



CALL FOR PROPOSALS – WATERSHED PLANNING SERVICES

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is seeking services of a qualified consultant to help develop eight (8) watershed plans in Illinois. This initiative is funded through a partnership with the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, with funding coming from the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Opportunity: Watershed plans are being developed for eight watersheds in Illinois. Five HUC-10 locations have been confirmed (HUC-12 sub-watersheds noted): Kent Creek (070900050106); Upper Macoupin Creek (071300120101, 071300120102, 071300120103, 071300120104, 071300120105, 071300120403, 071300120106, 071300120107, 071300120108, 071300120109, 071300120401, 071300120402); Mattoon (051201140101, 051201140102); Bay Creek (071100040901, 071100040902, 071100040903, 071100040904, 071100040905); and The Slough (051201121302). The final three watershed locations will be selected within the first 6 months of the project term. Completed watershed plans must meet criteria set by USDA-NRCS for its Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative.

AFT is seeking a consultant to assist with the following portions of the watershed planning process:

- Data inventory – Gather and summarize any existing watershed / water quality data, watershed assessments and plans, and identify critical gaps.
- Watershed Characterization – Use geospatial data to perform landscape level analysis and summarize drainage characteristics, climate, topography, geology, soils, land cover and land use.
- Hydrologic and Water Quality Characterization – Evaluate hydrologic conditions including irrigation, precipitation and runoff, and streamflow.
- Resource Problems – Conduct rapid field assessments to identify causes of existing and potential water quality concerns that will be refined through stakeholder input.
- Pollutant Loading – Quantify nutrient (total nitrogen and total phosphorus) and sediment loading within the watershed. Indicate anticipated model that will be used for this process in the proposal.
- Pollutant Sources – Identify and quantify relative contributions from various sources.
- Treatment Opportunities – Identify potential Best Management Practices and associated costs needed to treat pollutant sources.
- Document Creation – Assist AFT project staff to draft the watershed plan by providing input on goals, reduction targets, critical areas, and practice scenarios.

Deadline to complete watershed plans is July 30, 2028. Interim milestones will be developed with AFT.

Selection Criteria: AFT will evaluate proposals based on qualifications and cost, with preference given to consultants demonstrating the ability to successfully perform the required watershed characterization, geospatial analysis, and water quality modeling. Consultants with previous experience working alongside local stakeholders (e.g. Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, NRCS, Farm Bureau) shall be given priority.

Proposal deadline: Interested consultants are invited to submit a proposal to Jean Brokish, Midwest Deputy Director, via email: jbrokish@farmland.org. Proposals must be received no later than **8:00 AM CDT on Friday September 18, 2026**. Proposal shall include a brief statement on how the consultant will complete the identified portions of the watershed plans; a summary of the consultant's qualifications, including but not limited to any experience developing watershed plans for Illinois watersheds; and the cost for services. A not-to-exceed lump sum amount is acceptable, with the assumption that any lump sum amount includes all costs associated with the above tasks (i.e. travel, software licenses, etc.).

Pre-proposal consultations can be scheduled by contacting Jean Brokish at the email above.