

***Town of Waitsfield***  
***Austin Parcel Invasives Control***  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

April 8, 2017

Amendment 1: April 29, 2017

***Introduction***

---

The Town of Waitsfield Conservation Commission (the Commission) is seeking to address several near-term Management Objectives and Actions found in the draft *Wu Ledges Forest Management Plan* (the Plan) dated May 29, 2014. Specifically, the Commission, through this RFP, hopes to address items a, b, and d of the Objective: V.2 *Enhance Mad River floodplain and riparian natural communities.*

In consultation with the Commission, The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and Friends of the Mad River have prepared a report summarizing current conditions and offering guidance for managing the invasives on site. This report titled *Invasive Plant Management Plan for the Town of Waitsfield Austin and Tardy Properties* (the Report) provides a prioritized plan for achieving the land management goals identified in the Plan.

The Commission is now seeking proposals from qualified contractors for the implementation of Common buckthorn and Japanese knotweed control measures for the Austin parcel as prioritized in the Report.

***The Waitsfield Conservation Commission***

---

The Waitsfield Conservation Commission is comprised of nine members with responsibilities regarding the Town's natural resources and lands that have historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural or archaeological values in which the public has an interest. The Commission is charged with stewardship of a total of 793 acres of Town-owned land including parcels along the Mad River such as the Wu Ledges Town Forest and Austin and Tardy parcels. The Austin parcel, the focus of this request for proposals (RFP), has numerous species of invasives, most notably an expanding infestation of Japanese knotweed.

***Austin Parcel***

---

Designated as a Scenic Area in the *Waitsfield Town Plan 2012-2017*, the Austin parcel has unique ecological and physical value to the Town. This includes important riparian habitat, flood protection, recreational opportunity, open space, and more. The Austin parcel is a 5-acre parcel located along the Mad River that was donated to the Town of Waitsfield in 1999 and conserved with the VLT. The property is located south of Irasville and east of Vermont Route 100. It is bordered by Vermont Route 100 on the west, Mill

Brook on the north, the Mad River on the East, and a private river access road on the south.

The Austin parcel was acquired by the Town in 1999 and is subject to a Grant of Right of Entry, Covenants and Conservation Restrictions by the Town of Waitsfield to the VLT, Inc., dated December 29, 1999, recorded in Book 86, Pages 463 & 464. All of the Austin Parcel is located in the 100-year floodplain as mapped by the National Flood Insurance Program, which defines Waitsfield's Flood Hazard Area Overlay District

More detailed site descriptions including historical use, policies and guidelines, and habitat details can be found in the Report as well as the Plan.

### ***Current Status***

---

As noted in the Report, the Austin parcel has five invasive plant species on the property including common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), shrub honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), and Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*).

As noted in the *Waitsfield Town Plan 2012-2017*:

*While some species like knotweed are already widespread, the good news is that many are not yet prolific locally and so offer an opportunity for effective management to prevent or limit their spread. Before the threat and impacts of existing and new exotic invasive species intensify, the Town should do whatever it can independently and in collaboration with others (e.g., the other Mad River Valley towns, appropriate state agencies, nonprofit organizations like the Friends of the Mad River and the Vermont Chapter of The Nature Conservancy) to develop and implement an effective prevention and management regime.*

As the invasives are aggressively propagating, the Commission is eager to rapidly respond to ensure the Plan management objectives are still feasible given limited resources. It is important to note that the Report provides insight into the extent and nature of the invasive populations on Austin.

### ***Objective***

---

The Commission's objective is to move toward the restoration of the floodplain forest through active control, and ultimately elimination of, invasives on the parcel interior.

The Waitsfield Town Plan recognizes exotic species pose a number of environmental, economic, and human health threats. This is echoed in the Plan with near term, mid-term, and mid- to long term management objectives. Guided by these objectives, the Commission seeks to control infestation and promote desirable species and systems to resist further infestation through a site-led environmentally sustainable approach to

invasive species control and removal. This will facilitate achieving the mid- to long term management objective of enhancing the Mad River floodplain and riparian natural communities.

Through a prioritization process that balances the lowest cost and effort for the highest benefit, the Report recommends the Common buckthorn and Japanese knotweed infestation be controlled first. The Common buckthorn populations are prioritized because they are small can be readily eradicated. However, the Japanese knotweed infestation is extensive. Given upstream conditions the infestation along the river's edge is not likely to respond to control measures. The recommended strategy is to create a mow strip (buffer) between the infestation at the river's edge and the parcel interior (refer to Map 3 in the Report). With establishment of the buffer the interior infestation can be eradicated.

The Commission acknowledges that invasive plant management is a long-term project. Additionally, because of the persistence of certain species found on the Austin parcel, it is likely impossible to completely remove all of them. However, the Commission seeks to manage and mitigate invasives as we steward the land toward an improved flood release zone and healthy riparian habitat flush with native species.

The Commission envisions the Knotweed control measures will be accompanied by a separate, but related, tree planting effort in summer of 2018 to facilitate floodplain forest establishment.

### ***Scope of Work***

---

As noted in the Introduction, the Commission is seeking bids from qualified contractors to implement Common buckthorn and Japanese knotweed control measures for the Austin parcel as prioritized in the Report.

After significant dialog, it is clear there are multiple means by which the objectives can be accomplished. To that end, a concise scope of work is dependent on the contractor's proposed methodology. As noted in the Report, "an integrated approach using a variety of control methods is often most successful. Managing invasive plants is an ongoing effort and requires that management be flexible from year to year."

The Commission is open to any proposal based on best-practices and expert experience. Proposals are to take into consideration the management priorities and information presented in the Report, the Plan, and the Waitsfield Town Plan.

### ***Proposal Content***

---

Interested consultants should provide:

1. *Cover Letter*

A brief introduction including a point of contact and executive summary.

## 2. *Summary of Qualifications*

A brief outline of the contractor's experience and capacity to perform. This outline must include:

- a. A statement of the educational background of person(s) who will conduct any on-site mitigation work;
- b. A statement of relevant insurance requirements and capacity to supply a certificate prior to work beginning;
- c. Any performance guarantees specific to the eradication/mitigation objectives;
- d. A valid pesticide license if chemical treatment is the recommended method;
- e. A statement assuring the contractor is able to provide all items necessary (equipment, manpower, pesticides, etc.) to complete work proposed over the tenure of the project;
- f. Evidence of the contractor's knowledge about native plant species and habitats found on the Austin parcel.

## 3. *Methodology*

The contractor is to propose a methodology that achieves the aforementioned objectives safely, effectively, and efficiently. The proposed *Methodology* must include meeting with the Commission on-site prior to work commencing to define infestation levels, verify target areas, and discuss selectivity in eradication to prevent compromising native species health. The *Methodology* must also address timing of treatments and any access restrictions during treatment. The *Methodology* must also account for presenting a status report at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting near the end of the growing season when the initial treatment was applied. If herbicides are proposed they must be specified and Material Safety Data Sheets provided with the bid. The selected contractor will be required to provide a Safety Plan prior to commencing work that addresses issues such as chemical, personnel, and site safety measures.

## 4. *References*

The contractor must provide two references for projects of comparable scope. References must include a brief summary of the work performed, dates performed, and contact information. Contact information must include the name and contact number for an individual able to speak to the project successes and challenges.

## 5. *Project Cost*

The *Project Cost* section should outline all costs specific to the *Methodology* section. The Commission is interested in discovering the range of costs according to different methods and will not base selection on cost alone.

#### *6. Time Line*

A reasonable timeline should be proposed based on suitable control methods. Treatment is estimated from 1-5 years depending on the selected method of control.

#### ***Selection Criteria***

---

The Commission will evaluate proposals based on:

- ✓ Cost
- ✓ Experience
- ✓ References
- ✓ Past performance
- ✓ Efficacy of methodology

Ultimately the Commission reserves the right to select the contractor that it feels provides the best value to the Town.

#### ***RFP Time Line***

---

- 04/07/17: RFP release/notification
- 05/01/17: Questions Due close of business (5:00pm) (Amended from 04/18/17)
- 05/03/17: Questions response posted close of business (5:00pm) (Amended from 04/28/17)
- 05/05/17: Proposals due
- 05/22/17: Selection of consultant

Please forward any questions to Tom Dean, Waitsfield Conservation Commission by April 18, 2017. Proposals are due May 5, 2017. Communications should be directed to Tom Dean at: [tfdean27@gmail.com](mailto:tfdean27@gmail.com).