**Conserving Herefordshire’s Ice Age Ponds**

**Invitation to tender for:**

**Ecological Support for the Delivery Stage.**

**1.0 The Project Background**

‘Conserving Herefordshire’s Ice Age Ponds’ is a National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project to conserve and enhance kettle hole ponds across the north and west Herefordshire. The project is a partnership between Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team (HART), Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust (H&WEHT) and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) and is just commencing its 23 month delivery phase of the project.

A distinctive aspect of the landscape of Herefordshire are regions of hummocky topography, created by glacial ice (moraines), consisting of raised areas with numerous intervening small ponds. These ponds, known as kettle holes originate from a time around 24,000 years ago, late in the Devensian Glaciation (the last Ice Age), when glaciers briefly expanded into the county. Over time, these natural landscape features developed diverse aquatic habitats with rich assemblages of associated plants and animals.

The overall aims of our project are to:

1. **Increase our knowledge and understanding of the Kettle Hole landscape of Herefordshire and share that information with local communities, visitors and wider stakeholders**
2. **Conserve and enhance the heritage of the kettle hole landscape through conserving kettle hole sites and enthusing landowners and the wider public to care for them**

**2.0 Organisations**

**Herefordshire Amphibian and reptile Team** is dedicated to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Herefordshire. They aim to encourage people to learn about, protect and conserve these animals and their habitats. Their activities include recording the distribution and population size of amphibians and reptiles throughout Herefordshire, conservation work such as pond restoration, workshops and training days, talks and visits, providing advice on pond and habitat conservation and identifying threats to local habitats <http://herefordhart.org/>

**The Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust** is a charity that aims to record, protect and promote geology and landscape, and to raise awareness of this Earth Heritage by engaging the public in educational programmes. The great variety of rocks in the two counties yields outstanding fossils and minerals and gives rise to wonderful scenery. The Trust is committed to promoting and safeguarding these assets for all the residents of, and visitors to, Herefordshire and Worcestershire <http://www.earthheritagetrust.org/pub/>

**Herefordshire Wildlife Trust** **(HWT)** is part of the federation of 47 Wildlife Trusts based across the British Isles. Formerly known as Herefordshire Nature Trust, it is the largest member based nature conservation organisation in the county, with nearly 5000 members and 55 nature reserves across Herefordshire. HWT has over 50 years’ experience of managing sites valuable to wildlife and people, and successfully run a variety of partnership initiatives from environmental education programmes to conservation projects celebrating Herefordshire's natural beauty. [www.herefordshirewt.org](http://www.herefordshirewt.org)

**The National Lottery Heritage Fund** are the largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK since 1994. NLHF use money raised by National Lottery players to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. With offices across the UK they support the full breadth of heritage, investing £375 million each year.

The project is managed by a Project Manager who will be the ecologist’s primary contact throughout the project. A project steering group will meet approximately every 2 months to provide guidance for the Project Manager.

**3.0 The role of the Ecologist**

Specialist Ecological support is required for a broad range of activities ranging from volunteer training and support to the preparation of a kettle hole pond management plans. During the Delivery Phase of the project we aim, with the assistance of volunteers, to survey a minimum of 60 ponds during the duration of the project. The tasks are outlined in more detail below.

We require an ecologist to tender against the following services:

**3.1 Volunteer Training and support**

Volunteers will play an essential role in the delivery stage of this project through surveying in excess of 60 kettle hole pond sites to gather basic pond information relating to both ecological and geological interests. In order to deliver this effectively they will require training in pond survey techniques with a degree of ongoing support in the field. We require ecological services for the following:

3.1.1 Prepare and deliver two training courses to cover aspects of; basic pond survey technique & form filling; pond safety; first aid; amphibians; aquatic invertebrates; aquatic plants. A survey methodology with support forms and guidebook were produced in the Development Stage and should be utilised for these training courses.

 Prepare and deliver two further training courses that are more specialised focussing on species identification. For example: A course on amphibian survey techniques or a course on aquatic plant identification.

3.1.2 Undertake pond surveys with the volunteers (on a proportion of pond visits) to provide further advice and support and quality assure their survey work. Each volunteer team will require work shadowing in the field on at least one occasion. We anticipate less than 50% of the sites surveyed in the Delivery Phase will require the presence of the ecologist.

3.1.3 If necessary, assist with identification and verification of photos/specimens collected by volunteers.

**3.2 Administrative and Office Based Tasks**

3.2.1 During the development phase of the project we produced a strategy on the approach to conserving kettle hole ponds and guidelines on their management (attached). As we learn more these may need revisions. Support from the ecologists may be required in advising and contributing to these provisions

3.2.2 The ecologist may be required to attend meetings to update on progress. This is to be kept to a minimum where possible with email and phone consultation the preferred option

**3.3 Detailed Surveys and Management Plan Production**

To inform the production of Pond Management Plans we will require an ecologist to:

3.3.1 Carry out ecological surveys of ponds. This will require gathering broad ecological data about pond flora and fauna. In many instances this information can be gathered in conjunction with volunteer mentoring 3.1.2, to save return site visits.

3.3.2 Prepare management plans for post project legacy conservation. We have a target of preparing a further five pond Management Plans. These ponds will be selected from those identified and surveyed through items 3.1.2 and 3.3.1 above. The management plans must be prepared in consultation with geological expertise (provided by project partners) to respect the geomorphological interest present at the sites.

**3.4 Supervision of Contractors**

The Ecologists are required to supervise contractors at a number of kettle hole pond sites. Management Plans have been prepared for 17 ponds (example supplied separately) and the works range from simple coppicing of riparian trees to desilting works. The Ecologists are required to provide supervision on a total of 15 ponds during the contract some of which may need to be selected from the 5 legacy pond management plans prepared (see 4.3.2). Consequently, these management plans would need to be developed in ample time for restoration work to be contracted and completed within the project period. The contractors will be appointed by the Project Manager.

**3.5 Coronavirus - potential variations.**

**Please note that due to Coronavirus, it is difficult for the Steering Group to provide a timetable of the ecologist’s activities that won’t be susceptible to change. We will work hard with the successful applicant and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to be flexible in the timings of when the required work can be delivered. Currently the project will run until January 2022, providing 20 months from the expected contract start date, for completion of all the activities.**

**4.0 Tender submission and Scoring**

**4.1 Selection Criteria**

To be considered all applicants must provide the following:

1. Evidence of Professional and Public Liability insurance
2. CV’s of all relevant staff
3. At least one example of similar work successfully completed
4. Details of a past client who is prepared to act as a referee.
5. Your Health and Safety Policy and examples of relevant Risk Assessments and Method Statements

If all the above are not provided then the tender will be rejected

**4.2 Award Criteria and evaluation**

The contract will be awarded on the basis of Most Economically Advantageous Tender which will be based on the following weightings; Price 30 % Quality 70 %. Therefore, whilst price will be a material factor, the ability of the Ecological Consultant to meet the brief and demonstrate value for money will be fundamental. Herefordshire Wildlife Trust reserve the right to reject any or all of the proposals if they are not satisfied with their content.

**4.2.1 Assessment on Price**

The following table shows how the tenders will be scored on price.

**Assessment criteria for Price (price ranges are inclusive of VAT)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quoted Price** | **Assessment** | **Score** |  | **Summary**  |
| <£24,000 | Unacceptable | 0 |  | Price unacceptable |
| £24,001 - £26,000 | Minor Reservation | 2 |  | Price well below anticipated budget |
| £26,001 - £28,000 | Excellent | 5 |  | Exceptional price |
| £28,001 - £30,000 | Good | 4 |  | Price below anticipated budget |
| £30,000- £32,000 | Acceptable | 3 |  | Price meets anticipated budget |
| £32,001 - £34,000 | Reservations | 2 |  | Price above anticipated budget |
| £34,001 - £36,000 | Serious Reservations | 1 |  | Price well above anticipated budget |
| >£36,001  | Unacceptable | 0 |  | Price unacceptable |

The score for price is multiplied by 6 to get a maximum score out of 30

**4.2.2 Assessment criteria for quality**

The tender will be further scored against the following criteria

A sound appreciation of the brief, the rationale underlying it and the means of achieving it.

**Maximum Score 20**

Relevant skills, experience and knowledge.

**Maximum score 30**

Innovative and creative thinking in progression and development of the project.

**Maximum score 10**

Ability to work to targets.

**Maximum score 10**

**Total Score 70**

**Overall total maximum score for price and other criteria is 100**

To aid us in the assessment for quality please provide in the table below a breakdown of the days/costs associated with delivering each task (as detailed in section 3.0 above) and provide information on how each can best be delivered. Additional pages (up to a maximum of 4 sides of A4), can be added if required.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Number required** | **No. Days/Cost per day** | **Total (Exclusive of VAT)** | **Comments/suggestions on how this will best be delivered** |
| **4.1.1** Training Courses | 4 courses |  |  |  |
| **4.1.2** Mentoring volunteers on pond surveys | Approx. 20 ponds |  |  |  |
| **4.1.3** Verification of Specimens & Photos | Unspecified but one day allocated |  |  |  |
| **4.2.1** Contribution to revision of strategy and guidelines | Unspecified but 2 days allocated |  |  |  |
| **4.3.1** Ecological Survey of ponds | 20 ponds |  |  |  |
| **4.3.2** Production of 10-year Pond Management Plans (Legacy Ponds) | 5 plans |  |  |  |
| **4.3.3** Re-Survey 10 of the 15 ponds after management | 10 surveys |  |  |  |
| **4.3.4** Management Plan revisions | 15 ponds |  |  |  |
| **4.3.4** Supervision of pond restoration/contractors | 15 ponds |  |  |  |
| Incidental travel expenses | Estimated mileage | Cost per mile |  |  |
| A demonstrable ability to work to deadlines | N/A | N/A | N/A |  |

**5. Terms and Conditions**

5.1 The Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) will be the Client for the project and all financial arrangements go through HWT as lead partner and commissioning agent for project’s partnership.

5.2 One initial (pre-contract) meeting with the Client will be required.

5.3 A fee quotation, including disbursement and other expenses (including any cost of obtaining information), but excluding VAT is to be submitted for this commission covering the tasks listed earlier. In addition, staff day and hourly rates are to be supplied to allow the calculation of fees for any additional duties instructed by the Client not covered by this brief.

5.4 Herefordshire Wildlife Trust reserves the right to withhold payment for work considered to be unsatisfactory in quality or not carried out within a specified time scale. Herefordshire Wildlife Trust also reserves the right to curtail or terminate the commission at any stage if they are not satisfied that work is being undertaken in accordance with the brief. In order to achieve the above, milestones will be prepared and agreed with the successful applicant based in part against National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes. The milestones will be monitored monthly to ensure that delivery is on track. .

5.5 The consultant shall indemnify Herefordshire Wildlife Trust in terms of any claims arising from the work.

5.6 The appointment of the consultant will be made by exchange of letters.

5.7 The agreed Fee is a fixed sum. Payments will normally be made in stages depending on performance and quality of work produced in accordance to the agreed timescale.

5.8 The copyright of all documents, specification, plans and illustrations produced will be the property of the project partners (Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust)

**6.0 Submission of proposals**

6.1 The contractor is required to provide a fixed fee proposal to produce the activity outputs identified within Section 4.0.

6.2 You are requested to send a copy by email to d.hutton@herefordshirewt.co.uk by 5pm **29/04/2020**. Late submissions cannot be accepted. Successful candidates will be notified by 5pm Friday 07st May. Following this date there will be a 10 calendar day standstill period during which time no contract can be issued. Assuming the selection is not challenged during the standstill period, a contract can be issued.

6.3 Submissions should not exceed 4 pages of A4 typed excluding appendices, e.g. details of previous projects, curriculum vitae and references.

6.4 The successful applicant must be prepared to start working on the project from mid-late May 2020 subject to Coronavirus restrictions. However, the applicant must also have flexibility to programme the work to take account of constraints associated with coronavirus. Any queries regarding the brief must be submitted by 17/04/2020. Queries following this date may not be answered.

**7.0 Attachments**

1. A sample Management Plan
2. Kettle Hole Pond Conservation Strategy
3. Kettle Hole Pond Conservation Plan
4. Kettle Hole Pond Survey Methods Manual