

Zeitgeist and the Lake Superior Steelhead Association

Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Project – PH V

Request for Proposal Award Statement

Brief Background:

The following report is for Phase Five (V) of the Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Project being conducted on the Knife River watershed in Lake/S. Louis counties in northeast Minnesota. PH V work completes the remaining approximately 2000 linear feet of Reach 4 work as outlined in the Final Design Plans – Attachment #1 (see below). Also included is assessment, design and permitting of sites outlined in the RFP below Lake County Road 11 and work below the Hwy 61 Expressway. All proposed work is on the Knife River.

Information on the RFP, along with all the associated attachments, can be obtained from the Lake Superior Steelhead Association's website at www.steelheaders.org. Click on the *Projects* link and scroll down to PH V RFP. Attachment #11 is the complete RFP.

The bid was released per state guidelines: 30+ day notice of bid due date, bid information published in a local newspaper and bid posted on several local construction platforms. Those firms that were selected to receive the bid directly are listed on Attachment #13 on the website listed above. We received two bids from the list of firms in Attachment #13 and they were:

- The team consisting of Beaver River Consulting, Sunram Construction, Northern Ecological Services and Green Watershed Restoration.
- The team consisting of Environmental Troubleshooters, Inc., Cardno Engineering and Geomorphic Restoration, Inc.

We also received two comments from nonbidding firms:

- One firm was primarily engineering and did not have construction capabilities.
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Process and Timeline:

- Bids were due to be submitted no later than noon on Monday, November 23, 2020. Both bids were received on time.
- Bid award criteria are stated in the RFP. The process utilized to award the bid is the Best Value Bid Process, also laid out in the RFP.
- The received bids were distributed to the Award Committee for evaluation and scoring. The Award Committee consists of five individuals: Tony Cuneo, Tom O'Rourke, Gary Siverson, Ted Smith and Kevin Bovee.
- Initial bids were scored using a Bid Evaluation Sheet based on 20 points and broken down into three categories: Professional Qualifications-12 points; Ability to Meet Timelines and Goals-four (4) points and Ability to Meet Cost Goals-four (4) points. A bid needed to achieve at least 65% of points to qualify for consideration.
- The Award Meeting was scheduled for December 7 and was open to the public. This meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Both bidding firms had representatives at the meeting. At the Award Meeting, members of the Award Committee desired more information from the bidders so a one-hour follow-up interview of each bidder was scheduled. Conducting a follow-up interview as needed, was articulated in the RFP as part of the determination process.
- A list of questions was prepared based upon the information that the Award Committee wanted to learn through the follow-up interviews. The exact same questions were presented to each team.
- An interview scoring sheet was developed similar to that used in the initial bid scoring using the Bid Evaluation Sheet. The scoring for this sheet was based on eight (8) points and again broken down into three categories: Professional Qualifications-two (2) points; Ability to Meet Project Goals-four (4) points and Ability to Meet Costs-two (2) points.
- After the follow-up interview, the Award Committee individually filled out the scoring sheet and submitted to Zeitgeist to compile the final scores from the two separate scoring sheets (total of 28 points).

Decision and Scoring:

A second public meeting was convened, again virtually via Zoom, and the RFP award was discussed among the Award Committee. Both bidding firms had representatives at the meeting.

Zeitgeist released the tallied scores for the two bids received and the results were:

- The team consisting of Environmental Troubleshooters, Inc., Cardno Engineering and Geomorphic Restoration, Inc. scored **97.14%** (27.2 points) of total allowable points.
- The team consisting of Beaver River Consulting, Sunram Construction, Northern Ecological Services and Green Watershed Restoration scored **72.96%** (20.4 points) of total allowable points.

The vote was unanimous of the Award Committee to grant the project outlined in the PH V RFP to the team consisting of Environmental Troubleshooters, Inc, Cardno Engineering and Geomorphic Restoration, Inc.

Attached is a copy of the winning proposal for the PH V RFP.

Please Note:

In keeping with our commitment to transparency in all respects of our project, we are sharing that after the Award Committee's unanimous decision for awarding the PH V project to the team of Environmental Troubleshooters, Inc., Cardno Engineering and Geomorphic Restoration, Inc., the MN DNR reviewed the entire PH V process, criteria and scoring system.

Katherine Sherman-Hoehn, Grants Manager-Office of Management and Budget Services, determined our ***"bidding and evaluation process did follow the guidelines laid out in (our) grant agreement to provide for a fair and open process."***

She also stated that the RFP ***"provided the information about evaluation criteria and how budget bids would be scored up front in the RFP, including the weight given to the budget and that does follow the best value process we have adopted. That (best value) process is in line with the state requirements for non-governmental grantees."***

The DNR also encouraged us to continue to refine our future RFP processes for more detail and clarity to attract more bidders. We are moving forward with their recommendations as we believe that an open and competitive bidding process will enable us to conduct the best restoration of the Knife River, benefitting both the resource and the citizens of Minnesota.

These steps will include:

- Seeking input on previous RFPs to determine areas of improvement for increased clarity and substance.
- Adding additional information on our Best Value Procurement Process as a NGU and how it differs from what is required from governmental agencies.

- Extending the RFP application period to 40 days with a 14 day question period.
- Adding a non-mandatory site visit with project management staff.