

SAVE OUR COAST

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For

Development of Communications Strategy for Collaborative

Save Our Coast (SOC) is a collaborative of conservation organizations in Georgia. Our mission is to ensure intact and improved ecosystems along Georgia's Coast and the rivers and streams that are an integral part of this system. SOC seeks an experienced communications consultant to identify the communications needs of the collaborative, create a model for serving those needs and draft a short-term plan for executing communication strategies.

Deadline for Submission of Proposals – February 20, 2009

Budget for Consulting Fees and Expenses - \$25,000

BACKGROUND

Over the next three years, a new collaborative, Save Our Coast (SOC), will focus on key priority tasks addressing the interrelated systems of freshwater wetlands, freshwater flows, and the expansive Georgia saltmarsh while further refining our collective strategies. Our mission is to ensure intact and improved ecosystems along Georgia's Coast and the rivers and streams that are an integral part of this system.

Our work is complex and often technical in nature, and includes monitoring, advocacy, and education. Save Our Coast member groups have extraordinary legal, scientific, advocacy, policy and organizing expertise. A resource essential for leveraging this expertise, however, is the capacity to communicate the goals of our work and the outcomes of our strategies.

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROJECT

Save Our Coast seeks to identify the communications needs of the collaborative, create a model for serving those needs and draft a short-term plan for executing communication strategies. While the SOC members have extensive technical, scientific, legal, and advocacy expertise, we have identified a critical need for a more strategic and skillful communications plan. The changing landscape of our efforts requires unending adaptation of our communications strategies and tactics as we move forward. Our audiences are varied -- lay public, political representatives and regulatory agencies, the media, funders and others. And the collaborative nature of our work increases the complexity of developing and implementing an effective communications strategy.

Clearly, without improved communications, the constituencies we seek to become a part of our work cannot be reached and our goals – both conservation and institutional – cannot be fully realized. A more sophisticated and strategic approach to our communications efforts will catalyze the success of our strategic plan, engage more coastal and statewide residents in our work, and nurture a larger community of financial supporters for the coastal Georgia conservation community.

The specific tasks involved are outlined below.

March 2009: Develop timeline with project coordinator to collect information on and determine existing collaborative communications capacity.

April – May 2009: Conduct capacity review by:

- a. reviewing materials and capabilities of collaborative members;
- b. collecting information available from existing polling and focus group projects and determine information gaps;
- c. reviewing other collaborative communication projects that have been successful.

May 2009: Utilizing the capacity review, consultant(s) convenes a charrette of communications experts to identify a viable collaborative communications model and the tools necessary for its operation.

June 2009: Consultant(s) prepares final report with recommendations for communications model.

July 2009: SOC members chose model to base planning around.

September 2009: Consultant(s) presents draft communication plan for SOC.

DURATION AND SCOPE OF WORK

The project is expected to take approximately six months. It is important that the budget be no greater than \$25,000 including travel expenses to conduct the charrette.

It is assumed that the contractor will work in their own premises with their own equipment. SOC members will provide background information and materials to assist in the process.

Expected products of this project:

1. Review of existing communications capacity within SOC.
2. Report on suggested of collaborative communications models.
3. Short-term communications plan for SOC.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal should include a cover letter including a statement that will bind the respondent to the provisions of the proposal if it is selected, and a statement that the bid proposal will remain valid for 90 days from the date of submission. The proposal should be a plan for the design and implementation of the program evaluation process described above.

The proposal should also include an estimated budget for no more than \$25,000, which reflects the costs of the tasks described in this RFP. It will need to include the fees; travel, lodging and food costs for the contractor(s), and any other costs associated with the project.

A description of the qualifications of all of the individual(s) and/or organization(s) who will be involved in the project should be included. It should summarize relevant evaluation experience with collaboratives and coalitions. References and resumes should be included for all persons involved.

PROCESS

One printed copy of the proposal and support materials should be received at the address below no later than February 20, 2009. Interviews will be scheduled shortly thereafter and a decision will be made in early March 2009. SOC reserves the right to reject all submissions and reopen the request for proposal process and/or to propose that competing applicants submit a new joint proposal.

Proposals should be sent to the Project Coordinator:

Chandra Brown
Riverkeeper/Executive Director
Ogeechee-Canoochee Riverkeeper
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866-942-6222, ext 1