

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
JAMES RIVER ASSOCIATION  
FRESHWATER MUSSEL CURRICULUM DESIGN**

**I. Purpose**

The James River Association (JRA) is requesting Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from qualified contractors for assistance in developing environmental education curriculum in consultation with educators from JRA, and two Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), [Mountain Castles SWCD](#), [Peter Francisco SWCD](#).

**II. Introduction**

The James River Association (JRA) founded in 1976, today remains the only organization solely dedicated to protecting and improving the James and the 25,000 miles of tributaries that flow throughout its 10,000 sq. mile watershed - from headwaters in the Mountains to its confluence with the Chesapeake Bay. With headquarters in Richmond and outreach facilities in Lynchburg, Scottsville and Williamsburg, we work across Virginia to address critical issues affecting the James, its tributaries, and the communities that surround it. JRA's strategic efforts provide a comprehensive and long-term approach to solving systemic problems facing our waters, as well as fostering the opportunities a healthy river provides to our community. JRA protects the James River and connects people to it through a curriculum of core programs - education, community conservation, watershed restoration, and river protection - which build awareness, action, advocacy and appreciation for the James.

For more information visit [www.thejamesriver.org](http://www.thejamesriver.org).

**III. Background**

JRA is an active leader in collaborative initiatives that restore riparian forest buffers, as well as plan for the long-term sustainability of freshwater mussels in the James River Watershed. In addition, JRA continues to provide high quality environmental education to students throughout the James River Watershed. In fiscal year 2024, JRA recorded more than 24,000 individual interactions with students and teachers.

JRA acquired a 2-year grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Chesapeake WILD program to build on successes and lessons learned from both of those initiatives, work within JRA's existing partnership efforts for each initiative, and integrate the two important restoration programs through the following: 1) In-depth research to understand the connection of instream mussel habitat and varying levels of maturity within riparian forest buffers; 2) Riparian forest buffer and mussel restoration within targeted areas in the Middle and Upper James; 3) The engagement of youth through mussel education activities.

**IV. Project Description**

JRA is seeking Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from contractors qualified in the development of environmental educational curriculum. The curriculum will focus on

freshwater mussels and will connect to the Virginia Standards of Learning. The curriculum should support Virginia's goals of providing MWEs (Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences) to students. Specifically, the curriculum will convey information including, but not limited to, the following content:

- Environmental benefits provided by freshwater mussels.
- The role of freshwater mussels in stream and river ecology, and the James River food web.
- The life cycle of freshwater mussels.
- Physical and behavioral adaptations of freshwater mussels.
- Human impact on freshwater mussel populations, both negative and positive.

JRA staff and consultants have researched and collected information regarding these topics and is seeking to contract with an experienced firm or individual who can distill the collected information into compelling and engaging experiences, lessons and activities for students in elementary, middle and high school.

The mussel curriculum will consist of mussel lessons geared towards different grade levels and standards. The curriculum will include a description of the necessary materials.

The grades, context and content of each lesson will be determined in conversation with JRA, Soil & Water Conservation District educators, and other education agents.

*Below is an example of the scope of curriculum that will be written:*

#### Classroom Lessons

- One (1) 2nd Grade classroom lesson, 45 minutes - 1 hour in length
- One (1) 3rd Grade classroom lesson, 45 minutes - 1 hour in length
- One (1) High School classroom lesson, 30 - 45 minutes in length

#### Outdoor Lessons

- Two (2) 4th or 5th Grade outdoor activity, 30-45 minutes in length
- Three (3) High School outdoor stream/riverbank activity, 30 minutes - 45 minutes in length

Other deliverables will include:

- 1-page resource packet of information regarding freshwater mussels for use by students on local [Envirothon](#) teams.
- Poster of information about freshwater mussels for adult and general public consumption.

## **V. Services to be Provided**

Services to be provided by the selected contractor include the following:

1. Meet in person with JRA, local SWCD staff members, and educational partners to inform the scope and focus of the mussel education curriculum.

2. Share planned concepts for mussel curriculum with local SWCD staff members and educational partners.
3. Create a mussel education curriculum, including written lesson plans, and a description of all needed materials for each activity.
4. Share mussel education curriculum with SWCD staff.
5. Refine mussel curriculum based on SWCD staff's Spring testing with students and staff.
6. Train SWCD staff and regional education partners to deliver mussel curriculum.

## **VI. Project Schedule**

**Fall 2024:** Meet in person with JRA, local SWCD staff members, and educational partners to inform the scope and focus of the mussel education curriculum.

**Winter 2024:** Share planned concepts for mussel curriculum with local SWCD staff members and educational partners.

**Winter 2024 - Spring 2025:** Create a mussel education curriculum.

**Spring 2025:** Share mussel education curriculum with SWCD staff.

**Summer 2025:** Refine mussel curriculum based on SWCD staff's Spring testing with students and staff.

**Fall 2025:** Train SWCD staff and regional education partners to deliver mussel curriculum.

## **VII. SOQ Requirements**

SOQs must include the following to be eligible for consideration:

1. **Cover Letter.** Official representative and point of contact for the Contractor relative to this RFQ. Identify such representative's title, address, phone numbers, and email addresses. If applicable, letters should be signed by an authorized representative of the Contractor's organization.
2. **Summary of Qualifications.** Present a list of key staff who will work on this project, indicating years of curriculum-writing experience and any relevant certifications held by key team members. Describe any potential conflicts of interest in conducting this project. Identify whether your firm is a licensed Small, Woman or Minority-owned business enterprise. Please indicate if your company is on the Federal Debarment List or listed in the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS). Provide the business name, address, registration type, registration number, and expiration date.
3. **Prior Experience.** Describe the firm's experience with curriculum development. Provide examples for up to two active or past projects that are similar to the freshwater mussel curriculum project. For each project, please prepare a succinct project summary including: project name, description, and

reference contact information. Indicate if projects were completed on time and within budget.

Proposals should respond to the requirements of this RFQ in a straightforward and concise manner. Proposals will be evaluated based on staff qualifications, experience, project cost, and approach to bringing the project to a successful completion. JRA will employ good faith efforts to engage disadvantaged/minority/women business enterprises by reaching out to DBE/MBE/WBE firms to submit proposals.

Proposals should be emailed to Mauren Campbell at [mcampbell@thejamesriver.org](mailto:mcampbell@thejamesriver.org) by close of business on **Friday, September 13th**. This RFQ is not a contract or commitment and JRA is not responsible for any expenses that may be incurred during the preparation of a proposal responding to it.

#### **VIII. Contractor Selection Schedule**

The contractor selection schedule to be undertaken by JRA is as follows.

- **Friday, August 9th:** RFQ is released
- **Friday, September 13th:** Proposals received by Mauren Campbell at [mcampbell@thejamesriver.org](mailto:mcampbell@thejamesriver.org)
- **September 2024:** JRA selection committee reviews proposals and interviews contractors
- **Friday, October 4th, 2024:** Determination of award(s)

#### **IX. Conclusion**

Please direct questions about the Request for Submittals for Freshwater Mussel Curriculum Projects to Mauren Campbell, the Richmond Education Manager. Submittals should be emailed by close of business on **Friday, September 13th, 2024**.