

## **Request for Proposals**

### **Yampa River Stewardship Program: Technical Consultant**

Release Date: March 29, 2024

Proposals Due: April 17, 2024 at 11:59 pm

#### Background Information:

In 2022, an Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) for the Yampa River Basin was developed in a collaborative process led by the Yampa-White-Green Basin Roundtable. Two of the 20 recommendations included in the IWMP were later combined into the Yampa River Stewardship Program (YStew). YStew aims to:

- Define desired future conditions (DFCs) of river segments with input from river scientists, practitioners, and stakeholder groups
- Identify best management practices (aka strategies) to move from current conditions to those desired future conditions using data collected during Friends of the Yampa's (FOTY's) Yampa River Scorecard Project (YRSP) as well as other available data
- Develop outreach tools and provide training, support, and resources to practitioners, landowners, and land managers to guide them in implementing the identified strategies.

YStew is an initiative of the Yampa River Collaborative, a group of local conservation and agricultural nonprofits – all with a vested interest in river health – that formed after the completion of the IWMP process. Along with FOTY, who will act as the administrative lead of YStew, the Collaborative includes Community Agricultural Alliance, River Network, Yampa Valley Sustainability Council, The Nature Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited. Background work on this project includes a Scope of Work (see attachment A below) that was completed in June of 2023.

#### Project Purpose:

The main purpose of YStew is to strategically identify and prioritize projects to improve river health and to build capacity for landowners and practitioners to implement those projects by providing educational, funding, and programming resources. YStew is not focused on project implementation; rather, it is the intermediary step between data collection through the YRSP and project implementation and is focused on supporting landowners and land managers to prepare to implement best management practices, improve river health, and build resiliency in our riverine ecosystem and its uses. Specific objectives include:

- 1) Define current conditions, desired future conditions, and strategies to bridge the gap between the two.
- 2) Identify opportunity areas that could benefit from grant money, best management practices, and infrastructure improvements.
- 3) Provide landowners, land managers, and practitioners with river stewardship resources, information, and programming in order to increase the capacity of stewards along the Yampa River.

### Scope of Work:

The Collaborative seeks a technical consultant to assist in defining DFCs, assessing current conditions, defining DFC achievement strategies, and developing resources and training opportunities for practitioners and land managers. Specifically, the technical consultant will be responsible for:

- 1) Working with the Collaborative and a broader group of stakeholders to jointly develop DFCs for different river segments. This includes reviewing YRSP data to better understand past, present, and potential future conditions; supporting the planning and implementation of two stakeholder engagement meetings per year; and working with the Collaborative and a graphic designer consultant to develop conceptual illustrations and written descriptions of DFCs that meet the stakeholder vision, utilize the best available science, and align with projected future conditions.
- 2) Working with the Collaborative to assess current conditions of each river segment, using data collected and collated by the YRSP and other available data. This includes identification of any data gaps.
- 3) Working with the Collaborative to define DFC achievement strategies (i.e., how stakeholders will move the river from current conditions to DFCs) for different river segments in a series of work sessions. These may include invasive species management, riparian revegetation, floodplain restoration, grazing management, and more.
- 4) Working with the Collaborative and a graphic designer to develop a practitioner guidance document that illustrates key examples of existing conditions and the strategies to achieve DFCs in a given river segment. This document will draw on and be informed by existing resources. Upon completion of the document, the technical consultant will work with the Collaborative to host two 1-day trainings per year with practitioners and land stewards on how to utilize the guide.

Annual deliverables for the technical consultant's work will include DFC descriptions for the given river segment, a memo comparing current conditions to DFCs, a memo documenting the recommended DFC strategies, a practitioner guidance document, written technical contributions for the YStew website, and two 1-day trainings for practitioners.

### Schedule of Work:

Every year, one of the five segments of the Yampa basin (Upper Yampa, Steamboat segment, Elk River, Middle Yampa, and Lower Yampa) is monitored through the YRSP. Because YStew utilizes data from the YRSP, the YStew process will operate on a given river segment following the year in which data was collected on that river segment. However, because YStew needs to "catch up" to the YRSP cycle – which began collecting data in 2022 – two segments will go through the YStew process in 2024. The yearly schedule for YStew is as follows. In 2028, the cycle will start anew with the Middle Yampa segment.

Currently, funding is available to plan YStew through 2026, so the dates of work under this RFP are late April 2024 through November 2026, with possible extension depending on the outcome of subsequent funding applications.

<b>Year</b>	<b>River Segment</b>
2024	Middle Yampa AND Steamboat segment
2025	Upper Yampa
2026	Elk River
2027	Lower Yampa

Within each year, YStew tasks will follow this schedule:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
Develop DFCs	May*	Early July
Assess current conditions	Early July	Early August
Define DFC achievement strategies	August	August
Develop practitioner guidance document and host trainings	September	November

\*In 2024, this task will begin in May to account for time to hire a technical consultant, but in subsequent years, it will likely begin in March.

Budget:

The total budget for the technical consultant’s work (including any necessary sub-contracting relating to technical input or facilitation) over 3 years is \$70,000. We expect a greater share than one-third of those funds to be spent in the first year, with a less than one-third share spent in subsequent years once processes and templates have been established and created.

How Can I Be Considered?

The Collaborative will select the technical consultant for YStew, and FOTY will be the hiring entity. Please submit the following materials to Emily Burke, FOTY Conservation Program Manager, at emily@friendsoftheyampa.com by Wed, April 17th at 11:59 pm.

- A short description of your qualifications for the project (<3 pages), including:
  - Collaboration and consensus-building experience
  - Technical knowledge of river ecology, morphology, hydrology, and restoration techniques
  - Data synthesis, GIS, and spatial data analysis skills
  - Examples of at least two (2) similar projects conducted on river health and conservation best management practices
- Relevant staff resumes, if applicable
- Proposed budget, including timeline and task breakdown
- At least two (2) professional references for projects with a similar scope of work

The Collaborative will select the consultant by Wed, April 24th.

Questions?

Please contact Emily Burke (contact information above) with any questions, and replies will be provided as promptly as possible.