

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

**BIOLOGICAL CONSULTING  
AND  
FIELD MONITORING SUPPORT SERVICES  
FOR:**



**202 W. El Roblar Dr.**

**Ojai, CA 93023**

**(805) 640-1247**

**<https://uvrgroundwater.org/>**

**RFQ Issued: July 14, 2020**

**RFQ Submission Deadline: August 3, 2020**

## **1 OVERVIEW**

This request for qualifications (RFQ) is issued by Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency (UVRGA). UVRGA serves as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) for the Upper Ventura River Subbasin (DWR Basin No. 4-003.01), a medium basin priority groundwater basin (UVRB). The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) must be approved by the UVRGA's Board of Directors by January 31, 2022. UVRGA has a Proposition 1 grant that provides much of the funding necessary to complete the GSP.

The purpose of the RFQ is to identify and select qualified firm(s) to provide support services related to the biological aspects of GSP and ongoing field monitoring activities on an as-needed basis under the direction of the UVRGA Executive Director. Bryan Bondy, Bondy Groundwater Consulting, Inc. (BGC) serves as UVRGA's Contract Executive Director and GSP Manager.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

UVRB 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. Four public agencies pump groundwater from the basin and dozens of private wells supply water for domestic and agricultural uses. Lake Casitas is the back-up supply for many groundwater users, but the recent drought has reduced its capacity, 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 consists of a thin, unconfined alluvial aquifer 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 beginning near the San Antonio Creek confluence. The wet reach is habitat for anadromous fish and other groundwater dependent ecosystems. Understanding the surface water and groundwater interrelationship and its nexus with environmental beneficial uses of water will be an important part of addressing sustainability. 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. This state-level effort and development of the basin’s GSP can be mutually supportive.

To manage the basin sustainably, the UVRGA must balance significant demands from multiple beneficial users on limited local supplies, including environmental beneficial uses. Specifically, UVRGA is required to identify and consider groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) in the GSP. GDEs present in UVRB include (1) aquatic habit that supports anadromous fish and other aquatic species where groundwater and surface water are *interconnected* and (2) natural plant communities that rely on groundwater for a significant portion of their water needs. For more information, please see the preliminary draft Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the GSP available at:

Text: [https://uvrgroundwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UVRGA-Preliminary-Draft-GSP-Basin-Setting\\_Text\\_070820.pdf](https://uvrgroundwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UVRGA-Preliminary-Draft-GSP-Basin-Setting_Text_070820.pdf)

Figures: [https://uvrgroundwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UVRGA-Preliminary-Draft-GSP-Basin-Setting\\_Figures\\_070820.pdf](https://uvrgroundwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UVRGA-Preliminary-Draft-GSP-Basin-Setting_Figures_070820.pdf)

The GSP is being developed using a group of collaborators (“GSP Development Team”). The GSP Development Team includes:

- UVRGA Executive Director, Bryan Bondy, Bondy Groundwater Consulting – Bryan is the GSP Manger and contributing author. Bryan also provides technical support and review.
- Intera Inc. – Intera is the GSP lead and is responsible for overall document management, is the primary author of many GSP sections, and is lead on quantitative analysis (water budget development and modeling).
- Kear Groundwater – Kear Groundwater is a contributing author for the hydrogeologic conceptual model and a technical reviewer. Kear Groundwater also provides field monitoring services.

### 3 ANTICIPATED SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful RFQ respondent will be expected to assist other members of the GSP Development Team with the following potential tasks:

- GSP Development Support
  - GDE Characterization:
    - Identifying representative or indicator plant species within the various regional Natural Communities Commonly Associated with Groundwater vegetation classifications in the Basin;
    - Identifying rooting depth information for indicator species; and
    - Assisting with evaluation of indicator species' groundwater dependency.
  - Sustainability Criteria Development:
    - Assisting with evaluations that will support determinations of conditions that constitute undesirable results under SGMA and field metrics for groundwater conditions that correspond to those undesirable results (i.e. "Minimum Thresholds" under SGMA), as they relate to the various GDEs present in UVRB and
    - Assisting with evaluations that will support determinations of achievable goals for groundwater conditions (i.e. "Measureable Objectives" under SGMA), as they relate to the various GDEs present in UVRB.
  - Monitoring Plan Development: Assisting with developing a monitoring plan for the GSP as it relates to GDEs.
  - Projects and Management Actions: Assisting with developing realistic implementation measures to achieve the GSP sustainability goal, as it relates to GDEs.

- Field Monitoring Services: The consultant may also be requested to perform some or all of the following field monitoring activities listed below. A particular interest of UVRGA would be the ability to complete the field monitoring services using multidisciplinary firm/staff so that linkages between hydrologic monitoring and biologic observations can be established and to reduce overall monitoring costs by performing hydrologic and biologic monitoring contemporaneously.
  - Groundwater Level Monitoring: UVRGA currently maintains transducers in seven wells located throughout the Basin.
  - Surface Water Flow Monitoring: UVRGA current measures surface water flow in the Ventura River near Casitas Springs on a monthly basis. UVRGA is preparing to install and maintain a surface water flow gauge at the Camino Cielo crossing of the Ventura River. Additional surface water flow monitoring actions may be identified in the GSP for implementation.
  - Surface Water Dry-Wet-Intermittent Conditions Monitoring: UVRGA and Casitas MWD currently perform period surveys to map dry, wet, and intermittent river conditions.
  - Other: Additional monitoring activities may be identified in the GSP for implementation, such as biological monitoring.
- Permitting and Environmental Compliance (CEQA/NEPA): The consultant may be asked to perform certain permitting functions and CEQA/NEQA compliance for GSP implementation measures, such as monitoring well installations, geophysical surveys, stream gauge construction projects, etc.
- Grant Writing Support: The consultant may be asked to assist with preparation of grant applications.

The consultant should be comfortable working in a support role under a work order driven contract. Importantly, the consultant should be willing to work very closely with the Executive Director's and collaborate with the other GSP Development Team members.

UVRGA will not 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 (Maximums: Overview, 1 page; Resumes, 2 pages each)**

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. Provide a brief resumes demonstrating qualifications for other key project team members, their office location, and a brief summary for each proposed sub-consultant firm (if any).

##### **Project Experience and References (Maximum: 3 pages)**

Include descriptions for at least three projects performed within the last five years that demonstrate the qualifications of the firm to provide the requested services. 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.

##### **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 provide timely services on an as-needed basis.

## **Conflict of Interest**

Provide a brief discussion of any potential conflicts of interest the firm may have in performing this work for UVRGA 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 fiscal years 20/21 and 21/22 (July 1 through June 30). Labor rates for future year services would be negotiated in June 2022. Please be advised that the fee schedule may be included as an attachment to any contract(s) that may result from this selection process.

All work shall be performed on a time and materials basis, under individual work orders to be reviewed and approved by UVRGA. All work shall be completed to the satisfaction of UVRGA 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 [bbondy@uvrgroundwater.org](mailto:bbondy@uvrgroundwater.org) by 5pm on August 3, 2020.**

Submittals shall be clearly marked as follows:

Qualifications for UVRGA Biological Consulting and Field Monitoring Support Services.

Late submissions may not be viewed favorably and may be rejected.

## **6 QUALIFICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

UVRGA will review the submittals for completeness and will rank them according to the criteria listed below. UVRGA Board of Directors may choose to select a firm(s) with input from the Executive Director.

- Labor rates and overall approach to providing cost-effective services;
- Project approach;
- Relevance of firm/staff experience and qualifications; and
- Quality and completeness of the qualifications submittal.

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

The selected firm(s) should expect that the contract will include terms and conditions necessary to protect the interests of UVRGA and its member agencies.

## **7 SCHEDULE**

Fully-executed agreements with the selected firm(s) are anticipated by August 31, 2020.

## **8 CONTACT INFORMATION**

All questions regarding this RFQ shall be made in writing via email to [bbondy@uvrgroundwater.org](mailto:bbondy@uvrgroundwater.org).

**The deadline for submitting questions is 5pm on Monday July 27, 2020.**