REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR:

UPPER VENTURA RIVER GROUNDWATER AGENCY

&

MOUND BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Jointly Requested By:

Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency

P.O. Box 1779
Ojai, CA 93024

Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

P.O. Box 3544
Ventura, CA 93006

RFQ Issued: January 25, 2019

RFQ Submission Deadline: February 25, 2019

1 OVERVIEW

This request for qualifications (RFQ) is jointly issued by Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency (UVRGA) and Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MBGSA). These agencies serve as Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Upper Ventura River Subbasin (DWR Basin No. 4-003.01) and Mound Subbasin (DWR Basin No. 4-004.03), respectively. Both basins must have GSPs approved by the respective GSAs by January 31, 2022. Both basins have Prop 1 grant funding to complete the GSPs.

The purpose of the RFQ is to identify and select qualified firm(s) to provide Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development support services for the agencies. Both GSA's are seeking a consulting firm to provide as-needed GSP development support services under the direction of the GSP Plan Manager (GSP PM). Bondy Groundwater Consulting, Inc. (BGC) serves as the GSP PM for both agencies. Given that the agencies have the same GSP PM and similar support service needs, an economy of scale may be realized by both agencies if a single consulting firm is selected. **However, the agencies retain the right to hire different consulting firms based on their specific needs and independent evaluation of the RFQ responses.**

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency (http://www.uvrgroundwater.org/)

The Upper Ventura River Groundwater Sub-Basin of the Ventura River Valley Basin (UVRB) (DWR Sub-Basin No. 4-003.01) is a medium-priority basin located in the Ventura River watershed in Ventura County. UVRGA officially became a GSA on July 20, 2017. UVRGA's governing body is comprised of one representative from each of the following five local public agencies: Casitas Municipal Water District, the City of San Buenaventura, the County of Ventura, the Meiners Oaks Water District, and the Ventura River Water District. Additionally, two Board seats are held by non-agency representatives, one representing agricultural stakeholders and another representing environmental interests.

Unlike most areas of southern California, water users in the Ventura River watershed rely solely on local sources of water, with groundwater making up roughly half of those supplies. Three public agencies pump groundwater from the basin and there are dozens of private wells that supply water for domestic and agricultural uses. Lake Casitas is the back-up supply for groundwater users, but the current drought has reduced its storage, with uncertainty as to future

volumes. Thus, sustainable groundwater management is critical for ensuring reliability of local supplies for agriculture, domestic, public, and environmental users in the basin.

The basin is a relatively shallow, unconfined alluvial basin that underlies the Ventura River. The section of the river located downstream of the Robles Diversion to just upstream of the San Antonio Creek confluence is characterized as a “dry reach” where surface water disappears underground, except after storms, in most years. A “wet reach” occurs over the basin’s lower portion, generally downstream of the San Antonio Creek confluence. The wet reach is habitat for anadromous fish. Understanding the surface water and groundwater interrelationship, and the effects of pumping on surface water flows and groundwater levels, will be an important part of addressing sustainability for the basin’s various beneficial uses. In fact, the Ventura River is one of five stream systems called out in the 2014 California Water Action Plan to enhance streamflow for anadromous fish. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), with assistance from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, is now studying the river system, including development of a surface water-groundwater model, for which calibration with adequate data will be a crucial aspect. Results are expected in 2021. This state-level effort and development of the basin’s GSP can be mutually supportive, but the model will not likely be available for UVRGA use in time to complete the GSP. Thus, the Agency will need to develop analytical tool(s) to evaluate depletion of interconnected surface water in order to comply with the GSP Emergency Regulations.

To manage the basin sustainably, the UVRGA must balance significant demands from multiple beneficial users on limited local supplies. To be successful, this endeavor must be approached with as much hydrogeological data as possible. Therefore, the Prop 1 grant includes a number of tasks that are underway to fill key gaps in data and analysis, such as measuring groundwater levels, groundwater inflows, surface flows, and the surface water-groundwater interface, and estimating extractions from private wells and the water demands of natural habitat. More info details can be obtained from the UVRGA grant application available on DWR’s SGMA website.

Kear Groundwater (KG) and BGC are currently working for UVRGA. KG is executing the data gap tasks and BGC is serving as the GSP PM. The UVRGA Board recently created a Technical Review Group (TRG) to review the data gap tasks and data interpretation and analysis methods for the GSP. The TRG consists of four members, including KG and BGC. It is anticipated that the

successful RFQ respondent will serve as a third member. A separate RFQ is being issued to recruit the fourth member.

The successful RFQ respondent will be expected to work together with to KG and BGC on GSP development, provide reviews, and provide full service document management for the GSP. It is anticipated that GSP preparation will be split between KG, BGC, and the successful RFQ respondent. For example, the consultant will likely be asked to lead the development and implementation of an analytical modeling tool to evaluate depletion of interconnected surface water.

2.2 Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (https://www.moundbasingsa.org/)

Mound Basin (DWR Subbasin No. 4-004.03) is a medium-priority basin in the Santa Clara River and Buenaventura watersheds in Ventura County. Three public agencies, the City of Ventura, the County of Ventura, and United Water Conservation District (UWCD) formed the Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MBGSA), becoming an official GSA on September 30, 2017. The five-member GSA Board of Directors includes an agricultural and an environmental stakeholder representative.

Mound Basin underlies much of the City of Ventura, a coastal city of 109,000 residents noteworthy for using 100% local water supplies. Mound Basin currently meets up to 20% of the City's water demand, and is also used to irrigate 2,000 acres of agricultural lands, which comprise 14% of the surface area of the basin.

Mound Basin is a subbasin of, and marks the lower end of, the Santa Clara River Basin. It is positioned to the north of the river, largely out of the floodplain and underlying a sloping coastal plain adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. The basin does underlie the last 1.3 miles of the Santa Clara River, including the roughly 100-acre Santa Clara River Estuary, and 28 acres of treatment wetlands. It shares subsurface hydrologic connection to other basins to the east and south, which are sources of recharge. With the basin's position underlying the estuary and river, there are questions about groundwater-surface water interaction and whether groundwater pumping in the basin may affect these surface water bodies. The basin is highly complex and has been studied far less than other basins in the region. The Mound Basin complexity includes multiple confined aquifers that are extensively folded and faulted and have varying water quality characteristics.

Mound Basin's water quality has been an ongoing limiting factor in its use. Water quality is variable by area, but the basin's water is generally high in TDS, sulfate,

hardness, and other naturally occurring dissolved minerals, and typically must be blended with better quality water water from other sources before distribution for potable use. Municipal wells near the center of the basin have experienced degrading water quality over recent years and an agricultural well has been affected by mineralized water with elevated temperatures. As a coastal basin, seawater intrusion is always a risk, and water levels in the recent extended drought reached their lowest levels since the major drought of 1989.

Mound Basin is located within the service area of UWCD. UWCD has a groundwater department who has been studying the basin and has developed a groundwater model that includes the Mound Basin. UWCD staff will be performing modeling for the GSP, among other services.

UWCD technical staff will be the lead for most technical aspects of GSP preparation. UWCD's draft scope of work can be viewed in the Board of Director's meeting agenda packet for January 17, 2019, available on MBGSA's website. BGC serves as the MBGSA Executive Director and will be the GSP PM. BGC will be the lead on policy issues, such as development of sustainable management criteria. The successful RFQ respondent will be expected to provide support and backup to UWCD and BGC, address gaps in the services provided by UWCD and BGC, provide reviews, and provide full service document management for the GSP. Compared to UVRGA, the successful RFQ respondent will likely be less directly involved in the GSP development for MBGSA.

3 ANTICIPATED SCOPE OF SERVICES

The ideal consulting firm(s) will be qualified and willing to provide the following support services:

1. Cost-effective staff to support development of GSP background (non-technical) GSP sections;

2. Cost-effective analytical modeling support to evaluate depletion of interconnected surface water (UVRGA);

3. Cost-effective technical support for other GSP elements, and

4. Full Service GSP document management (editing, formatting, comment management, and version control). The consultant will serve as the document clearinghouse for the GSP development teams. The consultant will compile work products into a consistent document format, edit, and manage the document and comments. Ideally this service will be provided by a technical editor or other administrative professional with considerable document management experience on projects of a similar magnitude. Technical staff may assist with comment management, but the goal is to minimize costs for document management by keeping the bulk of this work in an administrative classification.

The consultant should be comfortable working in a support role with a work order driven contract. Importantly, the consultant should be willing to work very closely with and under the GSP PM's direction.

The agencies retain the right to hire different consulting firms based on their specific needs and independent evaluation of the RFQ responses. If one consultant is selected to serve both agencies, a contract will be issued by each agency. Contracting will consist of a master agreement and work orders will be issued for specific as needed services. The consultant will be expected to track and report expenditures against each work order issued and to prepare invoices with charges broken down grant task. Timely and accurate invoicing will be important to facilitate grant management.

Neither agency will pay for any costs incurred in preparation and submission of the qualifications, or in anticipation of a contract.

4 QUALIFICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Each submittal shall be limited to the maximum number of pages listed for each section. Qualifications shall be submitted as a PDF file. A minimum of 11 point font size shall be used.

All firms wishing to be considered for this work shall include the following information in their qualifications:

Cover Letter (Maximum: 1 page)

Include in the cover letter, the office location where the project will be managed, and the name, title and location of the project manager.

Statement of Qualifications (Maximum: 3 pages)

Provide a summary demonstrating the offeror's unique qualifications necessary to provide the anticipated services.

Project Team (Maximum: 2 pages per resume, No section page limit)

Include an organization chart illustrating the key project team members, the firms they are affiliated with (if multiple firms are teamed), and the role each will serve on the project; clearly identify the name and title of the proposed project manager and document management professional (or lead document management professional if multiple staff will be working together to provide the document management services); provide a brief resume demonstrating qualifications for successfully completing this work for other key project team members, their office location, and a brief summary for each proposed sub-consultant firm (if any).

Project Experience (Maximum: 5 pages)

Include a description for up to five projects that demonstrate the qualifications of the firm to provide the requested services. At a minimum, one project should be included that demonstrates analytical modeling capabilities, on project that demonstrates full service document management capabilities, and one project that demonstrates SGMA and/or other groundwater management knowledge/experience. Responding firms should specifically describe which GSAs they are currently under contract to perform work for, any other SGMA-related work, and/or groundwater management or relevant technical experience that would be pertinent to assist with technical analysis and GSP preparation.

Project Approach (Maximum: 3 pages)

Provide a description of your firm's understanding of the requested services and approach for providing the services. Describe your firms' availability to assist with completing the GSPs in accordance with the statutory deadline.

References (Maximum: 2 pages)

Provide contact names and phone numbers for at least three (3) references for similar projects that the Proposer has performed related services within the last five years. Please include a brief description of the services provided, the duration of the project, the completion status of the projects, the total contracted fee for the project, and the agency contact name, title, phone number, and email.

Conflict of Interest (Maximum: 1 page)

Provide a discussion of any potential conflicts of interest the firm may have in performing this work for the GSA and any work currently being done or previously performed for any of the stakeholders, water rights holders, or land owners in the Basins.

Fee Schedule

Include a fee schedule listing the billing rates for all classifications of personnel and sub-consultants that may be assigned to the project. Rates should be organized in a single table with a column for each fiscal year of the project (July 1 through June 30) (e.g. Fiscal years 18/19, 19/20, 20/21, and 21/22). It is acceptable to specify rates fiscal year 18/19 and a multiplier for the remaining fiscal years. Please be advised that the fee schedule shall be included as an attachment to any contract(s) that may result from this selection process.

All work associated with the preparation of the GSP and other tasks assigned by either agency shall be performed on a time and materials basis, under individual work orders to be reviewed and approved by UVRGA or MBGSA. All work shall be completed to the satisfaction of the agency issuing the work order within the time periods allocated for each work order and within the budget assigned to each work order.

5 QUALIFICATIONS SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Submittals shall be delivered via email to bryan@bondygroundwater.com by 5pm on February 25, 2019.

Submittals shall be clearly marked as follows:

Qualifications for GSP Support Services for Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency and Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Late submissions will not be accepted.

6 QUALIFICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

UVRGA and MBGSA will review the submittals for completeness and will rank them according to the criteria listed below. The UVRGA and MBGSA Boards of Directors will select the successful firm(s) with input from the GSP PM and UWCD (for MBGSA).

- Labor rates
- Quality and completeness of the qualifications submittal.
- Proposed approach for working with the GSP PM and other members of the GSP preparation teams for each basin;
- Experience collaborating with others professionals on similar projects;
- Technical team qualifications (surface water depletion analytical modeling experience is a key requirement for UVRGA);
- Document management experience; and

In-person interviews may be held, at the discretion of the agencies. If interviews are held, offerors will be notified with the details of the interview process.

The selected firm should expect that the contracts will include terms and conditions necessary to protect the interests of the agencies, its members, and beneficial users of groundwater.

7 SCHEDULE

Fully-executed agreements with the selected firm(s) are anticipated by May 1, 2019.

8 CONTACT INFORMATION

All questions regarding this RFQ shall be made in writing via email to bryan@bondygroundwater.com.

The deadline for submitting questions is 5pm on February 13.