

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CONSULTANT SERVICES FOR TRAIL PLANNING**

**SEAWALL TRAIL PLANNING WITHIN THE POLLETS COVE-ASPY
FAULT WILDERNESS AREA AND ADJACENT LANDS**



ISSUED BY: THE SEAWALL TRAIL SOCIETY



JUNE 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

Cape Breton Island is a wonderful place to explore on foot. Expansive valleys, hidden waterfalls, majestic old growth forests and a rugged coastline are just a few of the natural features waiting for the curious and intrepid hiker. While it has plenty of wonderful day hikes, Cape Breton lacks a true long-distance wilderness hiking trail.

We are proposing the Seawall Trail: a three to five day trek along the coast and cliffs of Northern Cape Breton. The trail will be predominately contained within the boundaries of the Polletts Cove – Aspy Fault Wilderness Area (PCAFWA).

We believe that, when completed, the Seawall Trail will attract hiking enthusiasts from around the globe and will help establish Nova Scotia as a world-class hiking destination.

The Seawall Trail Society is proceeding with trail planning as identified in the NS Department of Environment's document *Developing a Hiking Trail in a Wilderness Area*. We are now prepared to receive proposals from consultants for the preparation of a *Detailed Trail Development Plan*.

The *Detailed Trail Development Plan* will be presented to the community for input and will be submitted to Nova Scotia Environment - the department responsible for the management of the PCAFWA. NS Environment must approve the trail system and associated documentation before construction can begin.

The *Detailed Trail Development Plan* must be completed by a date mutually decided upon when the contract is signed.

2. BACKGROUND

The PCAFWA has been used by various groups for millennia. The area has long been a hunting ground for First Nations people. More recently, the region was home to pioneer Cape Bretoners who lived in isolated, now abandoned, settlements along the coast. To this day First Nations and locals take advantage of the PCAFWA for hunting and recreation. Even without an official hiking trail, the terrain draws many intrepid tourist adventurers.

The PCAFWA borders the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The National Park does a wonderful job promoting hiking in Cape Breton and attracts numerous walkers to the region. However, the Park currently focuses on shorter day hikes. Adventurous hikers are coming to the PCAFWA for longer back-country excursions. Visitors are looking for a product that is currently not offered in Cape Breton — a long distance, wilderness hiking experience.

The official numbers from Tourism Nova Scotia support our contention that the Seawall Trail can offer what tourists want. According to Tourism Nova Scotia's

2010 Exit Survey, thirty-four percent (34%) of visitors to Cape Breton want to hike. Thirty-eight percent (38%) want coastal sightseeing. Among the Outdoor Enthusiasts segment (our target demographic) seventy-five percent (75%) seek hiking opportunities and seventy-one percent (71%) want coastal sight seeing. The Seawall Trail offers the very best of both.

Vehicle access to northern Cape Breton and the Seawall Trail is via the world-famous Cabot Trail - along which one can also find many wonderful day hikes. The trails for these shorter hikes have been developed, used and maintained by local communities and organizations.

Developing a long-distance hiking trail will accrue huge benefits to locals. There is the obvious economic benefit. Additionally, The Seawall Trail will provide youth groups, community groups and recreation societies access and educational opportunities in a unique and special wilderness setting. The trail will also provide First Nations with improved access to a historically and culturally significant region. The trail will be a model for health and well being through active living.

Development of a world-class trail is possible because of the PCAFWA's unique ecology. Within the area's boundaries one will discover breath-taking barrens, wind-swept bluffs, pristine wetlands, old-growth forests, ancient faults, a rugged highland coastline, and secluded beaches. The land teems with moose, eagles rule the sky, and whales frolic offshore.



It is for these very reasons that the Seawall Trail Society sees the PCAFWA as the ideal location to develop Cape Breton's first long-distance hiking trail.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective: to produce a *Detailed Trail Development Plan* for a long distance, multi-day wilderness trail within the PCAFWA. The plan should align with the regulations of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* and any other applicable acts or legislation. It will include feedback from the public and consultations with all stakeholders.

Considerations for the trail will include:

- The development of a trail that conforms to a 'wilderness experience';
- Construction of a trail that is sustainable and durable;
- Identification of key maintenance issues and consideration for a maintenance plan;
- The identification of trail alignments that bring trail users to key destination points while minimizing impacts on the environment;
- Examination of various options for overnight sites including but not limited to tent sites, huts or cabins;
- Identification of key infrastructure such as bridges, boardwalks, etc.;
- Plans to reduce the probability of potential conflicts with other user groups in the PCAFWA (moose hunters, off-trail back country hikers);
- Accommodation of the needs and rights of private land owners and examination of the use of public K-class roads as access points;
- Representation of the beauty and variety of the landscape - the coast, cliffs, valleys, old growth forest, bogs, rivers, flora and fauna;
- Considerations for safety and accessibility - including potential parking areas and reasonable plans for response in case of injuries or emergencies; and,
- Identification of areas for possible future expansion - creating a loop(s), side trips to scenic lookouts etc.

4. SCOPE

The scope of the work shall be as follows:

- Develop high-level *construction budget* options for the construction phase of the trail and associated infrastructure. Options for various scenarios and/or stages should be identified and considered;
- Map and provide GIS information of proposed route (way-points);
- Identify potential trail alignments and optimal trail routing;
- Identify camping and hut locations;
- Identify any infrastructure required (at streams, boardwalks, steps etc.);
- Identify maintenance issues;
- Perform fieldwork and on-the-ground assessment;
- Consult with local knowledge groups and experienced hikers concerning routing and key features and viewpoints;

- Prepare a *Proposed Trail Development Plan* as required by NS Dept of Environment;
- Examination of K-Class roads for access and usage;
- Identify potential risk management issues and propose solutions;
- Recommend appropriate trail construction guidelines and standards;
- Work closely with the Seawall Trail Society and the NS Dept of Environment to meet all provincial requirements for trail development in a protected area; and,
- Engage the public and stakeholders through consultations.

5. BUDGET

We expect the total budget available to support this RFP to be not more than \$90,000.

With any proposals we expect a detailed fee document to be submitted, which includes the total costs expected (including HST) to complete the project. We expect the proposal to be broken down into line items where applicable.

6. RESOURCES

The following resources are available to the consultant:

- Mapping and access to current GIS systems (NS Dept of Environment).
- Local experience and knowledge from hikers, guides and outfitters and others experienced with the Wilderness Area.
- Full co-operation and guidance from the Seawall Trail Society.

7. DELIVERABLES

- a) A *Detailed Trail Development Plan* that shows a recommended trail alignment and design that is compatible with the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* and any other relevant legislation and requirements.
- b) Virtual flagging of the entire route (GIS and GPS waypoints).
- c) A series of options and associated budget estimates for the construction phase of the project.
- d) A maintenance plan and maintenance recommendations for the trail (can be part of the *Detailed Trail Development Plan*).
- e) Public and stakeholder consultations - a minimum of one information gathering session and one final presentation to review the final *Detailed Trail Development Plan*.

8. WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN PROPOSALS

- a) The qualifications of the consultant(s) and other key personnel.
- b) Two references from previous clients.
- c) Project Methodology - the proposal will include a statement of the consultant's understanding of the project and will identify the approach to

- be used to accomplish the job.
- d) Proposed Schedule - the proposal will include a tentative schedule of key actions and deliverables.
 - e) Fee Proposal - the proposal will include a complete budget for the deliverables outlined in section 'Deliverables' that is reasonably broken down into individual line items and actions. The Fee Proposal should include expenses, per diem rates and hours, and the total price (including identification of HST) to complete the entire project.

9. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The Seawall Trail Society will, in a timely manner, evaluate all proposals in accordance with a set of predetermined fact-based criteria, including but not limited to: consultant's experience, key team members, quality of the submission, clarity of the budget, understanding of project scope, and ability to perform public consultations.

The Society reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and will not necessarily accept the proposal with the lowest fee.

10. BID PACKAGE

All documents that are relevant to the bid process are available on the resources section at the Seawall Trail's website: www.seawalltrail.com/resources

11.DELIVERY AND DEADLINE

Proposals are to be submitted as an email, with attachments, to Ray Fraser - Chair of The Seawall Trail Society, at the email address below.

Proposals must be submitted no later than 4 pm on Friday, July 29th 2016.

The successful applicants will be notified as a soon as possible thereafter, subject to final approvals.

12.CONTACT INFORMATION

Proposal Submission: hike@seawalltrail.com
Chair, Seawall Trail Society - Ray Fraser

13.REFERENCES

Seawall Trail Society

Website: www.seawalltrail.com

Bid Package: www.seawalltrail.com/resources

Provincial

Wilderness Areas Legislation: <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/wildarea.htm>

PCAFWA: https://novascotia.ca/nse/protectedareas/wa_pollettscove.asp