



Request for Qualifications

**Vegetation Mapping for the Islands of
Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket
RFQ # 1-2023-0808**

RESPONSES DUE: Tuesday September 5th, 2023, at NOON 12:00PM EST

Late Responses Will Be Rejected

Deliver Completed Submissions in PDF format via email to:

seidel@mvcommission.org

Chris Seidel (she/her)

Cartographer/GIS Coordinator – Martha's Vineyard Commission

PO Box 1447

33 New York Ave

Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

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PART 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 BRIEF OVERVIEW

The islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are home to many varieties of unique flora and many acres of State identified Priority Habitats which support, in some cases, threatened fauna. These natural resources are threatened by human development and natural ecological processes (some of which are occurring more rapidly due to climate change).

As a quick overview, Martha's Vineyard is approximately 57,000 acres or 89 square miles of land vs Nantucket which is about 29,000 acres or 45 square miles of land. Both islands experience a huge swell in population during the summer months. Martha's Vineyard's year-round population is a little over 20,000 compared to Nantucket's of just over 14,000. In the height of the tourist season, Martha's Vineyard's population is estimated at 90,000 and Nantucket's seasonal population is estimated at 80,000. Both islands have been actively conserving land for many decades. Martha's Vineyard has just over 21,000 acres protected in perpetuity (about 37% of the island) and Nantucket has about 13,000 acres permanently protected (roughly 45% of Nantucket).

To provide forward thinking habitat management and hazard mitigation strategies, the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) and the Nantucket Conservation Foundation (NCF) are seeking a consultant to update the vegetation delineation for both islands. Both islands have an existing vegetation map which was completed in the early 2000s.

The new vegetation dataset will utilize the classification scheme provided by the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Natural Communities of Massachusetts with the ability to reference back to the historic vegetation classification scheme from the early 2000s via a crosswalk provided by the MVC and NCF mapping teams. Both islands have an existing community of local vegetation experts who are willing and able to provide geolocated point and/or polygon data of existing vegetation, for use as input to the consultant's vegetation modeling process. These same experts can provide assistance with on-site ground-truthing. If beneficial to the data validation/vegetation classification process, the Martha's Vineyard Commission's (MVC) licensed drone pilot could potentially also collect additional aerial imagery at low altitude. Such imagery would be forwarded to the consultant to assist with vegetation classification and delineation.

All data shall be delivered by the consultant in ESRI GIS format, with the final vegetation delineation in vector format. Through discussions with local vegetation and habitat experts, it has been identified that the minimum mapping unit of 0.25 acres is necessary to produce a valuable product. It is possible, after investigation of the draft dataset, that some select, key habitat areas, may need a minimum mapping unit of 0.15 acres.

To aid with project facilitation a lead vegetation mapping coordinator/liaison from each island will be identified for the purposes of this project.

1.2 KEY DATES FOR THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

- RFQ is available: Tuesday August 8, 2023, NOON 12:00pm EST
- Last date for written questions: Tuesday August 22, 2023, at 4:00pm EST
- Responses Due: Tuesday September 5, 2023, at NOON 12:00pm EST

1.3 RIGHT TO CANCEL/REJECT

The MVC reserves the right to cancel this RFQ or reject in whole or in part any and all proposals if the MVC determines that cancellation or rejection serves the best interests of the MVC.

1.4 TAXATION

Purchases made by the MVC are exempt from the payment of Federal excise tax and the payment of Commonwealth of Massachusetts sales tax and any such taxes will not be included in any fee arrangement.

Copies of the MVC's tax-exempt documentation shall be available upon request of the selected contractor.

1.5 OBTAINING THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The RFQ shall be available beginning Tuesday August 8, 2023 at NOON 12:00pm EST.

Digital and/or hardcopies of the RFQ and related documents may be obtained by emailing Chris Seidel (she/her) at seidel@mvcommission.org with subject header "Request for RFQ"

The MVC will reply between Tuesday thru Saturday: 8:30am – 4:00pm EST

This RFQ process is being treated and conducted as exempt from M.G.L. Chapter 30B, as a procurement of a contract with architects and/or engineers and/or related professionals for comprehensive vegetation mapping services.

PART 2. INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS

2.1 REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

Below please find a description of the requirements and submissions that must be included as part of your statement of qualifications.

2.1.1 Proposal (Statement of Qualifications) Components

The following items must be submitted in order for the proposal to be considered:

☐ **NON-COLLUSION FORM**

Every proposal must include a certification of good faith, certifying that the proposal was made in good faith and without collusion or fraud. See Appendix C attached.

☐ **TAX COMPLIANCE FORM**

Every proposal must include a written certification that the proposer has complied with all state laws relating to taxes, reporting of employees and contractors, and child support. See Appendix C attached.

☐ **CORPORATE BIDDER FORM**

If the proposal is being submitted by a corporation the proposal must include a certification that the individual submitting the proposal has been authorized to bind the corporation. See Appendix C attached.

☐ **SUBMITTALS**

1. Cover Sheet
2. A letter of interest and description of the respondent, including number of years engaged in the professional mapping/photographic interpretation field.
3. Description of project approach and proposed plan of services
4. Anticipated timeline
5. Staffing Plan, with resumes and prior project experience
6. List of comparable projects and narrative description of services performed, and number of specific vegetation mapping projects carried out by the respondent.
7. A mapping sample (in either static digital map format or an online interactive format) from a comparable project within the last five years, which reflects the respondent's photo interpretative capabilities. Also include at least one example of a technique used to communicate/share

periodic project updates and facilitate ground truthing of draft results.

2.2 PROPOSAL DELIVERY

Below please find a description of the manner in which sealed proposals must be submitted.

2.2.1 Due Date and Time

Proposals shall be received by the MVC's GIS office on or before Tuesday September 5, 2023, at NOON 12:00pm EST.

Any proposal received after that time shall be rejected as non-responsive. For matters of uniformity, the Time Stamp Clock in the MVC's office shall be the sole determinant of time.

2.2.2 Address

Digital Submissions: Send proposal in PDF format via email to Chris Seidel (she/her) at seidel@mvcommission.org

Hardcopy Submissions: Sealed proposals can be delivered to the MVC Office, Attn: Chris Seidel (she/her) 33 New York Ave, P.O. Box 1447, Oak Bluffs, MA, 02557 (Please note that the US Postal Service does NOT deliver to the MVC's physical office. Express shipments should be made using FedEx or UPS.)

Facsimile submissions will not be accepted.

2.2.3 Hours of Operation

Digital Submissions can be received at any time prior to the deadline of Tuesday August 5th at NOON 12:00pm EST.

Hardcopy Submissions must be received during the MVC's normal operating hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00am to 4:00pm EST.

The MVC's GIS Department is staffed Tuesday – Saturday 8:30am to 4:00pm EST.

2.2.4 Copies

Proposers must submit four paper (4) copies of the proposal and (1) digital copy. The digital copy should contain all appendixes. Do not send appendixes as separate digital files. Both the paper copy and digital copy are due by the stated RFQ deadline.

2.2.5 Labeling

Each proposal shall be labeled with (1) the proposal number and title, (2) the proposal due date, (3) the name of the proposer.

2.3 SIGNATURES

A proposal must be signed as follows: 1) if the proposer is an individual, by her/him personally; 2) if the proposer is a partnership, by the name of the partnership, followed by the signature of each general partner; and 3) if the proposer is a corporation, by the authorized officer.

2.4 QUESTIONS, CHANGES, MODIFICATIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

2.4.1 Questions

Questions concerning this RFQ must be submitted in writing to Chris Seidel (she/her) via email at: seidel@mvcommission.org with subject heading "RFQ Question" by Tuesday August 22, 2023, at 4:00pm EST. Written responses will be emailed to all persons on record as having picked up the RFQ. Questions will be answered within (7) seven days of their receipt.

2.4.2 Changes

If any changes are made to this RFQ, addenda will be issued. Addenda will be posted in the MVC Office, on the MVC's website and emailed to all proposers on record as having accessed the RFQ.

2.4.3 Modifications and Withdrawals

A proposer may correct, modify, or withdraw a proposal by written notice received by the MVC prior to the time and date set as the proposal due date.

Modifications must be submitted in either a sealed envelope clearly labeled "Modification No." to the address listed in part one of this section or sent via email to Chris Seidel (she/her) at seidel@mvcommission.org. Each modification must be numbered in sequence and must reference the RFQ.

After the proposal due date, a proposer may not change any provision of the proposal in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the MVC or fair competition. Minor informalities will be waived, or the proposer will be allowed to correct them.

2.5 UNFORESEEN OFFICE CLOSURES

If, at the time of the scheduled due date, the MVC Office located at 33 New York Ave, Oak Bluffs MA is closed due to uncontrolled events such as fire, snow, ice, wind, or building evacuation, the due date will be postponed until NOON 12:00pm EST on the next normal business day. Proposals will be accepted until that date and time.

2.6 SELECTION PROCESS

The MVC will review and evaluate the proposals received and select one or more respondents for an interview. In evaluating proposals, the MVC will consider depth and years of experience; record of successful and timely completion of projects; writing ability and clarity; ability to effectively facilitate project updates, concerns, and field data verification/quality control; number of vegetation mapping projects successfully performed; and overall quality of the proposal. The MVC may consider such other factors and qualities as it determines appropriate.

Any interviews will be conducted by the hiring committee, which will make a recommendation regarding the award of a contract to the MVC's Chief Fiscal Officer, Curt Schroeder, who is the Chief Procurement Officer. The hiring committee will be composed of MVC & NCF staff members and additional local vegetation experts if deemed necessary.

Before any contract is awarded, the MVC shall request a fee proposal and the fee for services will be negotiated. As part of the interview process, the MVC may require price and fee structure information. The successful respondent shall sign the contract for professional services presented by the MVC.

The MVC & NCF reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informality in the process, and to award a contract for any portion(s) of the Scope of Services, and any additional services not listed in this RFQ, that the MVC & NCF believes to be in its best interest to do so.

By submission of a proposal, a respondent acknowledges and agrees that any contract award decision made by the MVC shall be final and conclusive and without recourse or appeal by any respondent.

PART 3. SCOPE OF SERVICES & SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Martha's Vineyard Commission and Nantucket Conservation Foundation are seeking a qualified consultant to spatially delineate vegetation communities for the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket (see map Appendix E). These islands, located in the Atlantic Ocean south of the mainland border of Massachusetts, share a common geologic history in that they were formed during retreat of the glacial ice sheet.

The islands' economies are dominantly driven by tourism which is dependent on a healthy natural environment that provides recreational opportunities, local food, and coastal protection. However, our ecosystems and biodiversity will be especially challenged as sea levels rise and coastal lands are flooded and eroded, precipitation patterns change and become more extreme, and air and sea temperatures rise. These climate threats are exacerbated by development threats such as habitat fragmentation and existing or potential structures built in areas needed for wetland habitat migration. About 10% of native flora on Martha's Vineyard has been lost in the past 25 years mainly due to clearing of land and planting of non-native species.

Through previous planning efforts, a need to prioritize and protect terrestrial and marine habitats that support long term resilience has been identified. For example, there is a need to identify: salt marsh vegetation changes and health relative to marsh migration that can help protect marsh values and coastal roads and infrastructure; habitat corridors that help protect island biodiversity; habitat extent for management of federally rare species and reduction of invasive pests; suitable habitat for aquaculture that cleans coastal ponds, provides livelihoods, and supports food security; areas at risk

from wildfire; and storm inundation for undevelopment. This new detailed vegetation map will provide the necessary basemap data to facilitate those other habitat analyses and resiliency planning initiatives.

Data – Existing and Basemaps

(see Appendix E for links to these data sources)

Both islands have an existing vegetation GIS dataset which was created based on aerial photographs from 1999. That work was performed in the early 2000s by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and UMass Amherst. The new vegetation dataset will use a different classification scheme but a crosswalk bridging the TNC categories to the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program ([NHESP Natural Communities](#)) will be provided by the MVC and Nantucket Conservation Foundation to the hired consultant.

The new vegetation map will be created from a variety of existing data sources. From year 2021, there is leaf-off imagery from MassGIS, leaf-on imagery from USDA's NAIP program, and LiDAR data. For Nantucket, the LiDAR data is per the MassGIS specifications; for Martha's Vineyard, the point density is 20ppm. Within the timeline of this vegetation mapping project, it is possible that MassGIS and/or NAIP imagery from 2023 may become available.

The lead vegetation coordinator for each island will assemble existing georeferenced known vegetation locations (points and/or polygons) from various local experts and provide that to the hired consultant. These known vegetation points and areas can be used to train the AI learning process.

Data Validation

It is anticipated that necessary ground-truthing of data will be performed by local vegetation experts who have previously agreed to assist with this effort. The hired consultant will need to provide guidance as to locations to be evaluated and communicate their preferred method of data collection and submittal.

Project Timeline and Data Product Format

The hired consultant may proceed with work as soon as all necessary contracts are signed. **The final delivery of the Martha's Vineyard vegetation delineation should be provided by March 30, 2024; Nantucket's final dataset should be delivered by May 31, 2024.**

The data for Martha's Vineyard should be in State Plane, Mass Mainland, NAD83 meters coordinate system; Nantucket's data should be in State Plane, Mass Island, NAD83, meters.

If needed, the MVC's GIS Coordinator will establish an accessible folder in the Cloud for the consultant to upload the draft and final product files and metadata.

All interim and final datasets should be provided in ESRI format. The final product should be in

vector format. The final attribute table schema will be agreed upon at a future date by the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket vegetation mapping coordinators.

3.2 SCOPE OF SERVICES

Phase 1

Development of Preliminary Vegetation Data

Utilizing the basemap data outlined in Appendix E and the Introduction section, the hired consultant will generate a preliminary vegetation delineation for Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Islands. The classification categories will be that of the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program ([NHESP Natural Communities](#)). The lowest/most detailed community category should be identified for each unique vegetation area.

The minimum mapping unit will be 0.25 acres. However, upon review of the draft dataset, the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket vegetation mapping teams may judiciously identify select geographic areas or specific vegetation categories where more refined mapping may be required. In these cases, the minimum mapping unit will be no smaller than 0.15 acres.

Phase 2

Model Calibration and Ground-Truthing

In a collaborative & iterative process, the consultant and Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket vegetation mapping teams will identify areas for ground-truthing data validation. The local vegetation expert teams will do the field work and the MVC's GIS Coordinator will oversee facilitating those field results back to the consultant. ArcGIS OnLine may be utilized for field data collection and collaboration/data sharing with the consultant.

Phase 3

Review of the 'Final Draft' Vegetation Dataset

The vegetation mapping teams of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket will respectively review their dataset and communicate any necessary data edits and questions to the consultant. If necessary, the consultant will perform additional data edits.

Phase 4

Presentation of the FINAL Vegetation Dataset

The consultant will coordinate a video conference with each, the Martha's Vineyard and the Nantucket, vegetation mapping groups to present the final vegetation dataset. Additional key users of the data may attend this meeting (i.e. The Nature Conservancy, MassWildlife/NHESP, MassGIS, etc).

3.3 RFQ SUBMITAL REQUIREMENTS

Please make sure to respond to each of these items.

- A letter of interest, signed by an individual authorized to bind the respondent. The letter should provide background on the firm, how long it has been in business, number of employees and principal owner(s). Sufficient information should be included such that the MVC & NCF can evaluate the proposal and the company to ensure that the candidate has sufficient experience to complete the project.
- Plan of Services, describing how the proposer will deliver services specified in the scope of services. Proposed plan should not exceed three pages in PDF format and must describe the respondent's understanding of the project, the respondent's approach, and key considerations and guideposts that, in the respondent's view, are essential to success. This should include, but not limited to, a narrative of how (a) draft data will be shared with the MV & Nantucket mapping team; (b) ground-truthing locations and protocol will be disseminated; and (c) ground-truthed data will be received.
- Anticipated timeline including milestones and dates of completion.
- Staffing plan, showing name, title and/or position, and role of each individual who will substantially contribute to this project. Identify the person who will be the project manager with ultimate responsibility for the work. If there are any sub-consultants, please provide their name, address, specialty, and experience. For each individual, attach a current resume.
- Provide a list of comparable projects performed by the respondent which best illustrates the necessary qualifications for this project. This should include a description of each project, samples of the final data (if permitted to share) and links to websites if available. This should also include the name of the project's contact person for references.
- Metadata writing sample.
- A sample of the consultant's vegetation or land use GIS dataset products in ESRI format.

PART 4. MINIMUM EVALUATION CRITERIA

4.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

All participants must meet the following minimum requirements:

	Yes	No
1. Respondent must submit a complete application in accordance with submittal requirement of this RFQ.		
2. Respondent must demonstrate recent experience (within last five years) providing similar type services.		
3. Respondent must provide at least three (3) references from agencies or communities for which similar work has been completed.		
4. The principal, project manager, and primary contact to be assigned to this project must be available for meetings via video conferencing with the vegetation mapping team during the hours of Tuesday thru Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm EST.		

PART 5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1 TERM OF AGREEMENT

The term of any contract that results from this RFQ shall commence upon issuance of the 'Notice to Proceed'.

5.2 ASSIGNMENT AND SUBCONTRACTING

The selected contractor(s) shall not assign, sell, subcontract, or otherwise transfer any interest in the agreement without the prior written consent of the MVC & the NCF.

5.3 EXAMINATION

By submitting a proposal, the respondent warrants that she/he has fully examined the RFQ and understands the requirements for the vegetation mapping project.

5.4 INDEMNIFICATION

Unless otherwise provided by law, the contractor will indemnify and hold harmless the MVC and the NCF against any and all liability, loss, damages, costs or expenses for bodily injury or damage to real or tangible personal property which the MVC and/or the NCF may sustain, incur or be required to pay, arising out of or in connection with the performance of the contract by reason of any negligent action/inaction or willful misconduct by the contractor, its agents, servants or employees.

5.5 FEDERAL AND STATE LAW

The selected contractor shall comply with all applicable International, Federal, State and Local laws and regulations.

APPENDIX A: Cover Sheet
VEGETATION MAPPING OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND
NANTUCKET COVER SHEET

Proposer:	<hr/>			
Street Address:	<hr/>			
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(Number and Street)	(City)	(State)	(Zip)
Taxpayer Identification No:	<hr/>			
	<hr/>	<hr/>		
	(Social Security Number)	(Federal Identification Number)		
Contact Name:	<hr/>			
Telephone:	<hr/>			
Email Address:	<hr/>			
Fax:	<hr/>			
Authorized Signature:	<hr/>			
Name:	<hr/>			
Title:	<hr/>			
Date:	<hr/>			

APPENDIX B: Checklist
VEGETATION MAPPING OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND
NANTUCKET CHECKLIST

	Yes	No
1. Cover Sheet		
2. Proposer's Checklist (this sheet)		
3. Certifications		
• Non-Collusion		
• Tax Compliance		
• Certificate of Corporate Bidder		
4. Submittals		
5. Acknowledgement of _____ (If applicable) Addenda: #s		

APPENDIX C: Required Certifications
VEGETATION MAPPING OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND
NANTUCKET REQUIRED CERTIFICATIONS

1. NON-COLLUSION:

The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this bid, or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word "person" shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

2. TAX COMPLIANCE:

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 62C, §49A, the undersigned certifies under the penalties of perjury that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the proposer named below is in compliance with all laws of the Commonwealth relating to taxes, reporting of employees and contractors, and withholding and remitting child support.

3. CORPORATE BIDDER *(if applicable):*

I, _____ certify that I am the _____ of
_____ the corporation named as Bidder in the Bid included
herein, that _____, who signed said Bid on behalf of the Bidder was
then _____ of said corporation, that I know his signature,
that his signature thereon is genuine, and that said Bid was duly signed, sealed, and
executed for and on behalf of said corporation by authority of its governing body.

(Corporate Seal)

(Secretary-Clerk)

(Signature of authorized individual submitting proposal)

(Printed Name)

(Name of Proposer)

(Federal Tax Identification or Social Security Number)

(Date)

APPENDIX D: Legal Notice

LEGAL NOTICE

MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION

Request for Qualifications # 1-2023-0808

Vegetation Mapping for the Islands of

Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket

Proposals/statements of qualifications will be received at the Martha's Vineyard Commission Office, 33 New York Ave, P.O. Box 1447, Oak Bluffs, MA, 02557 until Noon 12:00pm on September 5, 2023.

The MVC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals/statements of qualification and waive any informality in the proposal process, if deemed in the MVC's and/or NCF's best interest.

Digital and/or hardcopies of the RFQ and related documents will be available on August 8, 2023, at Noon 12:00pm EST and may be obtained by emailing Chris Seidel (she/her) at seidel@mvcommission.org or at the MVC Office, 33 New York Ave, P.O. Box 1447, Oak Bluffs, MA, 02557 during office hours: Tuesday-Friday: 8:30am – 4:00pm EST

APPENDIX E: Additional References

This information is provided to present an overview of the study area and basemap data available. In some cases, higher resolution imagery may be available and better suited for vegetation identification.

MAP OF PROJECT AREA

See next page

YEAR 2021 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2021-aerial-imagery>

YEAR 2021 NAIP IMAGERY

Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket

<https://bit.ly/mvack2021naip>

YEAR 2021 LiDAR DATA

Martha's Vineyard (note: LAS point cloud is available but not provided here at this time)

<https://bit.ly/mvlidar2021>

Nantucket

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-lidar-terrain-data>

NHESP NATURAL COMMUNITIES CLASSIFICATION

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/classification-of-the-natural-communities-of-massachusetts/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/natural-community-fact-sheets>

CIRCA YEAR 2000 VEGETATION DATA – TNC/UMass Amherst

Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket

<https://bit.ly/mvack2000vegdata>

