

Call for Expert Services

HILLSDALE NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

December 2017

The Town of Hillsdale (Columbia County, New York) is seeking proposals for preparation of a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) for the town. The NRI will identify natural resources throughout the town, explain their significance to the Hillsdale community, and provide guidance for land use planning, land development, and conservation. The NRI will be developed as a reference document for use by town agencies, landowners, and others seeking information about Hillsdale's resources and landscapes. Funding for the NRI is from a grant to the town from the Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Project

The consultant selected for this project will work with the Hillsdale Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) to develop the NRI outline, format, and content, gather and compile information, prepare the NRI document, and present the draft and final NRI in public meetings.

The consultant will gather existing data on the presence, condition, and distribution of natural resources throughout the town, including bedrock and surficial geology, soils, water resources (streams, lakes, ponds, groundwater), biological resources (plants, animals, habitats), farmland resources, scenic resources, and recreation resources. Sources for data and information will include but not be limited to the NYS GIS Clearinghouse, state, county, and town agencies, private organizations (e.g., the Columbia Land Conservancy, Audubon New York, Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, Farmscape Ecology Program, New York Rural Water Association), as well as published literature, private interviews, and responses from townspeople at public events and online.

The NRI document will include but not be limited to:

- maps illustrating the extent and distribution of natural resources throughout the town;
- narrative descriptions of those resources, and discussion of their significance to ecosystems and services to and uses by the human community;
- photos of Hillsdale landscapes, habitats, and organisms (photos gathered and selected by the CAC);
- discussion of resources of conservation concern, threats to those resources, and recommendations for conservation measures that can be carried out by landowners and municipal agencies;
- discussion of current and predicted effects of climate change on resources of concern, the implications for land uses, and measures that will improve resiliency of ecosystems, land, and infrastructure in response to climate change;
- explanation of how to use the information in the NRI for land use planning, municipal policy-making, and environmental reviews of development projects.

A 2014 document published by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation—*Creating a Natural Resources Inventory* (available at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/100925.html>)—describes NRIs and provides recommendations for general content and sources of available data.

Two recently-completed NRIs for Columbia County towns are viewable on the Ancram and New Lebanon websites:

<http://www.townofnewlebanon.com/conservation-advisory-council-cac/>

http://www.townofancram.org/images/uploads/CAC/Ancram-NRCP_27-Jan-2015.pdf

Each of those documents is called a Natural Resource Conservation **Plan**, which is simply an NRI with the added component of an "action plan" for conservation. The Hillsdale NRI will be similar in breadth of content, but will not include an action plan.

The consultant will submit drafts of the NRI for review by the CAC and the Hudson River Estuary Program at several stages, and the NRI will be considered complete upon the CAC's approval of the final draft.

The completed NRI will be conveyed to the town in pdf format and also as a printed and bound document.

Meetings

The consultant will correspond with the CAC throughout the course of preparing the NRI, and will meet with the CAC and staff of the Hudson River Estuary Program at the following junctures, at a minimum, to discuss the project:

- at the project outset to discuss the general approach, sources of data and information, contributions by the CAC, extent and types of public outreach during NRI preparation, expectations of the funder, timeline for completion, and timeline for public outreach during preparation and after completion;
- after submission of the first or second draft, as needed, to discuss the CAC's and Estuary Program's review; and
- during preparation for one or more public presentations.

The consultant will also help to present the project to town agencies and the public, solicit ideas and information from the public during preparation of the NRI, and give a public presentation after completion of the NRI.

Deliverables

- At least four drafts of the NRI for review.
- The final NRI in pdf format, and 20 printed and bound full-color copies.
- The final GIS data used for preparing map figures in the NRI, including metadata for any new shapefiles created for the NRI project.
- The ArcGIS template for map figures (to be used for future map updates).
- Co-presentations with the CAC at two public meetings, one during NRI preparation and one after completion.

Timeline

The NRI project will begin in winter 2018; the exact start date will depend in part on the date of execution of the grant contract between the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Town of Hillsdale. The NRI document will be completed by 31 May 2019, after which the consultant will help introduce the document to the town in a public presentation in spring or summer 2019. The details of the timeline for preparation of the NRI, including schedules for NRI drafts and public meetings, will be established with the consultant at the project outset.

Funding, Budget, and Payments

The budget available to the consultant for preparation of the NRI and other deliverables is \$24,100.

The consultant will submit an invoice and progress report to the town each month (or less frequently) as the project proceeds. The final invoice will be submitted upon completion and submission of all deliverables, and before 31 October 2019.

Proposal

The proposal must include:

- a description of the NRI project as applicable to the Town of Hillsdale, a rural town with most land in private ownership;
- the range of data sources to be surveyed in the course of the project;
- a description of how the project will be carried out;
- primary personnel who will conduct the work, their resumes, their particular qualifications for this project, and a summary of their experience with similar projects;
- links to similar completed projects; and
- an itemized budget.

The proposal must be submitted as a pdf document to Hillsdale Conservation Advisory Council chair David Lewis at dalewis2108@gmail.com by 5:00pm on 24 January 2018. Any proposal received after the deadline cannot be considered. Proposals will be reviewed by the CAC, and the consultant will be selected in early February.

Criteria for Selection

The consultant will be selected on the basis of 1) the quality of the project description and thoroughness of the proposal; 2) demonstrated knowledge of natural resources and the implications for land use planning, public policy, and conservation; and 3) demonstrated experience with preparing similar documents for public agencies.