

**Site-Specific Tidal Wetland Restoration, Conservation, or Enhancement
Project Design
Request for Proposals**

Overview

[Green Fin Studio](#) (GFS) is seeking qualified individuals to develop one site-specific tidal wetland restoration, conservation, or enhancement project design on public, or publicly accessible, land based on the recommendations in the [Coastal Wetlands Plan for the York River, Piankatank River, and Mobjack Bay](#) (“Coastal Wetlands Plan”). Funding for this design project competition has been provided by the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office as part of NOAA’s [Middle Peninsula Habitat Focus Area](#) efforts. All products submitted as deliverables under this award will be provided to NOAA by Green Fin Studio.

This geographic region is home to extensive tidal and nontidal wetlands, across many salinity regimes. These wetlands are important to human communities, water quality, and a diverse array of plants, fish, birds, and other wildlife. However, changing climate conditions, including the rate of coastal erosion and sea level rise, along with development impacts from dredging, depositing sediment, and shoreline hardening, directly and indirectly, negatively impact our wetlands.

In 2022, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced a Middle Peninsula Habitat Focus Area (HFA) in Virginia. The selection of this area as an HFA will concentrate NOAA’s efforts to support the restoration and conservation of tidal wetlands (and other estuarine habitats) in the York and Piankatank Rivers and Mobjack Bay, as called for in the Coastal Wetlands Plan.

Scope of Work

We seek applicants to develop a comprehensive tidal wetland restoration, conservation, or enhancement site design plan that can be used for permitting and subsequent implementation funding requests.

The Coastal Wetlands Plan identified high priority wetland sites for wetlands restoration, conservation, and enhancement projects. The areas identified include:

- Guinea Marsh Wildlife Management Area in Mobjack Bay
- Dragon Run (a Piankatank Tributary)
- Middle Peninsula State Park in York River
- York River State Park in York River
- Catlett Islands & Machicomico State Park in York River
- Goodwin Island in York River
- U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Wormley Creek, York River

- Big Island in Mobjack Bay
- Other Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority's sites throughout the York, Piankatank, and Mobjack Bay (map available [here](#))
- Colonial National Historical Park sites along the York River
- Private properties in the York Piankatank, Mobjack Bay tidal watershed area (if they are publicly accessible via an easement or some other mechanism)

Applicants are highly encouraged to review the Coastal Wetlands Plan and focus on specific areas within the list of high priority wetlands sites. Project sites must be located on public or publicly accessible parcels. Proposals that benefit or expand conservation work done on the same or adjacent sites are preferred.

The final site design should include 1) Design/Construction document set with proposed scale and scope of restoration, conservation, or enhancement practices, and engineering requirements of sufficient detail to carry out construction activities, and construction implementation materials list with estimated quantities 2) Budget estimate for implementation 3) Completed JPA permit application for the site that could be submitted if construction funding were to become available.

The applicant will also submit a written report along with the site design that should include the following:

- Literature citations of design applications and effectiveness.
- Description of chosen site and rationale for methodology chosen based on physical characteristics of the site.
- Potential ecological and physical outcomes of restoration, conservation, or enhancement.
- Potential socioeconomic or other co-benefit outcomes of the restoration, conservation, or enhancement.
- Monitoring protocol with timeline of pre-construction monitoring, implementation, and post-construction monitoring. Recommended monitoring criteria are provided on page 27 of the [Coastal Wetlands Plan for the York River, Piankatank River, and Mobjack Bay](#).
- Summary of efforts to engage local community officials and stakeholders to increase awareness and support for the project and discuss potential challenges.
- Key partner and stakeholder recommendations and feedback.
- A brief list or summary of funding sources for implementation.
- Recommendations for future maintenance/adaptive management.
- Plan for permitting application process based on site selection.

Award decisions are expected by November 15, 2023. Final deliverables are expected no later than April 30, 2024.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must include a concise (≤5 pages) written description of the proposed project. Additional pages outside of the 5-page limit such as maps, letters, and tables may also be attached as appendices, not to exceed an additional 10 pages. All material must be submitted in one electronic file. The proposal must include:

- A. Description of applicant's qualifications, including: names of individuals providing the services and number of years of experience in respective areas; a description of the applicant's experience relating to providing the services described in the scope and project deliverables; names, phone numbers, and email addresses of three references; and the resume or CV of the individual(s) providing the service.
- B. The applicant's proposal for how to address the elements of the Scope of Work and required outcomes described in the deliverables section.
- C. Timeline for work.
- D. A budget including total number of hours and hourly rate of compensation for the services to be performed during the term of the contract broken down by direct rate, benefit rate, indirect rate, profit, and direct expenses; any additional costs required to complete the project; and total compensation. Proposals must also include a requested payment schedule that includes 50% or more of the funds due after submission and acceptance of deliverables by Green Fin Studio. Under this program, food and beverage costs will not be supported. Use a spreadsheet, and if needed, provide additional justification or explanation as an attachment to the proposal.
- E. A letter from the property owner of the site of the proposed project that states support for a restoration, conservation, or enhancement design for the site and for eventual project implementation, subject to available funding and any relevant legal or regulatory requirements.
- F. Any other information that the applicant considers relevant to a fair evaluation of his/her/their experience and capabilities. (e.g. how the project could benefit or impact underserved or tribal communities.).
- G. Successful bidders should consider developing a collaborative design process, consulting with the York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable, or other partner organizations, communities or networks, on their project design.
- H. Describe how design elements could facilitate/advance community engagement, education, stewardship, recreational activities, and/or workforce development at the publicly accessible site once implemented.

Amount of Available Funding

Approximately \$40,000 is available to award one contract to develop a site-specific tidal wetland restoration, conservation, or enhancement design.

Proposal Deadline and Instructions:

Proposals must be received no later than 5 p.m. EST on **October 27, 2023**. Please email your project application to **Allison Burbach (allison@greenfinstudio.com)** with the

subject line “Wetland Design RFP Submission”. Questions about this RFP may be submitted to this email address as well.

Eligible Organizations

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, for profit organizations, regional planning district commissions, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, conservation corps organizations, and others that are eligible to apply. Minority owned businesses and Minority Serving Institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, are encouraged to apply.

Qualifications of applicant

- Expertise with designing wetlands or living shoreline restoration, conservation, or enhancement projects.
- Experience working in lower Chesapeake Bay and/or other estuarine nearshore environments.
- Experience working in or with underserved or tribal communities on similar projects, if applicable to the proposed location.

Evaluation

Proposals shall be evaluated by a review committee composed of technical experts and facilitated by GFS. Evaluation will be made on the basis of the criteria discussed below. In addition, GFS may permit qualified applicants to revise their proposals by submitting "best and final" offers.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals by applicants that meet the minimum qualifications (see qualifications of applicant section) will be evaluated by the technical review committee on the basis of the following factors:

- A. Proposed Team (Specific Individual(s) Responsible for Performance of Project). Evaluation of the qualifications and reputation.
- B. Proposed Approach. Evaluation of the work to be performed to accomplish the goals outlined in the Scopes of Work, with the public or publicly accessible sites identified in the [Coastal Wetlands Plan](#).
- C. Experience of applicant(s). Evaluation of the quality and quantity of the applicant's experience and expertise in the areas proposed, supported by references.
- D. Capacity. Evaluation of the applicant's ability and commitment to meet the timeline for the project.
- E. Price and Hours. Hourly rate, indirect rate, and number of hours to be devoted

to the project.

Project Steps and Timeline

1. All applications will be reviewed and screened with regard to the criteria listed above, final deliverable(s), demonstrated abilities of applicants, budget, and process, and then ranked by priority.
2. Applicants may be asked to participate in a ~30 minute call to discuss their proposal before final decisions are made.
3. After applicant selection, members of the York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable's Nearshore Habitat Restoration Committee, through their normal meeting schedule, will act as the project advisory team to oversee development of the project design. Team will meet quarterly with the successful applicant throughout the project to monitor progress and provide feedback. Applicants should budget time to participate in two meetings, each approximately one hour long, over the course of project development.
4. Working collaboratively with the project advisory team and other interested stakeholders, the successful applicant will collect pre-restoration, conservation, or enhancement baseline data at a candidate site and summarize justification of site selection (winter 2023/spring 2024).
 - a. Baseline data should include information on proximity and size of adjacent water bodies (fetch, wave field, currents), elevation and slope (survey data), sediment type, and existing dominant biota.
5. Complete draft design document set based on field observations and results of stakeholder engagement (spring 2024).
 - a. In addition to reviewing resources already known/recommended by the contractor, the following resources should be consulted in developing a restoration, conservation, or enhancement plan:
 - i. NOAA Guidance for Considering the Use of Living Shorelines
 - ii. Virginia Institute of Marine Science Shoreline (VIMS) Self-Guided Decision Tool
 - iii. VIMS Shoreline Management Model
 - iv. Virginia Coastal Geospatial & Educational Mapping System
 - v. County level shoreline management plans (produced by VIMS) i.e. York County Shoreline Management Plan
 - vi. Site Recommendations and Design Options for Nearshore Oyster Structures Specific to Mobjack Bay, Virginia, and its Tributaries (VIMS) (if applicable).
6. Final written report submitted to Green Fin Studio and other relevant partners on the refined final design and other required information as described in Deliverables section below.

Deliverables

The final written report of the project design (to be submitted no later than April 30, 2024), should include the following:

- Literature citations of design applications and effectiveness.
- Description of chosen site and rationale for methodology chosen based on physical characteristics of the site.
- Design/construction document set with scale and scope of restoration, conservation, or enhancement, engineering requirements of sufficient detail to carry out construction activities, and construction implementation materials list with estimated quantities.
- Potential ecological and physical outcomes of restoration, conservation, or enhancement.
- Potential socioeconomic or other co-benefit outcomes of the restoration, conservation, or enhancement.
- Monitoring protocol with timeline of pre-construction monitoring, implementation, and post-construction monitoring.
- Summary of efforts to engage local community officials and stakeholders to increase awareness and support for the project and discuss potential challenges.
- Key partner and stakeholder recommendations and feedback.
- Budget and potential funding sources for implementation.
- Recommendations for future maintenance/adaptive management.
- Plan for permitting application process based on site selection.