



## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Skamania County Community Wildfire Preparedness Planning**

**Issued January 25, 2024**

**STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS DUE: February 15, 5:00pm**

**to Tova Tillinghast, District Director**  
**PO Box 96, White Salmon, WA 98672**  
**or [tova@ucdwa.org](mailto:tova@ucdwa.org)**  
**Questions? Call Tova at 509-637-7006**

**Statement of Qualifications must include:**

- Description of prospective consultant’s proposed approach and relevant qualifications to perform anticipated scope of work.
- Description of prospective consultant’s ability to meet required timeline.
- Prospective consultant’s fee schedule for the project time period.
- List of at least three (3) professional references for prospective consultant.

**Consultant scope of work:**

- Advise and assist UCD on overall strategy and approach to **Skamania County Community Wildfire Preparedness Planning (CWPP)**;
- Assist UCD with partner engagement, including meeting coordination, agendas, notes, facilitation, graphical representation of planning process, and associated communications;
- Assist UCD with public engagement, including the development of an online story map and other materials for public consumption;
- Help compile existing data and assist with data synthesis for CWPP use;
- Provide technical writing, graphics, layout and formatting of draft and final CWPP;
- Facilitate and integrate partner and public input to finalize CWPP;
- Assist UCD with final presentation of CWPP to stakeholders and public.

**Timeline:**

UCD is funded for this work through a grant from the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) and is subject to its timelines and funding requirements. Our goal for accomplishing this work includes the following timeline:

February 1 through 15, 2024 – Key collaborators invited and engaged

March 1 – Consultant hired for this scope of work, project approach and process defined with UCD staff, schedule and deliverables committed

March 15 – Complete kick-off meeting with County Commissioners

*“UCD engages landowners and land users throughout Skamania and west Klickitat Counties in the conservation, enhancement, and sustainable use of natural resources through voluntary stewardship.”*

April-December 2024 – Monthly meetings with partners; includes:

- resource and data compilation and synthesis
- meeting agenda planning, facilitation, graphical representation, and meeting notes
- partner input and communications
- web story map for public consumption
- community events and public input
- hazard and risk assessments
- development and prioritization of mitigation strategies and recommendations
- plan writing, graphics, layout, format and printing
- public and partner review of CWPP
- development of strategy for plan monitoring, adaptation and future updates

January 2025 – Final CWPP adopted by relevant jurisdictions

**Budget range for consultant:** \$40,000-50,000, to be negotiated based on proposed scope of work.

**Basis for award decision:**

- Relevant qualifications and experience in similar work and with similar jurisdictions;
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, within budget limitations, and recommend and guide effective approach to successful CWPP process;
- Ability to meet required timeline; and
- Positive professional references.

**Overall Project Goal and Purpose:**

The goal of the Skamania County CWPP is to include local governments, fire departments, and relevant experts in a collaborative process of identifying the highest priority locations for fuel treatments and reduced structural ignitability across Skamania County. The process will emphasize community-adjacent fuel break treatments and individual responsibility of landowners and homeowners. The final plan will reflect community goals and values as well as regional fire behavior, on-the-ground conditions, and critical infrastructure in Skamania County. Through the completion of a county-wide CWPP project funding will become more available to implement priority projects described in the CWPP (a requirement for current Community Wildfire Defense Grants).

**Project Background:**

CWPPs have evolved in the past several years, nationwide and in Skamania County, where they have been in place for more than 15 years, but not actively referenced or used in the past decade. The plans began with a Klickitat/Skamania combined CWPP (2006; steering committee meeting notes are located here: [https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2078/2013/11/Appendix\\_D1.pdf](https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2078/2013/11/Appendix_D1.pdf)). Soon after, various agencies, technical experts, and concerned citizens, facilitated by WSU Extension forester Ole Helgerson and Skamania County wildfire prevention coordinator Gail Fullerton, produced CWPPs for seven separate communities in Skamania County, between 2006-2009. The plans were based on fire districts and associated communities: Beacon Rock, Greater Stevenson, Greater Wind River, Little White Salmon, Swift, Underwood, and West End. All are housed online here:

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/wildfire/wildfire-preparedness/community-wildfire-protection>. The community-scale CWPPs will provide a foundation for an updated county-wide CWPP, with some additional updating based on projects accomplished over the past decades, changing fire conditions, recent wildfires, and emerging wildfire science.

These 2006-2009 plans included background and hazard analyses and local technical knowledge resulting in robust proposed project lists. Project prioritization was rudimentary; nearly all projects were rated “high” priority. Projects had no owners, no lead agencies or committed groups, nor funding or deadlines – they were good ideas without much impetus. For several years, Washington DNR and Underwood Conservation District staff continued to host monthly or quarterly meetings with representatives from various CWPPs; but attempting to prioritize and act on seven different project lists, without consistent funding, was challenging.

Figure 1: a screenshot of a typical Skamania County CWPP, circa 2008, showing a list of wildfire-mitigation proposed projects, specific to that community, but having no prioritization (all are “HIGH” priority) and no project lead or owner.

| PROJECT TYPE   | PROJECT   | PRIORITY |
|--|---|----------|
| Fuel Reduction   | 1. Refine fuel estimates  | HIGH     |
|  | 2. Fuels reduction along evacuation Routes                                  | HIGH     |
|  | a. Archer Mountain road   | HIGH     |
|  | b. Duncan Creek Road  | HIGH     |
|  | c. Kidney Lake Road   | HIGH     |
|  | d. Kueffler Road  | HIGH     |
| e. Smith-Cripe Road  | HIGH  |          |
| f. Woodard Creek Road  | HIGH  |          |
| 3. Fuels reduction in the Green Leaf Lake area   | HIGH  |          |
| 4. Fuels reduction on privately owned properties   | HIGH  |          |
| 5. Chipping or removal of down wood and sprayed brush along BPA right of way near Beacon Rock State Park | HIGH  |          |
| 6. Fuels reduction (thinning and chipping ) in Beacon Rock State Park                                    | HIGH  |          |
| Planning   | 1. Evacuation planning  | HIGH     |
|  | 2. Water source identification  | HIGH     |
|  | 3. Coordination of Burn Bans (between all agencies and landowners)          | HIGH     |
|  | 4. Involve CERT   | HIGH     |
|  | a. Engage in planning projects especially evacuation and assembly points    | HIGH     |
| b. As a deployable resource for early response   | HIGH  |          |
| 5. Develop an all risk Incident Management Team (IMT) for Skamania County                                | HIGH  |          |
| Education  | 1. Develop and post signage including fire danger and burn ban in effect    | HIGH     |
|  | 2. Signage for evacuation routes and assembly points                        | HIGH     |
|  | 3. Education on mitigation of structure ignition                            | HIGH     |
|  | a. Gorge Days in North Bonneville booth                                     |          |
| b. Skamania County Fair booth  |   |          |
| 4. A roving fire danger education team (volunteer?)  | HIGH  |          |
| a. Trail Head Reading  |   |          |
| b. Recreation Education (most starts are recreation related)   |   |          |
| Equipment, Staffing and Exercise   | 1. Communications interoperability  | HIGH     |
|  | a. Resolve issues caused by repeater locations                              | HIGH     |
|  | b. P-25 compatibility   | HIGH     |
|  | 2. Volunteer recruitment and training                                       | HIGH     |
|  | 3. Fire department equipment and training                                   | HIGH     |
|  | a. Brush rig (Skamania)   |          |
|  | b. Water tender (North Bonneville)  |          |
|  | c. Fire shelters  |          |
|  | d. Firefighters red Card / wildland trainings (weekends, combine districts) |          |
|  | e. Other continuing firefighter training                                    |          |
| 4. Chipper – purchase or rent for use in planning area including Beacon Rock State Park                  | HIGH  |          |
| 5. Water supply  | HIGH  |          |

Beacon Rock CWPP

UCD and DNR implemented fuel break projects together around the county on several sites between approximately 2012 and 2016. Due to staff turnover at DNR and inconsistent funding, these partner efforts slowed. UCD has continued to implement a robust wildfire education and assistance program, mainly with Skamania County Title III funds. This work has focused on individual homeowners and general education and outreach, and modest defensible space projects in small communities, such as a mobile chipper program to help reduce residential wildfire fuels.

In 2021, Skamania County completed a Hazard Mitigation Plan with involvement from multiple jurisdictions, including county fire districts, public utility districts, school districts, and city administrations. This plan can be found here:

<https://www.skamaniacounty.org/home/showpublisheddocument/11322/638161143170570000>

and discusses previous CWPPs (see pages 21-22). While this HMP includes brief high-level assessment of wildfire hazards, an updated county-wide CWPP will provide mitigation projects, other desired resource improvements (e.g., updated radios for rural volunteer fire districts), assign project leads and describe means for successful implementation.

So why write a new plan that covers the entire county? Several reasons:

- Conditions on the ground have changed: consistent climate change has yielded longer, more erratic fire seasons; wildfires west of the Cascades have become more common; and populations in the wildland-urban interface of Skamania County have grown.
- Newly established federal and state wildfire mitigation funding is more readily available: new resources (personnel, programs, emphasis and funding) for wildfire mitigation from state and federal sources brings more consistent support to these efforts and to UCD.
- Our federal and state forestry authorities are signaling that CWPPs should be written at the county-scale: newly updated county-wide CWPPs open doors for significant project implementation funding.
- UCD is expanding its wildfire resilience program to enable community-scale mitigation projects: with increased support and more consistent access to funding, UCD will increase its effectiveness in assisting Skamania County residents and communities in adapting to greater wildfire hazards.

Thus, in early 2024, UCD intends to convene willing partners from key local governments (Skamania County and the several fire districts), along with other technical experts, agencies, and local concerned citizens. We propose a process with robust local engagement and technical insights, to create an actionable new county-wide CWPP. As per guidance from federal and state wildfire officials, the process will include:

- Mapping the area
- Assessing local risk with accessible tools
- Gathering community input
- Prioritizing treatments with partners
- Creating an action plan

Success would yield an engaged set of partners in wildfire preparedness and resilience, and a set of priority projects for them to work on to meaningfully increase defensibility and resilience against wildfires in the wildland-urban interface of Skamania County.