

Request for Proposals (RFP) Strategic Planning Services Paint Rock Forest Research Center

Release Date: 8/6/25
Response Deadline: ~~8/29/25, 11:59 CT~~ 9/5/25, 11:59pm
Point of Contact: Will McGarity, Stick Architecture LLC

Introduction

The Paint Rock Forest Research Center (PRFRC), located in Jackson County, Alabama, invites qualified consulting firms or individuals to submit proposals to lead a comprehensive strategic planning process. This plan will provide clear, actionable guidance to support PRFRC's continued growth in the areas of research, education, conservation, communications, infrastructure, and economic impact.

This effort is funded in part by a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and is designed to advance ARC Investment Goal 4 by strengthening the regional economy through investment in natural assets and biodiversity-based tourism and education.

Background

The Paint Rock Forest Research Center was established to advance ecological and biodiversity research within the Paint Rock River Valley—one of North America's most biologically rich landscapes. The Center maintains partnerships with leading universities, research institutes, and conservation agencies, and supports dozens of researchers and interns annually. PRFRC has recently completed a 150-acre forest dynamics census in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute's Forest Geo network, and is actively expanding its scope of work to include cave, aquatic, avian, and genetic biodiversity research. Large landscape planning and utilisation is critical to our mission.

Given the growth of its programs and partnerships, PRFRC now seeks to develop a 5- to 10-year strategic plan that aligns its infrastructure, operations, communications, staffing and landscape with a bold vision for the future.

Project Objectives

The selected consultant will:

- Facilitate an inclusive, participatory planning process with board, staff, and stakeholders.
- Produce a comprehensive strategic plan, including vision, mission, goals, and implementation roadmap.
- Identify opportunities for sustainable growth in programs, facilities, and community impact.
- Recommend staffing and organizational capacity solutions.
- Develop strategies for communications, partnership development, and revenue generation.

Key focus areas include:

- Organizational structure and governance
- Facilities, infrastructure, and campus planning
- Research and education program expansion
- Land Acquisition
- Marketing and communications
- Community and economic development impacts

- Strategic local, national and international partnerships and stakeholder engagement
- Business and fundraising strategy

Scope of Work

Services to be provided include, but are not limited to:

1. **Start-Up & Planning**
 - Review background materials
 - Meet with staff and board to confirm goals and schedule
2. **Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Conduct interviews and focus groups
 - Facilitate at least 3 in-person or virtual workshops
 - Coordinate with external partners, including academic, nonprofit, and government stakeholders
3. **Assessment & Analysis**
 - Organizational analysis
 - SWOT or comparable assessment
 - Infrastructure and campus review
 - Geographic Analysis
4. **Plan Development**
 - Draft plan documents for review
 - Incorporate feedback from stakeholders and board
 - Finalize plan with implementation timeline and measurable outcomes
5. **Presentation & Close-Out**
 - Present plan to Staff and Board of Directors
 - Provide electronic and print-ready files

Proposal Requirements

Interested consultants must submit:

- A cover letter summarizing interest and qualifications
- A narrative outlining the proposed approach and methodology
- Timeline for project execution
- Resumes or bios of key personnel
- Relevant past project examples (preferably with nonprofit, research, or conservation organizations)
- Three references
- Fee proposal with hourly rates (if applicable) and estimated total cost

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Demonstrated experience and qualifications (30%)
- Quality and clarity of approach (25%)
- Experience with similar organizations and regions (15%)
- Cost-effectiveness and value (15%)
- References and past performance (15%)

Questions

Please submit questions by ~~8/22/25~~ **8/29/25, 5:00pm CT** via email to:

Will McGarity
wcm@stickarch.com
Subject Line: RFP Question – PRFRC Strategic Plan

Submission Instructions

Please submit proposals by ~~8/29/25~~ **9/5/25, 11:59pm CT** via email to:

Will McGarity
wcm@stickarch.com
Subject Line: RFP Submission – Strategic Planning Consultant

Timeline

- RFP Issued: 8/6/25
- Proposals Due: ~~8/29/25~~ 9/5/25 , 11:59pm
- Deadline for Questions: ~~8/22/25~~ 8/29/25, 5pm
- Interviews (if applicable): ~~8/25/25 – 8/28/25~~ 9/8/25-9/12/25
- Notification of Award (anticipated): ~~9/12/25~~ 9/19/25
- Project Kick-Off (anticipated): 10/1/25

Additional Information

Paint Rock Forest Research Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Jackson County, Alabama. More information about our mission, programs, and partnerships is available upon request or by visiting paintrock.org

Stick Architecture LLC is serving as the owner's representative during the strategic planning process, providing institutional knowledge and assisting with project coordination.