

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Website Design Request for Proposals

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I. DESCRIPTION OF WORK

The Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) is requesting proposals for the design of a website to be used as a resource and voice for all forms of trail related recreation in Vermont. The Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC) helps plan for the future of Vermont's recreational activities. It promotes the development and maintenance of trails, coordinates public and private trail efforts, encourages education programs, and recommends the allocation of funds of trail and greenway programs. The most important role of the Council is to give all of Vermont's recreational community a vehicle for working together as a cohesive unit to advance trail related recreation in Vermont.

From 1988-1993, before legislation established the official designation of the VT Trails & Greenways Council, a statewide trails group convened to help put together legislation that would support the development and maintenance of trails and the Vermont trails system and ensure funding. This trails group worked to establish the Vermont recreation trails fund under Title 10, Chapter 20. They also worked on legislation that included the responsibilities of the Agency of Natural Resources, the formal designation of the Council and its responsibilities, landowner liability legislation, and legislation for the Vermont trails system. It was in 1993 under Title 10, Chapter 20, Vermont Trails System statutes, that the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council was officially designated as an advisory council to the Agency of Natural Resources to advise on all matters related to this chapter including the allocation of state and federal funds appropriated for the purpose of this chapter. It was at this time when the Council put together its articles of incorporation and by-laws making it a primary purpose of the council to communicate the importance of recreation and the benefits of trail-related recreation. The purpose of the council today is to ensure access to trails and advise the State in maintaining and improving a network of trails throughout Vermont. By statute, it is the Council's role to promote development, improvement, maintenance, and protection of trails by all groups and agencies, promote the coordination of efforts among user groups and government agencies, and encourage educational programs by all related groups and agencies. – (Vermont Statutes, Title 10, Chapter 20; VT&GC articles of incorporation and meeting minutes of its passage;)

Since that time the Council has continued working towards several other goals.

- It coordinates the efforts of user groups with government agencies and landowners.
- It encourages educational programs by all related groups and agencies.
- It serves as a clearinghouse.
- It carries out studies and/or promotes research and publications.
- It coordinates matters related to appropriate legislation.

II. VTGC WEBSITE OBJECTIVES

A. Purpose

The VTGC is a forum for all interested in statewide trail related recreation. The more members in the VTGC the louder the voice and the more influence that we all have in government related decisions that affect trail users in Vermont. One of the main functions of the new VTGC website will be to have a forum where members can access resources to help maintain and develop safe, low impact, sustainable trails in Vermont. The website will also be a resource used to help grow our membership and to promote stewardship and personal responsibility.

The VTGC is a hub for many recreation organizations, trail builders, and conservation commissions throughout the state. The website will also be a gate way for virtual visitors to navigate to the homepages of members of the VTGC.

The VTGC is responsible for putting on educational events throughout the state. It will also be a function of the website to promote these events and allow people to pay and register for these events, as well as pay and become a member of the council.

There is already some information developed and implement on our current website. This website can be found at: <http://www.vermonttrailsandgreenways.org>

The VTGC website will be managed with an open source content management system such as Drupal, Joomla, and Wordpress.

VTGC will be in charge of content management and will own all content. Upon completion and acceptance of the project structure and design, the website will become the domain of the VTGC.

B. Content

The VTGC website will be composed of 7 sections. Tabs to access each new section of the website will be logically laid out on the Home Page. The title of the various sections and brief description are as follows:

Home Page

Main Pages: Home, About Us, Members, Our Programs, Resources, Join Us, Contact Us

The Home Page will have a description of the VTGC mission statement, list of current executive committee and board, and highlighted member of the month. Links to all of the Main Pages will be across the top of the page. There will also be a series of links down the left side of the page for all of the most accessed topics: Current Events, Newsletter, News, VTGC Manual, Updates, and Link to Calendar. We will also have direct links to current VTGC surveys. Listed tabs represent additional pages. Individuals with permissions will be able to easily edit the body of the front page.

About Us

This page will have the entire VTGC mission and history. There will be a letter written by the Council Chair. There will also be a vertical spread on the page with a face shot, contact information, and areas of expertise for all executive committee and board members of the VTGC.

Tabs:

- **Join Us-** A Pay Pal (or similar function) application that will allow visitors to become VTGC members. The website will be designed so that new member information will be entered into a database and payment will be processed and added to VTGC bank account
- **Contact Us-** Will allow visitors to send a message directly to the VTGC Chair. This application will be easily administer in-house to redirect emails when a the Council receives new chair
- **State Statutes that the Council Adheres to-** See current VTGC website
- **Meeting Minutes-** will bring visitors to a comprehensive list of all archived VTGC meeting minutes
- **Newsletter-** Will bring visitors to an archived list of all past newsletters

Members

The VTGC is composed of the following member groups. We would like to post a list of all of our current members. Each member will have a website “profile.” Ideally, their profile will be directly linked to a field indicating if there application is current, so that it is self updating and members are removed when their terms expire. The main “Members Page” will have an identified member of the month for each category with a link to their website showing a partial live feed from one of their website postings.

Members will be organized into different categories: individual, local/community, regional, statewide, and commercial. Each member profile will have the following contact fields: Name, email, phone, website, address. Each member profile will have a paragraph about their efforts. Member profiles will be viewed as a list; clicking through to individual member pages will pull up additional details. Members will be able to update their own profiles. Members will also be given permission to be able to post certain types of content on the page (i.e. announcements and events).

Tabs:

- Individual
- Local/Community
- Regional
- Statewide
- Commercial
- Pay Pal for Membership

Our Programs

The VTGC has several programs that it offers the public.

Tabs:

- Education
 - Trail Symposium- Our signature event. We would like a page devoted to our last Symposium with details of the upcoming symposium and a link to registration
 - Description
 - Registration Form
 - Sign-up to put on a workshop
- VT Trail System
 - Description- See current VTGC website
 - Embed a Google Maps-based application hosted and maintained by Local Motion's Trail Finder (<http://www.localmotion.org/trails/>) showing all Vermont Trails in the Vermont Trail System. Local Motion will provide the iframe code to embed this application.

Resources

This page will be devoted to the links falling into the following categories:

Tabs:

- Educational
- Financial
- Technical
- Advocacy

Join Us

Tabs:

- Pay Pal Form
- Address to send payment to

Contact Us

Tabs:

- Executive Chair
- Membership
- Education

C. Design Components

It is important that the VTGC be able to update content when needed through an easy to use content management system. The VTGC is a volunteer organization and members have a limited amount of time to devote to the Council. In order to present up to date information to the public with a professional look it is necessary that multiple website managers be able to update and alter content, easily and at their leisure. Training to use the content management of this website needs to be minimal as well as the navigation and implementation of management tools. The VTGC strives for the highest degree of professionalism and the best use of current technologies in its website.

The following basic design principles should be incorporated in the website design:

- **Utilize an open-source content management system**
- **Use consistent unified or common themes-** The VTGC has a banner logo that has been developed and used for many years. It is easily recognized as the emblem of the council. We would like this banner to integrate as a reoccurring theme throughout the website.
- **Provide a user-friendly site.**
 1. Use logical and intuitive links.
 2. This site should not overwhelm the user with visual clutter.
 3. Design should be accessible to individuals with disabilities, meeting ADA Priority 1 requirements.
 4. Incorporate “printer friendly” feature for all web pages.
 5. Incorporate a WYSIWYG editor for posting content
 6. Ability to upload and display images
- **Graphic files should be relative to site.** Design with simplicity to allow for quickest loading. Web pages should be tested at both 28K and 56K dial-up modem speeds to ensure each webpage can be accessed timely.
- **Allow for search capabilities.**
- **Able to track page visits using Google Analytics**
- **Form printing.** A number of static forms will be available for printing. Website must have links or embedded plug-ins such as Java and Adobe for opening and viewing these documents.

D. Integrated Website Applications and Modules

The following will be components that the web designer will need to develop specifically for the VTGC website:

- Ability to create forms specific to clients and able to process information to spreadsheet
- Integrate website with Pay Pal or similar secure pay service
- RSS (Real Simple Syndication) integration, taking the latest “Hot Topic” information from member organizations and streaming a portion of it on the VTGC website with link to member’s website.

- Calendar- Visitors will be able to login in and upload events that will be automatically entered into the calendar once fact checked by VTGC member
- Embedded Local Motion “Trail Finder” application showing all trails in the Vermont Trail System. Local Motion will provide the necessary code.
See Local Motion Trail Finder at: <http://www.localmotion.org/trails/>

E. Tasks for Website Design

The Web Designer will also be responsible for the following:

- Design main components/page layouts of website.
- Test website for compatibility on all platforms.
- Website to comply with ADA Priority 1 website requirements (include a site map to help meet these requirements).
- Use of various flash characteristics and sound to enhance appeal of website.
- Register website with a variety of search engines; use meta tags to make pages visible to automatic searches; provide appropriate links; and upload to Internet search engines that may include, but are not limited to, the following: Lycos, Infoseek, Yahoo, Excite, Google, and Ask.
- Provide training to VTGC volunteers on how to maintain and manage the site.
- Provide regular updates and meetings for one year following implementation of the website.
- At completion and acceptance of project structure and design, the website will become the domain of the VTGC.
- Provide a fully operational website, complete with information, forms, maps, links, operational interactive components, signature verification and payment transaction tools.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicable Laws Shall Apply. The contract awarded shall be governed in all respect by the laws of the State of Vermont, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the State of Vermont. The company awarded the contract shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Proposal Submission. The original and two (3) copies of the proposal shall be signed and submitted to:

VASA
Attn: Danny Hale, VTGC Chair
14 Don Camp Drive
Barre, VT 05641

Respondents shall submit proposals no later than *4:00 p.m., Friday, April 16, 2010*. Timely submission of the proposal is the responsibility of the respondent. Any extension, if granted, shall apply to all recipients of this Request for Proposal. Each page of the proposal shall be identified with the name of the responding agency. The VTGC reserves the right to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to reject a proposal as non-responsive. As a precondition to acceptance, the VTGC may request the respondent to withdraw or modify those portions of the proposal deemed non-responsive that do not affect quality, quantity, price, or delivery of service.

Collusion Among Respondents. Each respondent, by submitting a proposal, certifies that it is not party to any collusive action or any action that may be in violation of state and federal law.

Withdrawal of Request for Proposal. The VTGC retains at all times the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP, and to refuse to accept a proposal from any respondent.

Selection Criteria. The VTGC executive committee shall review and evaluate all proposals.

A. Response Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of responses will be based, in part, on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of respondent, including:
 - a. Demonstrated competence and professional qualifications necessary for successfully performing the work required by the VTGC.
 - b. Recent experience in successfully performing similar services.
 - c. Background and experience of the specific individuals to be assigned to this project.
 - d. Standard hourly billing rates for the assigned staff, including any sub-consultants, sub-contracts, project rate or module design rate.
 - e. Experience in integrating online bill payments into website content.
 - f. Experience in making a website interactive, user-friendly, informative, and attractive to the website user.
 - g. Experience in content management website construction.
2. Commitment to work with the VTGC in addressing current and future needs with respect to website development, content, equipment and service requirements of the VTGC website.
3. Expressed understanding of the mission and goals of the VTGC.
4. Completeness of responses to specific requirements of the solicitation.
5. Proposed approach in completing the work.
6. References from other entities that the respondent has performed similar work for.

7. Extent to which the design concept reflects the objectives noted in this RFP.
8. Proposed compensation and payment schedule tied to accomplishing key tasks.
9. Vendor costs

The VTGC has \$10,000 to spend on this project. The money is tied to a grant that is dedicated for educational work allowing the VTGC to use any unspent monies on Council digital educational outreach. The Council will be considering the most cost effective proposal with the highest quality product.

IV. Respondent Submissions

The respondent will be required to submit:

1. A sample page layout that expresses fluid navigation, clean appearance, and unified theme.
2. A proposed project timeline that includes:
 - a. Timeline of services rendered
 - b. Hourly rate and total cost to VTGC for each aspect of the project
 - c. Integrated meetings:
 - i. One open to the entire Vermont Trails and Greenways Council.
 - ii. Periodic meetings with the VTGC Executive Committee as deemed necessary
3. A cost break-out for the following website components:
 - a. Ability to create forms specific to clients and able to process information to spreadsheet
 - b. Pay Pal or similar secure pay service
 - c. RSS (Real Simple Syndication) module, taking the latest “Hot Topic” information from member organizations and streaming a portion of it on the VTGC website with link to member’s website.
 - d. Calendar- Visitors will be able to login in and upload events that will be automatically entered into the calendar once fact checked by VTGC member
 - e. Embedded Local Motion “Trail Finder” application showing all trails in the Vermont Trail System.
4. Description of open source management system. This can be in the form of a narrative or visual sample of how the site will be managed. VTGC will weigh heavily on this item. It is import to present a clear picture to the review committee explaining exactly how this site will be managed.
5. Explanation of how VTGC members will be able to maintain the site and the training process that will be implemented to all VTGC members that are allowed management access to the VTGC website
6. Samples of prior work with similar scope
7. Three references
8. Supporting documentation

Proposals are required to be submitted with topics arranged in the above order.

The VTGC Executive Committee will review all submissions. Each member of the VTGC Executive Committee will rate submissions using a rating scale that is paired with each topic listed in “IV. Respondent Submissions”. The group will meet to compare respondent scores and decide on appropriate contractor no later than April 16, 2010. Interviews with potential contractors may be performed to assure compatibility. All respondents will be informed of the decision by the review committee upon verbal agreement with chosen contractor.

Questions about this Request for Proposals can be directed to Walter Opuszynski at: truetrails@gmail.com