



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
 ELKIN CREEK HEADWATERS PRESERVE MASTER PLAN**

DATE ISSUED:	April 1, 2024
SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND TIME:	May 15, 2024
Opening of Bids	May 20, 2024
Selection Notification	May 24, 2024
CONTACT INFORMATION:	EVTA
	Attn: ECHP
	PO BOX 91 Elkin, NC 28621
	Email: megan.stainback@elkinvalleytrails.org jason.taylor@elkinvalleytrails.org

1 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project Overview

Elkin Valley Trails Association (EVTA) in partnership with Piedmont Land Conservancy (PLC) and the Town of Elkin intends to contract for the services of a consultant(s) to develop a Trails and Infrastructure Master Plan for the Elkin Creek Headwaters Preserve (ECHP). The Master Plan will help the Elkin Valley Trails Association develop a cohesive and comprehensive approach to develop low-impact, passive recreation and infrastructure deemed to be consistent with the conservation purposes of Conservation Easement(s) on the property protecting the conservation values of the property. One easement is held by PLC and the other easement is held by the State of North Carolina.

ECHP consists of 446 acres on three tracts, the Lassiter Tract and the Chatham tract (combined 297.33 acres) and the Bryan Tract (149.5 acres).

The primary goals of this master planning project include:

- Conduct a comprehensive inventory and assessment of existing trails and logging roads with the property including their condition, connectivity, and usage.
- Conduct a thorough analysis of the ECHP topography, natural resources, and land use patterns to identify potential trail corridors.
- Engage with stakeholders, including community members, local organizations, government agencies, and trail user groups, to gather input as the draft plan is being developed and incorporate their perspectives into the final plan.
- Develop design guidelines and standards for trail development, considering factors such as trail width, surface materials, signage, and amenities. (The guidelines should factor in the requirements of possible funding sources such as NC RTP grant or similar)
- Propose a diverse network of trails for various non-motorized activities such as mountain biking, hiking, primitive camping, photography, scientific and education studies, and plant and animal observation.
- Propose a prioritized trail network plan that connects key destinations, such as property natural features, natural areas, and linking to existing trails when possible.
- Propose parking area(s) in accordance with the Conservation Easement(s).
- The Trails and Infrastructure Master plan will be delivered using non-proprietary maps and other visual means that clearly identify where the trails are to be located and allow the EVTA to update as needed.
- Develop an implementation strategy for the top trail priorities that includes phased timelines, cost estimates, potential funding sources, and considerations for maintenance and sustainability.

- Prepare a final Elkin Creek Headwater Preserve Trail Master Plan document that clearly presents the findings, recommendations, and proposed strategies in a visually appealing and accessible manner.

1.2. Explanation of Parties Involved

[Town of Elkin, NC:](#) The Town of Elkin, NC assumed long-term ownership and management of the Lassiter tract in December 2021 from Piedmont Land Conservancy. The Bryan tract is in the process of being transferred to the Town of Elkin.

[Piedmont Land Conservancy:](#) The Piedmont Land Conservancy acquired the tracts comprising ECHP and conveyed them to the Town of Elkin for long term management subject to conservation easements (the Bryant tract is in process of being transferred). All tracts will be subject to conservation easements that protect the conservation values of the property. The conservation easement on the Lassiter/Chatham tracts is held by PLC and the conservation easement on the Bryan tract will be held by the State of North Carolina.

[Elkin Valley Trails Association:](#) The mission of the non-profit Elkin Valley Trails Association (EVTA) is to enrich the quality of life in the region by building and promoting a network of multiuse trails. EVTA is tasked with the trail development for the ECHP.

1.3. Project Background

Nestled in between the rolling foothills of the Piedmont and the high peaks of the Blue Ridge is the Blue Ridge Escarpment, the steep slopes that provide the drastic elevation gain of anywhere from 1,300 to 2,500 feet. This landscape has always been a top conservation priority for Piedmont Land Conservancy (PLC) because of the presence of extensive, unfragmented forests, headwaters streams and habitat for many sensitive species of plants and animals.

PLC sought to protect the sensitive landscape between Elkin and Sparta along the scenic drive up US Highway 21, less than one aerial mile east of Stone Mountain State Park and 13 miles from Elkin. In 2018, the PLC purchased 246 acres along the highway, a property called the Lassiter Tract. Adjacent to the Lassiter tract was another 51-acre tract donated to PLC in 1999 by the Chatham family. Combined, these two properties total 297 acres of steep, forested lands along the Blue Ridge Escarpment, providing excellent wildlife habitat and protection for headwaters streams. In January 2023, an additional 149.5 adjacent acres were acquired by PLC, the Bryan Tract. PLC will deed this combined 446 acres in total to the Town of Elkin with the proposed use of low-impact recreation. There is tremendous potential for a significant trail network on the property, utilizing existing logging roads, to add to the existing local trails network managed by the EVTA. This combined acreage has been named the Elkin Creek Headwaters Preserve.

2 PRELIMINARY WORK PLAN

2.1. Existing Conditions

The Consultant will review the existing Elkin Creek Headwater requirements. This task should include an inventory and analysis of policies, programs, and infrastructure.

The Consultant will lead public meetings to gather comments on the existing conditions to quantify the extent, barriers and opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, and other low-impact recreation use. Multiple meetings are expected to ensure input is provided from all stakeholders in the area. It is important to gather significant public input from diverse stakeholders through the public meetings in the planning process. The consulting firms should identify and engage all stakeholders.

The consultant will also lead a meeting to present findings towards the end of the analysis task to review the results of the public meetings and the final existing condition analysis.

Work Product #1: Written narrative and a summary of the physical inventory and analysis along with a summary of the results from community input.

Work Product #2: Conduct public input meetings and one (1) public meeting to present findings, along with written summaries of each.

2.2. Draft Master Plan

A draft plan will be prepared based upon:

- Public input from Section 2.1
- Discussions with the Town of Elkin, Piedmont Land Conservancy, and EVTA ECHP committees.

The draft plan will identify possible additional ways to facilitate connections. The plan will include the findings of the analysis task along with recommendations.

The draft plan will propose priority trails and infrastructure that will improve long term trail connectivity, including a range of implementation opportunities identified as short-term, mid-term, and long range. Consideration for different trail use types and recommendations, including mountain biking and hiking as a priority and consideration of the feasibility of any equestrian trails, although consultant may determine not all uses are feasible based on physical constraints. Recommendations to incorporate historical aspects including the cemetery and the Elkin & Alleghany rail line should be part of the recommended draft plan. A breakdown of general implementation costs will also be included. Additionally, an infrastructure technical guide and sign standards to be used in the trail network will be outlined.

Additionally, the draft plan will include maps illustrating the proposed multi-use trail system and infrastructure. Maps can cover topics such as:

- Trail network with user group recommendations, illustrating available and planned facilities including parking and convenience stations
- County and community connections
- Project priorities and phasing
- A trail user map, as a promotional piece for tourism and for use by residents

The public meeting should also be used to solicit input necessary to help prioritize the recommendations of the plan.

Work Product #3: Electronic and paper copies of the draft plan for review and comment.

Work Product #4: Conduct one (1) more organizational ECHP meeting and an additional public meeting along with written summaries of each.

2.3. Develop Plan Priorities and prepare Final Plan for adoption

The recommendations of the plan will be prioritized based upon the input gained in public meetings and input from the ECHP Committee. After prioritization, further detail (project bidding, engineering, etc) will be provided in the plan on the identified projects.

A written communication strategy with recommendations for how to describe and promote the plan will also be provided under this task. The consultant will identify potential grant opportunities and alternative funding sources that could be pursued for implementation of projects.

Based on the draft plan, public input and discussions with the ECHP committee, the Consultant will identify two to five projects for additional analysis. Specifically, the identified projects will be refined in order to be submitted for unidentified grant applications. This will include a planning study for each agreed upon project that will stop short of completing the environmental permitting, but will include:

- Construction cost estimates
- Right-of-way and utility impacts
- An analysis of potential issues

EVTA will meet to discuss the plan priorities prior to the production of the final plan.

Work Product #5: Prioritized list of recommendations of the draft plan.

Work Product #6: Written communication strategy for the plan.

Work Product #7: Final plan document in both hard copy and electronic formats.

Work Product #8: Additional analysis of two to five projects.

2.4. Adoption

ECHP Committee will formally adopt the final plan following the requirements necessary:

Work Product #9: Formal resolution adopting the plan.

2024	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Consultant Selection									
Existing Conditions Analysis									
Develop Draft Plan									
Develop Plan Priorities and Final Plan									
Formal Adoption of the Plan									

3 SELECTION PROCESS

3.1. RFP Deadline

The deadline for this RFP is as contained in the schedule included herein, **May 15, 2024**.

3.2. RFP Delivery Procedures

Sealed RFPs shall be delivered to:

Elkin Valley Trails Association
 Attn: ECHP
 PO Box 91
 Elkin, NC 8621

Sealed envelopes shall be clearly labeled "Elkin Creek Headwaters Preserve" with the vendor's name and address. Once a RFP is received by the EVTA, it will be time and date stamped. RFPs received after the specified deadline will not be considered. Additionally, the EVTA will not consider any proposal submitted via fax, email, or oral proposal.

3.3. Withdrawal of RFP

A written request for the withdrawal of a RFP may be granted if the request is received by the EVTA prior to the specified time of award.

3.4. RFP Opening Procedures

The opening of all RFPs shall commence immediately after the stated delivery date and time. The proposals shall be taken under review at that time.

3.5. Selection Process

All proposals submitted will be evaluated by a ECHP committee. The committee will consider, but not be limited to, the major factors that will be incorporated in a weighted-scale matrix to help objectively highlight the proposal that best meets our needs. A site visit is highly recommended. The committee reserves the right to narrow the field to two final proposals and require further information of both for a final award.

The major factors that will be considered are:

- Entity's experience in this field of work; number of examples provided highlighting this work,
- Entity's experience with construction projects of this scale in Surry County/Northwest NC region,
- Sample illustration of design proposed and its incorporation of the desired design elements of the entire site area,
- Costs and contingency ranges,
- Calendar and staff availability to provide first property attention to this project to completion,
- Reference, and quality of references provided by referrals

3.6. Reserved Rights

The EVTA reserves the right, at any time and for any reason, to cancel this RFP, to reject any or all proposals, or to accept an alternate proposal. EVTA reserves the right to develop criteria for each bid package. EVTA reserves the right to waive any immaterial defect in any proposal. EVTA may seek clarification from a consultant at any time and failure to respond promptly is cause for rejection.

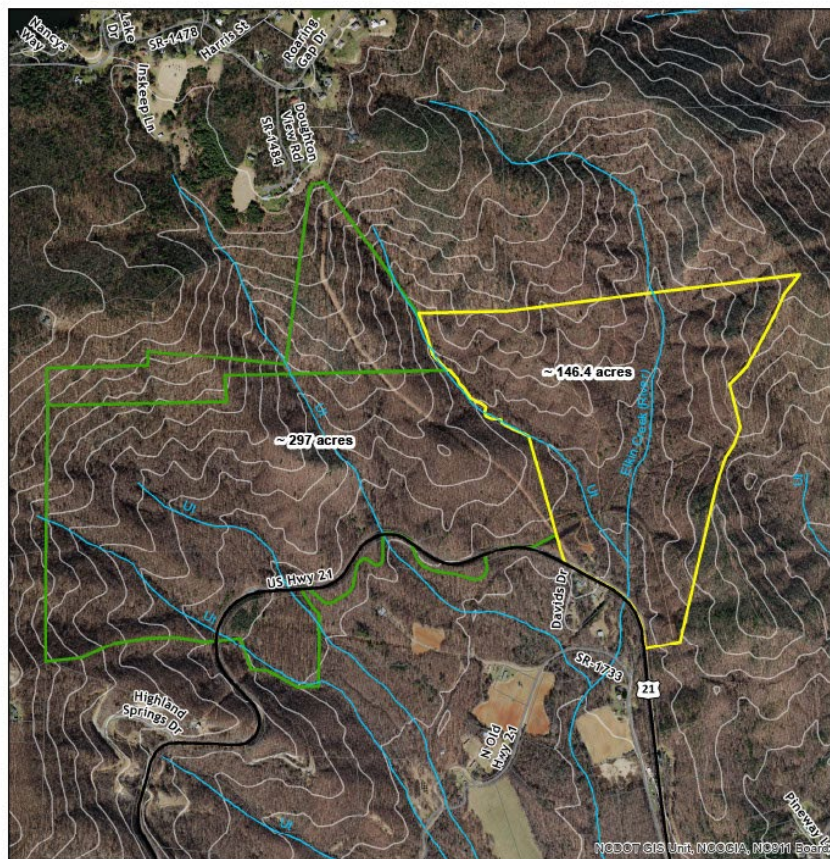
Questions

If you have questions about this RFP, please contact either Megan Stainback, megan.stainback@elkinvalleytrails.org, or Jason Taylor, jason.taylor@elkinvalleytrails.org.

All questions received will be posted on elkinvalleytrails.org where the RFP is also posted. No questions will be accepted within the week proposals are due.

Due Date: May 15, 2024

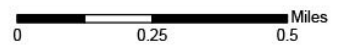
Supporting documentation:



Elkin Creek Headwaters Preserve Wilkes County

Total Acreage: +/- 443.3

-  Bryan Tract
-  Elkin Creek Headwaters Preserve
-  100 ft Contour



P.O. Box 4025
Greensboro, NC 27404-4025
(336) 691-0088
www.piedmontland.org

Map updated February 8th, 2024
by Tesla Jefferson

[Site Survey Report](#)

[Conservation Easement \(Wilkes\)](#)

[Conservation Easement \(Alleghany\)](#)

Bryan Track Conservation Easement-To be made available upon finalization by PLC and State of NC

[PLC Project Management Proposal \(2019, minus Bryan tract\)](#)

Wilkes County, NC Parcel IDs:

[1900807](#), [1902451](#), [1901024](#)