



816 Park Ave NW

Norton, VA 24273

Phone: (276) 679-1691

<https://appvoices.org/>

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Project Title: Ecological Restoration of Mined Lands: Advisory, earthworks and reforestation services for Quarry Dr. site

Issuing Agency: Appalachian Voices

Date Issued: December 18, 2024

1. Introduction

Appalachian Voices is a non-profit organization that envisions an Appalachia with healthy ecosystems and resilient local economies that allow communities to thrive. Our organization brings people together to protect the land, air and water of Central and Southern Appalachia and advance a just transition to a generative and equitable clean energy economy.

Appalachian Voices is issuing a Request for Proposals from qualified organizations to provide planning and implementation services for the reforestation of a 193-acre reclaimed mine site on Quarry Dr. near Clinchco, VA. The selected contractor will be responsible for the design, cost estimation and implementation of this reforestation project which will include the removal and suppression of non-native invasive species (NNIS), the establishment of a functional planting medium, and the planting of diverse native species to support the establishment of a native hardwood forest.

We recognize that mined land reforestation is a specialized skill set. Respondents should demonstrate a track record of successful mined land reforestation projects with experience directly providing or sub-contracting services including earthworks, NNIS removal and suppression, and silviculture.



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The Quarry Dr. site will serve as part of our Mined Land Reforestation Carbon Pilot project. The Forest Reclamation Approach (FRA) practices have been demonstrated and advanced in Central Appalachian mine reclamation contexts for decades, and have proven and measurable carbon removal value. We are encouraged by the potential of biological carbon removal to restore degraded landscapes such as those found in coal country and to produce multi-benefits to the community through public land access, ecosystem benefits and job creation. We envision a model where regenerative land restoration practices are used to reclaim barren landscapes left by large surface coal mines in Appalachia. The USDA, USFS Forest Landowner Support grant will fund the scope of this RFP.

2. Background

Appalachian Voices is committed to promoting environmental protection and sustainable development in the Appalachian region. The rehabilitation of mine-scarred lands in central Appalachia represents an opportunity to sequester carbon while revitalizing ecosystems and the regional economy. Our specific vision is to reforest the site and protect it long-term by establishing a carbon project with high-quality standards and centering community vision, benefits, participation and land access, as a replicable best-practice model for the region. We seek the services of an experienced reforestation contractor to contribute to the site project design and carry out an implementation plan based on the best available science.

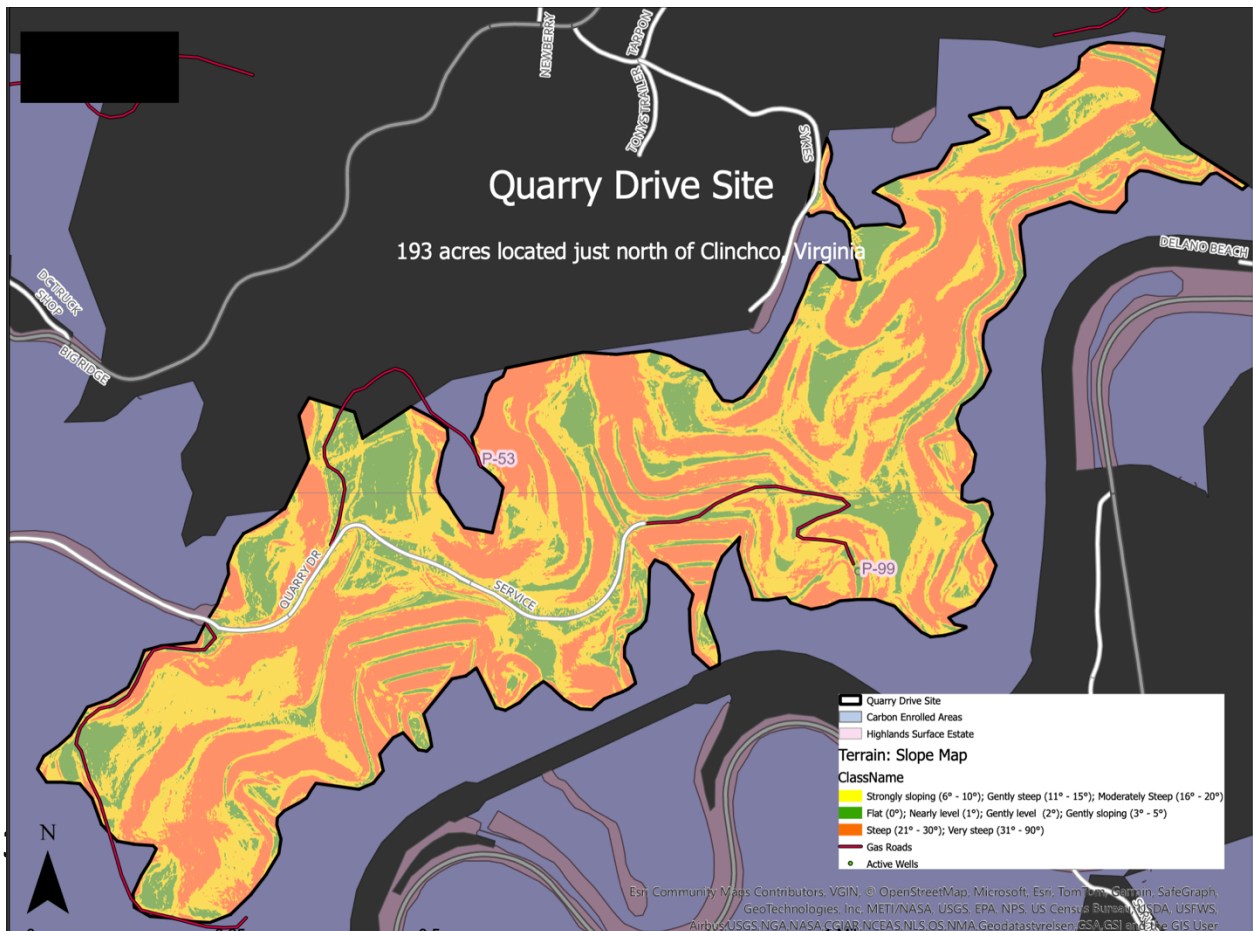
This site was surface-mined in the 1980s then re-permitted and remined in the 1990s. It was reclaimed around the year 2000 to the Post – Mining Land Use designation of Unmanaged Forestry/Undeveloped Land. It was planted with autumn olive and has now had over 20 years of regrowth. Kudzu is also present in one section of the site. It was reclaimed in the post-law period, that is after the introduction of SMCRA in 1977, but it was reclaimed prior to the use of the Forest Reclamation Approach.

Below are photos of the vegetation on site, taken on May 9, 2024, and a map indicating the slopes present on the site.





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The contractor shall perform the following tasks within two phases:

Phase 1: Assessment and Treatment Design

Task 1: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current condition of the site including:

- Boundary survey
- Soil sampling
- Survey of standing timber
- Survey of plant and animal communities

Task 2: Utilize the assessment and feedback from our carbon developer to create a treatment plan that incorporates our goals of removing NNIS, preparing an appropriate planting medium, reforestation using native vegetation consistent with the development of a hardwood forest and sequestering carbon. The treatment plan is likely to include, but is not limited to the following elements:

- Safe operating plan for the protection of gas infrastructure on site
- NNIS removal and suppression
- Application of soil amendment
- Earthworks: Low-compaction grading, use of a ripper shank and/or root rake and recreational trail construction
- Basal spray to combat invasives
- Planting and seeding
- Regeneration survey
- Replanting if necessary

Phase 2 – Implementation

Task 1: Remove and suppress NNIS using a bulldozer, root rake and herbicide as required. Meet the following criteria:

- Maintain adequate insurance for contractors and subcontractors
- Document the fuel used by heavy equipment for assessment of the project's carbon footprint
- Coordinate with the gas company and 811 for safe operating and digging practices



- Adhere to guidelines for use of herbicides and use only when no alternative effective treatment is possible
- Contractor plans shall comply with all applicable State and Federal rules and regulations and receive all appropriate reviews and approvals required for operation

Task 2: Conduct earthworks to prepare the planting medium using a bulldozer and ripper shank. (Same criteria as Task 1.)

Task 3: Reforest site with native plantings and seed. Meet the following criteria:

- Develop a silvicultural prescription to prioritize both biodiversity and carbon sequestration
- Comply with FSC sourcing requirements
- Ensure proper stock handling
- Incorporate strategies to minimize risk to plantings including deer browse, crowding by NNIS, etc.

Deliverables:

- Detailed site assessment report establishing baseline characteristics
- Treatment plan and accompanying timeline
- Comprehensive cost estimates for the proposed treatment plan
- Complete NNIS removal and suppression
- Complete preparation of the planting medium
- Complete reforestation of the site

4. Site Visit

Applicants are welcome to request a visit to view the site. Visitors will tour the site as a collective on a date that works for all applicants in early January. Please express your desire to view the site by emailing Elizabeth Holloway at liz.holloway@appvoices.org by January 6th, 2025.

5. Proposal Submission Requirements

4.1 Proposal Format: Proposals must be submitted in electronic format (PDF) and include the following sections:



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- Executive Summary: One page including project title, name of proposing organization, contact information, date of submission, and summary of the proposal's key points.
- Statement of Qualifications: All respondents must submit a written Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) to include information about the respondent directly related to each of the tasks and deliverables. Respondents must provide an explanation of how they propose to accomplish the project outcome within the stated time frame.
- Three references from past clients, either a letter of support or contact information.
- Budget and Cost Proposal: Provide a detailed budget breakdown, including labor, materials, and other expenses and a corresponding timeline.

4.2 Proposal Submission Deadline: Proposals must be received no later than noon **January 17, 2025**.

4.3 Submission Instructions: Proposals should be submitted electronically to **liz.holloway@appvoices.org** with the subject line: "Ecological Restoration of Mined Lands RFP Submission."

5. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Technical Approach (30%)
- Organizational Capabilities (25%)
- Cost Proposal (20%)
- Past Performance/References (15%)
- Compliance with Requirements (10%)

6. Point-of-Contact

Respondents shall restrict all contact and questions regarding this RFP and selection process to the individual named herein. Questions concerning terms, conditions, and technical specifications shall be directed in writing to: Elizabeth Holloway, email at: Liz.holloway@appvoices.org.



7. Regulatory

This Contract is supported by federal pass-through funding from Rural Action and thus subject to federal regulations. The funding origination and statutory authority is USDA Forest Service from the Inflation Reduction Act Landscape Scale Restoration grant, CFDA 10.731. If engaged, contractor must comply with contract provisions set by Appalachian Voices to include regulations, cost principles and audit requirements as established by the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Grant Guidance, available for review at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards>. Please review and submit any questions on regulatory matters to Appalachian Voices, Government Grant Manager, Jana Jones at jana@appvoices.org.

8. Amendments

Appalachian Voices reserves the right to amend or modify this RFP at any time. Any changes will be communicated to all prospective offerors.

9. Proposal Reviews and Selection Process

All teams being solicited for this RFP will be asked to interview in Norton, VA. or virtually. Elizabeth Holloway will email you the preferred date, once she has received availability from all teams.

Consideration is expected to be given, but is not guaranteed to be given, to the selection criteria outlined in this RFP. Appalachian Voices reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any and all formalities outlined in the RFP and in the selection process and generally to make the award that in its judgment, will best meet the objectives stated in this RFP.

If the successful respondent is unwilling or unable to execute a contract covering the scope of the RFP, Appalachian Voices has the right to request another respondent to enter into the contract with Appalachian Voices. All dates in the RFP are subject to change at the discretion of Appalachian Voices, and notice of any changes will be provided to all respondents.

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposing organization acknowledges and agrees to comply with all terms and conditions outlined herein.



Signature of Authorized Representative:

Elizabeth Holloway

Elizabeth Holloway

Carbon Removal Program Manager

Appalachian Voices