

Strafford Regional Planning Commission

# Request for Qualifications

For Technical Services in Development of Milton Three Ponds  
Watershed Management Plan: Deadline-June 17, 2024

**Milton Three Ponds- Milton, NH**



## INTRODUCTION

Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) was awarded a \$90,000 grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation through the Great Bay Watershed Fund to develop a watershed based management plan for Milton Three Ponds. Milton Three Ponds are a series of connected lakes including Milton (Depot) Pond, Townhouse Pond, and Northeast Pond that are formed by the Salmon Falls River impoundment located primarily in Milton, NH. The three ponds' land coverage combines to over 1,000 acres and an average depth of 10 to 12 feet.

The watershed-based plan will include the nine-element (a-i) criteria (<https://www.epa.gov/nps/handbook-developing-watershed-plans-restore-and-protect-our-waters>) to restore waters impaired by nonpoint source pollution and will set forth specific recommendations for guiding future development and strategies for reducing the cumulative impacts of nonpoint source pollution on water quality of the lakes. The goals of the management plan will be to:

- Identify and quantify sources of phosphorus loading to the lakes
- Establish a water quality goal for the lakes
- Identify management actions to reduce phosphorus loading

The adaptive management approach will enable project partners to conduct restoration activities in a responsive manner; however, the plan will recognize that improvements in water quality cannot be achieved with a single restoration action or within an immediate timeframe. An incremental implementation approach ensures that as management activities are conducted, water quality response is monitored, and success is documented.

The watershed plan will set water quality goals aimed at improving water quality of the lakes, reducing toxic algal blooms, and achieving a significant reduction of phosphorus loading to *Milton Three Ponds*. Milton Three Ponds Beach is identified in both the 305(b) and 303(d) lists of impaired and threatened waters. In addition, the 2017 NH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program Report also indicates increased levels of phosphorus and sediment in each of the lakes, including historical short-term algal bloom events. Lastly, Milton Pond Recreation Area Beach is ranked high on the Priority Restoration List for Beaches in New Hampshire, according to the 2020-2024 NH Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan. Milton Three Ponds lies entirely within the Town of Milton, however the watershed extends into Lebanon, Maine.

Strafford Regional Planning Commission is soliciting proposals from Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEPs) with proven expertise performing watershed planning to provide guidance for selected tasks related to the development of a watershed management plan for Milton Three Ponds. The partnership formed to lead this project comprises a diverse group, with a wide range of relevant backgrounds and skills, and who are committed to performing much of the required work themselves; however, completion of a select subset of watershed analyses and planning tasks require services of a QEP working collaboratively with the project partners.

The SRPC has a modest amount funding available to hire a QEP to assist with selected project tasks and sub-tasks. The QEP will work under the direction of the SRPC staff and will work in collaboration with the Milton Three Ponds Watershed Management Advisory Committee and its partners to provide technical advice or services to complete the selected tasks (See Appendix A: Table 1 for anticipated tasks).

## RFQ TIMELINE

May 13, 2024	Request for Qualifications release.
June 3, 2024	Deadline for submittal of questions on this RFQ to ask a question(s) or to be put on the list to receive the summary digest. (5:00 p.m.)
June 10, 2024	Questions and answers digest distributed to those on the summary digest list.
June 17, 2024	Deadline for receipt of qualification packages to this RFQ. (5:00 p.m.)
July 15, 2024	Anticipated final selection of QEP and notification to all firms. SRPC reserves the right to conduct interviews with selected teams. The decision to conduct interviews may affect the specified timeline.

## WORKPLAN

SRPC's Milton Three Ponds Watershed Management Workplan follows as Appendix A for more detail.

## QUALIFICATION CONTENT

Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) are to be presented in a clear and concise manner. Proposers shall ensure that all information required herein is submitted with the RFQ. Additional useful information pertaining to the Scope of Work is appreciated and should be included. However, the Commission reserves the right to negotiate any portion of the RFQ determined to be unclear or to appropriately address the needs of SRPC. All RFQs shall remain firm for sixty (60) calendar days after receipt of the proposals.

## RFQ SUBMISSIONS

Qualification packages shall include the following components:

1. A cover letter expressing the QEP's interest in working with SRPC and its Milton Three Ponds Watershed Management Advisory Committee.
2. The name, address, brief history, and description of the firm,
  - a. Include identification and qualifications of members of the firm (including project manager/principal staff) and any subcontractors who will be working directly with the Commission.
  - b. Include a description of projects this firm has done similar in nature to this one.
  - c. Present verifiable qualifications, experience, and knowledge regarding all aspects of watershed management planning and technical services (See Appendix A: Table 1).
  - d. Provide three (3) references from current customers receiving the same or similar service(s). Include name, contact information, and a brief project description for each reference.
3. Description of the firm's approach to performing the tasks detailed in the Scope of Work, including a timeline and discussion of the relative effort anticipated to be expended on each task and expected deliverable.
4. A list of any additional services, tools, or resources not included in this RFQ that you recommend SRPC consider.
5. Do NOT provide a cost estimate, fee schedule, or any type of price proposal at this time.

Submissions are due by **5:00 PM, Monday June 17, 2024**. Complete submittals should be sent by email in digital format (PDF or Microsoft Word) to Lisa Murphy, SRPC Senior Regional Planner, at [lmurphy@Strafford.org](mailto:lmurphy@Strafford.org) with subject line: Milton Three Ponds RFQ. A complete and timely submittal as described in this RFQ is required in order to be considered.

## SELECTION PROCESS

SRPC's Milton Three Ponds Watershed Management Plan selection committee will be responsible for screening proposals, conducting interviews of selected firms, and the recommendation of a QEP to hire to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will make the final decision regarding selection of a QEP.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection will be based on the assessment of the qualifications package to meet the following criteria.

- Specialized Experience of the Project Team (35%)
  - Overall experience related to the successful completion of similar watershed planning projects that include incorporation of EPA's Nine Elements ("a – i"), data analysis, monitoring, outreach, and working with diverse stakeholders to achieve project goals.
  - Understanding of and demonstrated experience with lake loading response modeling.
  - Demonstrated ability to identify structural and non-structural BMPs and generate pollutant load analyses for BMPs.
  - Demonstrated ability to complete work within the available budgets and schedules.
- Project Personnel (30%)
  - Roles, participation levels, availability, qualifications, and experience of principal team members.
- Project Approach (35%)
  - Demonstrated strong understanding of the scope of work, project schedule, and expected deliverables outlined in the RFQ.

After the qualifications-based ranking and selection process is complete, SRPC will request from the highest-ranked QEP a task-based cost proposal. SRPC will proceed with contract negotiations with that QEP. If the parties cannot come to terms, SRPC will request from the second-ranked QEP a task-based cost proposal and follow the same procedure, working with each of the next-ranked qualified candidate(s) in order of their scores, until a contract has been successfully negotiated.

## CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Any questions about this RFQ raised by an individual/firm will be answered in a summary digest. The summary digest will be provided to those who contact SRPC and request to be put on an email list to receive the digest. The cut-off date for questions and requests to be put on the email list to receive the summary of questions and answers is **June 3, 2024**.

Please email **Lisa Murphy** at [lmurphy@strafford.org](mailto:lmurphy@strafford.org) to ask a question or to be put on the summary digest list to receive responses. The summary digest will be provided via email on **June 10, 2024**, to all parties on the summary digest list.

## DISCLAIMER

No contract will be awarded except to a responsible Proposer capable of performing the work presented in the workplan. Proposers must comply with all state, federal, and local (municipal) laws. Prior to the award of any contract, the Proposer may be required to demonstrate that they have the required experience, ability, resources, and facilities to perform the work outlined within the workplan.

This RFQ does not commit SRPC to award a contract or pay any costs incurred during the preparation of any submittal. SRPC reserves the right to reject any or all the submittals while adhering to applicable laws. To participate in the project and receive payment, the selected firm will be required to enter into a

contract which stipulates that the QEP is eligible to receive Federal funding and certifies compliance with State and Federal rules related to grant-funded projects.

## **REJECTION**

Strafford Regional Planning Commission reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received and to waive any informality, technical defect, or clerical error in any proposal as the interest of the Commission may require. Rejection of any proposal shall be construed as meaning simply that the Commission does not deem the proposal acceptable or that another proposal is deemed to be more advantageous to the Commission for the particular services proposed.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

Equal opportunity consideration will be taken throughout the QEP selection process without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, status as a covered veteran, or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, and local laws. Strafford Regional Planning Commission, as a grant recipient through NH Charitable Foundation, will exercise appropriate measures to ensure good faith efforts are made during QEP selection.

## **APPENDIX A: SRPC MILTON THREE PONDS WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT WORKPLAN**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The outcome of this project is the development of a watershed plan that incorporates the nine, key elements (a – i) for watershed-based plans as required by the USEPA and NHDES (<https://www.epa.gov/nps/handbook-developing-watershed-plans-restore-and-protect-our-waters>). It is expected that the plan will contain a range of feasible approaches, stakeholder commitments, and identified funding sources to implement phosphorus load reduction management and/or restoration measures.

The plan will identify and quantify specific sources of phosphorus contributing to the lake's water quality impairments. It will then use this analysis to develop an annual phosphorus loading budget, recommend reduction goals, and outline options for reducing phosphorus loading. SRPC will collaborate with the identified watershed partners to select, refine, and prioritize measures to address water-quality impairments.

The plan will include a summary of recommended management approaches for reducing phosphorus including a description of the recommended action; expected pollutant load reductions; estimated project costs; potential local, state, and federal funding sources; and the parties responsible for the specified actions to achieve the desired results.

The primary purposes of Milton Three Ponds watershed-based planning project are to:

- Identify and quantify specific sources of phosphorus contributing to the lake's water quality impairments; and
- Develop a watershed-based plan to reduce phosphorus loading in the lakes to a specified level that would significantly improve water quality and reduce the occurrence of cyanobacterial blooms.

## **BACKGROUND**

The NH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program Report indicates increased levels of phosphorus and sediment in each of the lakes, including historical short-term algal bloom events. In addition, Milton Pond Recreation Area Beach is ranked high on the Priority Restoration List for Beaches in New Hampshire, according to the 2020- 2024 NH Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

The watershed-based plan will include EPA’s nine-element (a-i) criteria to restore waters impaired by nonpoint source pollution and will set forth specific recommendations for guiding future development and strategies for reducing the cumulative impacts of nonpoint source pollution on water quality. This project will explore the connection between identified impairments and other signs of stress in the lakes and their tributaries.

This watershed planning project will explore connections between identified impairments in the lakes and other signs of stress in the lakes and their tributaries. The desired outcome of the project is to develop a watershed-based management plan that defines a realistic approach for water quality improvement – including reducing pollutant loads and removing Milton Three Ponds from the NHDES 303(d) for Aquatic Life Integrity.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The SRPC and its project partners seek a qualified, experienced watershed planning expert to provide guidance for selected tasks related to the development of a watershed management plan for Milton Three Ponds. The partnership formed to lead this project comprises a diverse group, with a wide range of relevant backgrounds and skills and who are committed to performing much of the required work themselves; however, completion of a select subset of watershed analyses and planning tasks require services of a QEP working collaboratively with the project partners.

The SRPC has funding available to hire an environmental QEP to assist with selected project tasks and sub-tasks. The QEP will work collaboratively with SRPC and its partners to provide technical advice or services to complete the selected tasks.

## **PROJECT WORK PLAN**

SRPC and a qualified consultant, to be hired through a competitive procurement process, will work in cooperation with a project steering committee to develop the criteria required in an a-i EPA approved plan which will enable us to subsequently secure implementation funding on projects identified in the management plan. Specific steps (involving the consultant) to do so are as follows:

Task 2.1: The QEP and SRPC, working with project partners, will develop a list of review materials. Working with the selected QEP, the project team will create a final list of information for use in the plan. Lead: SRPC, Minimal Assist: QEP

Task 2.2: SRPC and the QEP will organize and hold the project kick-off meeting with community members. Lead: SRPC, Minimal Assist: QEP

Task 3.1: Run lake loading response model to estimate phosphorus loads to the lakes and present output to project team. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC

Task 3.2: Develop the draft water quality goal, present to the project team to solicit feedback and finalize. The project team and QEP will attend the goal setting meeting and provide feedback. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC

- Task 3.3: Conduct the watershed assessment to identify best management practices (BMPs) to reduce nonpoint sources. The project team will assist in assessment activities and identifying locations of concern and other actions including non-structural approaches for NPS control. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC
- Task 3.4: Develop cost estimates and leads for NPS management; present actions and costs to project team. The project team will review cost estimates and assist with identifying leads for implementation. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC
- Task 3.5: Develop a draft outreach plan and convene a project team meeting to review and finalize the outreach component for inclusion in the plan. Lead: SRPC, Minimal Assist: QEP
- Task 3.6: Develop a schedule for implementing the NPS management measures to be reviewed and finalized at a meeting with the project team. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC
- Task 3.7: Develop a description of interim, measurable milestones for determining whether NPS management measures or other control actions are being implemented; the draft will be shared at a project team meeting for review and finalization. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC
- Task 3.8: Develop a set of criteria that can be used to determine whether loading reductions or habitat restoration is being achieved over time, and progress toward attaining water quality standards. The draft indicators will be reviewed and finalized at a project team meeting. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC
- Task 3.9: Work with project team and lake monitors to develop a water quality monitoring plan to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation actions. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC
- Task 3.10: The QEP and SRPC will work to combine all elements into an a-i plan and present the draft at a project team meeting to solicit feedback and finalize the plan. Lead: QEP, Minimal Assist: SRPC

### **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

It is expected that the QEP's share of work on this project will begin in Summer of 2024 and continue until Fall of 2025 (Table 1). It is understood that final scheduling will depend upon completion of many tasks by SRPC and its project partners.

**Table 1: Anticipated Schedule for Selected Tasks**

TASK	2024						2025									
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	
Review information	█	█														
Project Kick-off meeting	█	█														
Identify causes and sources of NPS; identify phosphorus loads (element a)	█	█	█													
Estimate load reductions and determine water quality goal (element b)	█	█	█													
Conduct watershed assessment to identify BMPs to reduce non-point (element c)			█	█	█											
Develop cost estimates and leads for NPS management (element d)			█	█	█	█	█									
Develop a schedule for implementing the NPS management measures (element f)							█	█	█	█	█	█				
Develop interim measurable milestones (element g)							█	█	█	█	█	█				
Develop criteria (indicators) for tracking water quality standards (element h)							█	█	█	█	█	█				
Develop water quality monitoring plan (element i)							█	█	█	█	█	█				
Combine all elements into an a-i plan												█	█	█	█	



