

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

To Provide Professional Environmental Support Services to Prepare Environmental Documents
for the Advanced Purified Groundwater Replenishment Project

Statement of Qualifications Due: April 15, 2016



Soquel Creek Water District

Attention: Taj Dufour, Engineering Manager/Chief Engineer

5180 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA 95073

tajd@soquelcreekwater.org

Request for Qualifications

The Soquel Creek Water District (District) is soliciting a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) from qualified engineering consulting firms (Consultant) to perform environmental assessments, and provide environmental documentation and permitting support services for the District's Advanced Purified Groundwater Replenishment Project (APGRP).

I. Overview

The District is a public agency that provides potable drinking water and groundwater resource management in a portion of mid-Santa Cruz County, which includes portions of the City of Capitola and the unincorporated communities of Aptos, La Selva Beach, Rio Del Mar, Seascapes, Seacliff Beach and Soquel. The District serves approximately 14,400 connections, of which 94 percent are residential, and a population of approximately 40,000. The District obtains 100 percent of its water supply from groundwater aquifers within the Soquel Aptos Groundwater Management area. The groundwater aquifers are located within two geologic formations that underlie the District's service area, the Purisima Formation and the Aromas Red Sands aquifer. The Purisima Formation provides the majority of the District's annual water needs.

The District's groundwater supply is currently in a state of overdraft and is experiencing seawater intrusion at some of its coastal monitoring wells. In order to return the groundwater aquifer to protective levels, the District needs to reduce its groundwater pumping. Recent hydrologic modeling and evaluations indicate that in order to restore groundwater levels and to provide protection against further seawater intrusion, the District will need to reduce pumping by approximately 40% for 20 years. This assumes that annual District pumping is limited to no more than 2,300 acre-feet per year (afy) and other users of the basin do their fair share to reduce pumping as well. This limit of 2,300 afy has been established by the District as the interim recovery pumping goal. Taking into consideration anticipated conservation savings, approximately 1,500 afy of supplemental supply is needed to allow the District to reduce its pumping to the recovery pumping goal (2,300 afy). The recovery pumping goal of 2,300 afy cannot be implemented without sufficient supplemental water supply/ies or additional conservation, which would allow the District to reduce and sustain its groundwater pumping at this level.

Given the groundwater overdraft conditions in the Soquel-Aptos area, as well as threats from climate change and changing water quality requirements that may affect the use of a portion of the District's groundwater sources, the District has been actively pursuing development of a supplemental water supply, along with conservation and groundwater management. The District has recently completed a Groundwater Replenishment Feasibility Study for recharging the local groundwater aquifers with advanced purified recycled water. The goal of this work was to determine the best project alternative(s) to treat and inject approximately 1,500 afy of purified water into the local groundwater aquifer.

On February 2, 2016 the Board of Directors directed its staff to solicit Consultant support to perform environmental assessments and provide environmental documentation and permitting support services for the District's Advanced Purified Groundwater Replenishment Project.

The purpose of the environmental documentation work is to develop the environmental assessments and documents necessary to support selection of the preferred APGRP approach and to support its eventual implementation. As the District may seek grants or loans from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) through the State Revolving (SRF) Fund Loan Program, Proposition 1 funds, and possibly

Title XVI under the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. It is anticipated that an Initial Study, and either an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), a Negative Declaration, or a Mitigated Negative Declaration under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be required for this project. For the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance it is also anticipated that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or possibly an Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact (EA/FONSI) will also be needed.

II. Project Description

Several options were evaluated and three recommended alternatives for locating the advanced water purification facility (AWPF) for the APGRP were developed for further evaluation through the District's Groundwater Replenishment Feasibility Study. The three recommended alternatives included: 1) build an AWPF at the Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Facility to purify secondary effluent and convey the purified water approximately 6 miles to the District's service area, 2) build an AWPF at the District office site to purify secondary effluent from the Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Facility, and 3) build a satellite wastewater treatment plant plus an AWPF to purify raw wastewater effluent on a new site in Soquel. In all three scenarios, purified water would be directly injected into the groundwater aquifer at Cabrillo College, on Monterey Avenue, and potentially at Anna Jean Cummings (AJC) Park. The draft Groundwater Replenishment Feasibility Study is available on the District's website (see Section VIII.E for details).

The environmental/permitting services consultant (Consultant) will prepare the environmental documents for the APGRP. The documents must fulfill the requirements of CEQA Plus, NEPA and the State Board's SRF Loan Program.

The CEQA/NEPA document(s) shall identify and address all issues required by State and/or Federal statutes and regulations so as to comprise a complete document. The level of significance of the identified impacts on environmental resources shall be determined pursuant to CEQA/CEQA Plus and the CEQA/CEQA Plus Guidelines. Significant thresholds will also be considered pursuant to NEPA requirements. Indirect or secondary impacts of the project shall also be discussed and mitigation measures recommended.

The District expects the Consultant to have the knowledge required to support the District through the entire CEQA/NEPA process. The Consultant is expected to have significant experience in CEQA and NEPA compliance and permitting. The Consultant will be responsible for conducting all necessary environmental assessments; preparing CEQA/NEPA documents; and providing environmental-related permitting support for the Advanced Purified Groundwater Replenishment Project.

The environmental documents must consider the impacts of the construction and operation of the project alternatives described above. The Consultant shall have expertise in:

- 1) Evaluating the impacts associated with the alignment and construction of water conveyance systems;
- 2) Evaluating the impacts associated with the construction and operation of secondary wastewater treatment facilities and advanced water purification facilities;
- 3) Expertise in evaluating impacts related to the modification of existing conveyance systems and wastewater treatment plants, as well as the siting of a new satellite secondary/advanced water purification facility.

III. Scope of Work

A. Overview

In lieu of providing Consultants with a detailed task-by-task description of the desired scope of services, the District is seeking Consultants with experience in this arena of projects to present their innovative approach and a brief outline of tasks, deliverables, and assumptions to streamline the environmental documentation process so as to support the implementation of the proposed Program within the proposed schedule as set forth in Section V. The CEQA Plus and NEPA environmental assessment, documentation, and permit support work must address the following Groundwater Replenishment Project components:

1. Advanced Water Purification Facilities,
2. Satellite Secondary Treatment Facility under Option #2,
3. Conveyance Pipelines and Associated Infrastructure, and
4. Injection Wells.

If the Consultant believes that some or all of the CEQA exemption language in SB88 can be applied to the work outlined in IV-A, the proposed approach and reasoning to incorporate such an exemption should be presented, and the Consultant should define how the CEQA process could be improved or shortened.

- B. For anticipated issues to be analyzed in the environmental document(s), provide a synopsis of the approach (e.g., methodologies, assessment tools, assumptions). Provide proportionately greater details for key issues compared to less significant topics.
- C. The Consultant will collaborate and coordinate its work with that of other Consultants involved in developing the APGRP. The District's hydrogeologist is currently developing a groundwater model that will be used to evaluate injection of the advanced purified water into the local aquifer.
- D. Other to-be-defined services may be suggested by the Consultant to assist the District with addressing potential environmental impacts of the APGRP.
- E. Scope of Work Outline

A sample proposed scope of work is outlined below. A detailed scope of work will be developed with the selected Consultant. Any additional scope of work items proposed by the Consultant that may provide additional value to this Environmental and Permitting Support project are encouraged and should be labeled as "Optional Tasks" in the Consultant's response to the RFQ. Consideration will be given to added value of each optional task for Consultant selection and inclusion in the final scope of work.

Task 1 – Project Management and Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)

- Conduct Project Kick-Off Meeting.
- Conduct monthly progress meetings and participate in conference calls, stakeholder meetings, etc. as required to keep the project on schedule and on budget. Monthly progress meetings could be conducted through a combination of conference calls and in person meetings.
- Prepare monthly progress reports.
- Provide for internal QA/QC on all work products and submittals (e.g. reports, calculations, opinion of probably cost, etc.).

Task 2 – Review Groundwater Replenishment Feasibility Study

At the start of the project, the Consultant shall review the District's 2016 Groundwater Replenishment Feasibility Study report as well as other Supplemental Water Supply assessments completed previously to identify data gaps and additional engineering information needed to support the CEQA/NEPA. This task

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shall be completed within the first month after notice to proceed. Specifically, this task will assist the District in identifying additional engineering support necessary to carry out the environmental review process.

Task 3 – Environmental Impact Assessment

This task includes preparation of the necessary documentation needed to prepare the CEQA/NEPA documents and implement the District's groundwater replenishment program. It is assumed that the environmental documents will need to comply with CEQA Plus requirements so that the project can qualify for funding from the State Board's SRF program.

- Lead the District's public outreach effort in conducting agency scoping and pre-scoping meetings and public hearings as recommended or required by CEQA, NEPA and the SRF guidelines. Prepare presentation materials and content and, as necessary, provide technical support.
- Prepare the Notice of Preparation and the Notice of Intent as required by CEQA and NEPA. This includes assistance with the definition of project alternatives.
- Prepare an Initial Study and Environmental Assessment for the proposed alternatives to identify all potential environmental impacts and to classify these impacts as required by CEQA and NEPA.
- Develop CEQA significance criteria and NEPA significance thresholds for impacts of the project on environmental resources.
- In accordance with CEQA and NEPA, the recommended project will be evaluated to identify any environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the planned facilities. This includes confirmation of project alternatives to be considered in the EIR/EIS as well as a strategy meeting with the District and other key stakeholders.
- Conduct an alternatives analysis for the APGRP for the purpose of identifying a recommended project.
- Assess the range of construction and operational impacts of each project alternative on all environmental resources.
- Develop feasible mitigation measures that will reduce or avoid significant impacts.
- Other tasks as required by the CEQA/CEQA Plus and NEPA requirements.

Task 4 – Prepare Draft and Final Documents

- Prepare three (3) rounds of drafts of the environmental documents for review by District staff. The Consultant shall provide a suggested number of internal review and coordination meetings to support each round of draft documents.
- Prepare draft environmental documents for public review.
- Conduct public meetings pursuant to CEQA and NEPA requirements.

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- Prepare estimated scope to evaluate and respond to all comments on the draft environmental documents received during the public review process.
- Prepare the final environmental documents acceptable for approval and certification by the District, who will be the lead agency for CEQA and NEPA documentation.
- Produce documents, including technical editing, formatting, printing, reproducing, collating and binding the Draft EIR, Final EIR, separate Draft Executive Summary and separate Final Executive Summary, Draft Appendices, and Final Appendices per District specifications.

Task 5 – Acquisition of Permits/Approvals

- Prepare a list of permits and approvals required for the project, along with the corresponding permitting agencies and jurisdictions. This list shall include all environmental and construction permits with timelines and approvals for each as they relate to the planning, design, construction, and operational phases of the project.
- Assist the District as requested in securing all required environmental permits/approvals (with the exception of NPDES permits) for the project.

Task 6 – Assist with NPDES permits (Optional task)

- Assist the District as requested in securing all required NPDES permits for the project. This is optional task that the consultant may or may not feel comfortable including as part of their submittal.

IV. Project Schedule

The Consultant shall manage the Scope of Services such that the work is completed within the not-to-exceed fee limit and in accordance with the project schedule and confirm that all services and deliverables meet the District's requirements.

The estimated project schedule from notice to proceed (NTP) is approximately 18-24 months if a full EIR/EIS effort is required, a shorter schedule is preferred. Permitting support services may be extended beyond this window.

V. Fee Estimate

A fee schedule shall be included in the State of Qualifications (SOQ). The District will negotiate the final scope and fee after contract award to the best qualified Consultant.

VI. General Assumptions and Requirements

The following is a list of general assumptions:

- A. The Consultant shall manage the Scope of Services such that the work is completed within the not-to-exceed fee limit and in accordance with the Program schedule and ensure that all services and deliverables meet the District's requirements.
- B. The Consultant shall submit deliverables in both electronic and hardcopy format. Deliverables shall be submitted in PDF and native (editable) format, including Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint files, AutoCAD files, etc. The hard copy deliverables shall be printed in professional quality presentation and submitted in the agreed-upon number of copies. District may require original copies of signed documents and/or scanned (Adobe PDF) versions.

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- C. All reports/memoranda, plans and specifications, cost estimates, etc., shall undergo review and comment by District staff and/or the Program's Project Management consultant. As determined by the District, some of the deliverables may also be subject to review and comment from regulatory agencies and stakeholders following the District's review process.

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VII. Proposal Requirements

The proposal should be concise, well-organized and demonstrate the Consultant's and the individual team members' qualifications related to the proposed nature of the Environmental and Permitting Support Services needed and the Scope of Work. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content with sufficient detail to allow for accurate evaluation and comparative analysis.

For the sake of efficient review, please restrict the Proposal to a total not-to-exceed limit of 20 sized 8½" by 11" pages, including preprinted material, charts, design write-up, graphics, forms, pictures, etc. The minimum font size for the proposal is 12-point. For exhibits such as the proposed project schedule, the use of 11" x 17" pages is allowed and welcomed. The 20-page limit does not include the cover letter, dividers, resumes, appendices, front cover or back cover included in the proposal. Please limit resumes to 2 pages per individual.

Parties interested in being considered for this project are requested to submit their Statements of Qualifications **by 2:00 p.m., April 15, 2016** to:

Soquel Creek Water District
5180 Soquel Drive
Soquel, CA 95073
Attention: Taj Dufour, Engineering Manager/Chief Engineer

The District will not be liable for costs incurred by the respondents in preparing this Statement of Qualifications (SOQ).

At a minimum, the Consultant's Proposal shall include:

A. Cover Letter

This letter shall be a brief formal letter from the Consultant that provides information regarding the firm and its ability to perform the requirements of this solicitation. This letter must include the following information:

- Complete legal company name (as it should appear in a contract).
- Company Address.
- Contact person, telephone number, and email address.
- Identify all materials and enclosures being forwarded in response to this solicitation.
- The letter must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the proposing entity.

B. Project Understanding

The statement of qualification shall include a description of the Consultant's understanding of the Environmental and Permitting Support Services needed, including background, purpose, key issues, and inter-relationship with other District and regional projects. The Consultant shall demonstrate an understanding of the District's goals and objectives as related to the Environmental and Permitting Support Services.

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C. Technical Approach

A clear description of the Consultant's approach and methodology to complete the work tasks outlined in this RFQ. The Consultant is encouraged to identify additional tasks that may benefit this work. The Consultant should provide an initial discussion on which approach, after the Initial Study, would likely be taken (e.g., EIR vs. [Mitigated] Negative Declaration) along with key considerations for each available approach. Please include a preliminary schedule for the Environmental and Permitting Support Services tasks.

D. Project Team

Provide a brief overview of the firm and identify local and regional branch offices, including subconsultants that will be participating in the Environmental and Permitting Support Services. Provide a specific organizational chart identifying key project personnel by name, title, work office location, California Professional Registrations and the areas of expertise for which each team member will be responsible. A list of subconsultants to be used, if any, will be identified along with their expertise related to the project and scope of work summarized in this RFQ. A description of how the firm will use its resources to start and complete the project in a timely manner shall be included.

E. Experience

Describe the specific projects that the proposed team has worked on within the past five (5) years with contact names and phone numbers of clients. Please provide a minimum of three (3) reference projects of similar scope. For each project, please indicate which proposed team member worked on the projects and describe the role/work they performed. Emphasis should be placed on provision of CEQA and permitting support of recycled water projects, particularly potable reuse facilities if available. Please restrict project experience listings and descriptions to the team members that are a part of this proposal team.

F. Project References

In addition to the description of project experience, please provide three (3) specific project reference contacts for your firm on similar projects.

G. Resumes

Please include resumes for each proposed team member. Please limit each resume to two (2) pages.

H. Fee Schedule

Provide fee schedules for your firm and proposed subconsultants which include an hourly rate for each category of employee (i.e., principal, project manager, staff engineer/scientist, etc.) and fee for related support costs (mileage, blueprint, reproduction, etc.). Provide proposed rate schedules for consecutive years.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria and Selection

A. Selection Process

SOQs will be evaluated based on the criteria established below. Top-rated firms will be invited to interview with an Evaluation Committee comprised of District board members, District staff, and the District's Program Manager. During the interview process, the firms may be asked to:

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- Make an oral presentation by responding to pre-established questions.
- Prepare a proposal and detailed scope of work for the purpose of negotiating a contract.
- Provide additional information to assist the District in determining the best value firm.

All top rated firms will be given equal opportunity to provide the requested information to the District. Any oral presentations and/or demonstrations being conducted in an interview will be scheduled on a mutually agreed upon date and will be at no cost to the District. The Evaluation Committee will use all information collected to rank the semi-finalists in order of their ability to best meet the requirements of the District.

B. Timeline

Solicit Proposals March 16, 2016

Pre-proposal Meeting March 31, 2016 (2pm at Soquel Creek Water District Headquarters)

Last Day for Respondent's Questions April 8, 2016

SOQ Due April 15, 2016

Interviews (Optional) April 29, 2016

Project Award May 6, 2016

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 shall so indicate in the transmittal letter. By responding to this RFQ, respondents waive any challenge to the District's decision in this regard.

If any SOQ contains confidential information, the respondent shall 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 response as confidential. Notwithstanding the foregoing, respondents recognize that the District 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. District Rights and Options

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

1. To determine which respondents, if any, shall be included on a short list of semi-finalists based on the criteria set forth in the RFQ;
2. To reject any, or all SOQs or information received pursuant to this RFQ;
3. To supplement, amend, substitute or otherwise modify this RFQ at any time by means of written addendum;

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4. To cancel this RFQ with or without the substitution of another RFQ or prequalification process;
5. To request additional information;
6. To verify the qualifications and experience of each respondent;
7. To require one or more respondents to supplement, clarify or provide additional information in order for the District to evaluate SOQs submitted;
8. To hire multiple contractors to perform the necessary duties and range of services if it is determined to be in the best interests of the District;
9. To use any techniques or concepts included in the submitted SOQ regardless of firm's selection; and
10. To waive any minor defect or technicality in any SOQ received.

E. Questions/Clarification Request

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

For the District, the primary contact is:

Taj Dufour
Engineering Manager/Chief Engineer
Soquel Creek Water District
5180 Soquel Drive
Soquel, CA 95073
Email: tajd@soquelcreekwater.org
Phone: (831) 475-8501x 123

During the SOQ process, interested parties shall direct all questions via email to the District's primary contact listed above.

F. Selection Criteria

Firms will be evaluated on the information presented in the SOQ. Final selection will be based on the SOQ as well as an interview with top-rated firms. Evaluation factors shall include the following:

1. Qualifications as they relate to this project (40%).
 - a. Firm's experience with similar projects.
 - b. Qualifications of proposed key personnel.
 - c. Communication skills.
2. Consultant's project understanding and technical approach to complete the tasks outlined in the RFP, including any optional tasks proposed by the Consultant (30%).
3. Apparent ability to provide the required services in a timely matter (15%).

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- a. Accessibility of staff.
 - b. Flexibility and readiness for completing specified work.
4. Firm's reputation for integrity and competence (15%).

Contract negotiations will begin immediately with the first choice candidate after the interview process. If an agreement on cost is not reached within five (5) 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 firms of exceptional rating.

IX. Attachments and Resources

- A. Sample Professional Services Agreement (attached).
- B. Draft Soquel Creek Water District Groundwater Replenishment Feasibility Study (March, 2016) available on the District's website at:
<http://www.soquelcreekwater.org/documents/reports/groundwater-replenishment-feasibility-study>
- C. Additional information on the District's Back-Up Supplemental Supply Options development is available on the District's web page at <http://www.soquelcreekwater.org/planning-our-water-future/back-supplemental-supply-options>
- D. Memo to the Board of Directors on Back-Up Supplemental Supply Options – Narrative information on Common Criteria and Conceptual Technical Evaluation is available at [http://www.soquelcreekwater.org/sites/default/files/documents/Back Up_Options/July15_Staff_Memo_KJ_Tech_Memos.pdf](http://www.soquelcreekwater.org/sites/default/files/documents/Back_Up_Options/July15_Staff_Memo_KJ_Tech_Memos.pdf)