheduling during critical fire weather shall be at the discretion of the SLVWD's Representative. No compensation will be made for stoppage due to fire conditions. As soon as feasible but no later than 15 minutes after initial discovery of a fire, the fuel reduction manager shall notify SLVWD's representative of any fires in project area or along roads used. RPF or employees shall report all fires as soon as possible by calling 911 and notifying anyone in proximity of the fire.

IX. SOQ REQUIREMENTS

The SOQ shall not exceed 13 pages excluding resumes, cover letter, dividers, front and back covers. SOQ must use a font size of 11 or larger, and provided in a single document. Fee schedule must be provided in a separate document. Responses to this RFQ shall be in the following order and shall include:

1. Cover Letter: Include a one-page, dated cover letter indicating the fuel reduction manager consultant understanding of and interest in the project and summarizing the key components addressed within the SOQ. This document shall be signed by a person legally authorized to represent and enter into contracts for the contractor. Please include name, address, telephone number, email and title for each of these persons.
2. Background: Provide a general description of your background and project qualifications, including years of business, and identify any contract or subcontract by the consultant which has been terminated, in default, or had claims made against it that resulted in litigation or arbitration in the last 5 years.
3. Experience: The SOQs shall describe examples of previous work involving fuel management, fire prevention, and implementation working for government agencies. Preference will be given to respondents that have experience working with water purveyors and implementing fire/vegetation fuel reduction work. If the fuel

reduction manager has expertise in biological resources (e.g., nesting birds, rare plants) surveying and buffering to ensure avoidance, please include.

4. Staff Experience: Provide resumes describing the qualifications of key staff who will be working on these projects. Provide a list of similar projects and clients that your proposed Project Manager and other key staff have completed work for in the past seven years, including their experience in working fuel reduction projects. Clearly link the staff and projects.
5. Sub contractor's Experience: Provide a list of all proposed sub contractors, their background and qualifications, point of contact, and degree of involvement.
6. Client References: Client references, including contact person and current telephone numbers. References should focus on projects in which the personnel listed had responsibilities.
7. Fee Schedule and Estimates: Provide fee schedule for as needed services within the full proposal.

X. CONTRACTOR SELECTION

The fuel reduction manager will be invited to submit proposals based on the qualifications submitted for the work. The following weighted criteria will be used to evaluate SOQ's:

- a. 25% Experience of staff for work to be done
- b. 30% Understanding and approach to the work to be done
- c. 15% Experience of contractor with similar kinds of work
- d. 15% fee schedule and cost estimates
- e. 10% Overall clarity and presentation of SOQ
- f. 5% Contractor's Local Experience

XI. SELECTION PROCESS

Negotiations will begin immediately with the first choice 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.

If a clear choice is not evident, interviews will be scheduled with those semi-finalists of exceptional rating.

At this time, the District contemplates the use of a Time and Material Not to Exceed contract for the services requested. Negotiations will cover: scope of work, contract terms and conditions, office arrangements, attendance requirements and appropriateness of the proposed fee schedule.

XII. INSURANCE

The District will require a professional liability insurance verification for coverage of not less than \$1,000,000.00 for selected consultants.

After negotiating a proposed agreement that is fair and reasonable the District Manager will present each contract to the District's Board for authorization to execute a contract with the responsive consultant.

XIII. SELECTION SCHEDULE

Work is anticipated to begin as early as July 2021 and continue until the end of the year, depending on weather conditions (refer to Section III.). Board approval may be needed for authorization of the 2021 activities. Ideally, the District will continue to work with the chosen fuel reduction manager on future vegetation management projects after 2021. The District anticipates that the process for selection of consultant and awarding of contracts will begin July 2021.

XIV. SPECIAL CONDITIONS / ATTACHMENTS

The following links to documents are included as attachments to provide background:

- San Lorenzo Valley Water District Post-Fire Recovery, Critical Asset Hardening, Vegetation, and Fuels Management Plan. (available June 4, 2021)
https://www.slvwd.com/sites/g/files/vyhlif1176/f/uploads/slvwdvegplan_wappendices_may2021_digital_june.pdf
- San Lorenzo Valley Water District Watershed Management Plan, Part 1 Existing Conditions Report, Chapter 5 Fire Management.
<http://www.slvwd.com/Watershed.htm>
- San Lorenzo Valley Water District Watershed Management Plan, Part II: Goals, Objectives, and Policies, Chapter 5: Fire Management.
<http://www.slvwd.com/watershed/FINAL-VERSION-pt2.pdf>
- San Lorenzo Valley Water District Integrated Pest Management Policy (2020-2021). <https://www.slvwd.com/environmental>

XV. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

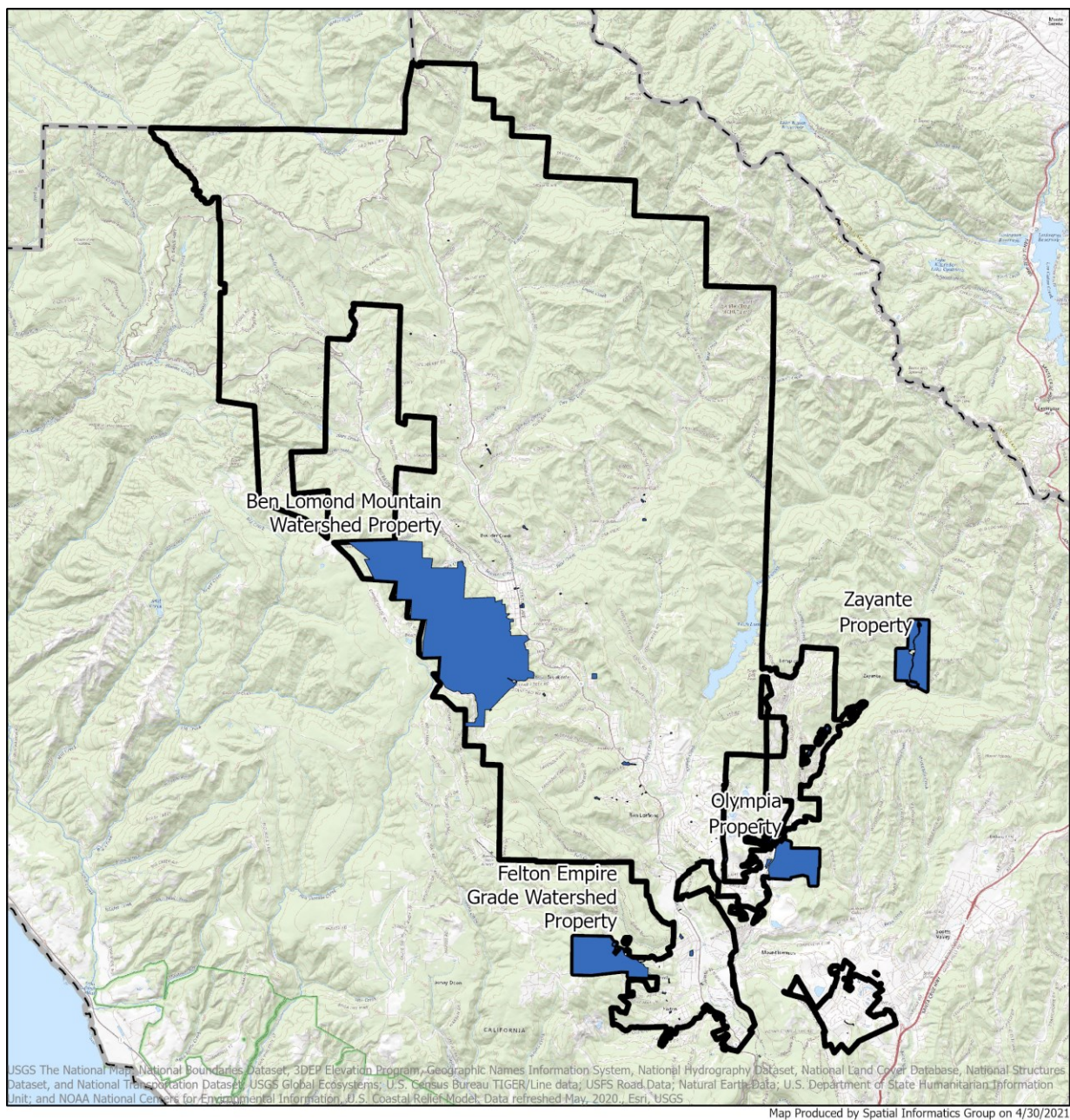
1. Submit one electronic copy of the SOQ in PDF format by email. The SOQ shall be signed by an individual, partner, officer or officers authorized to execute legal documents on behalf of the Consultant.
2. The SOQ must be received no later than **3:00 p.m.** local time, on or before **June 30, 2021** by email to Carly Blanchard:

cblanchard@slvwd.com

Failure to comply with the requirements of this RFQ may result in disqualification.

Questions regarding this RFQ shall be submitted in writing to cblanchard@slvwd.com by June 25th, 2021. The District will not respond to questions submitted after June 25th, 2021.

Figure 1 San Lorenzo Valley Water District Service Area and Lands



NO PART OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM INCLUDING PHOTOCOPY, RECORDING OR ANY INFORMATION RETRIEVAL AND STORAGE SYSTEM, WITHOUT PERMISSION IN WRITING FROM SLVWD.



0 1 2 3 Miles

Figure 2 **Examples of Vegetation on San Lorenzo Valley Water District Lands**

