

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**BIG DARBY ACCORD**



**Proposals Due by October 25, 2004**

**Notification of Intent Due by October 11, 2004**

## **The Importance of the Big Darby Watershed**

It has been well documented that the Big Darby Watershed is one of the most biologically diverse aquatic systems in the Midwest and is among the top warm freshwater habitats in the nation. The sustainability of the Big and Little Darby Creeks is of critical importance so that they continue to be healthy, biologically diverse, and a recreational treasure for current and future generations.

The Big Darby watershed also represents the largest undeveloped area in Franklin County. With the continued growth of Central Ohio, the watershed has experienced increased pressure for development in recent years. Due to the unique nature of the Big and Little Darby Creeks, any development within their watersheds must be carefully planned and managed.

On July 21, 2004 elected officials from jurisdictions that comprise the Big Darby Watershed in Franklin County gathered to discuss the importance of protecting the watershed and the need for a common vision for future development. Jurisdictions in attendance at this historic meeting included Brown, Prairie, Pleasant, and Washington townships, the cities of Columbus and Grove City, the Village of Harrisburg and Franklin County. Each jurisdiction expressed its resolve to work cooperatively on the development of a plan that would protect the Big and Little Darby rivers for future generations.

## **Mission Statement**

The Big Darby Accord consists of local governments within the Franklin County area of the Big Darby Creek watershed. The mission of the Big Darby Accord is to cooperatively develop a multi-jurisdictional plan and accompanying preservation and growth strategies, capable of implementation, oversight and enforcement, which are designed to:

- Preserve, protect and improve, when possible, the Big Darby Creek watershed's unique ecosystem by utilizing the best available science, engineering and land use planning practices;
- Promote responsible growth by taking measures to provide for adequate public services and facilities and promote a full spectrum of housing choice, as well as adequate educational, recreational and civic opportunities, for citizens of each jurisdiction and for Central Ohio;

- Create a partnership that recognizes the identity, aspirations, rights, and duties of all jurisdictions and that develops methods of cooperation among the partners through means which include the cooperative utilization of public services and facilities; and
- Capitalize on the results of other efforts by considering local comprehensive plans, as well as the work of the Environmentally Sensitive Development Area External Advisory Group, the Hellbranch Forum, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Growth Policy Team and other local planning and zoning efforts, in the development of the plan.

### **Past Planning Initiatives**

The historic meeting of Big Darby jurisdictions followed years of studies and planning activities of each jurisdiction and various other organizations. These efforts have contributed to a common understanding of the importance of the watershed, the quality of the waterways and the vision of each jurisdiction and serve as an excellent foundation for future joint planning activities. Comprehensive plans are in place for each city and township that lies within the Big Darby watershed.

In addition to the comprehensive planning activities, two recent initiatives have brought together representatives of multiple jurisdictions and interests to address watershed issues

### **ESDA External Advisory Group**

The EPA-approved *Columbus Metropolitan Facilities Plan Update* (“208 Plan”) establishes the goal “to protect critical water resources, especially in the Darby Watershed.” This plan designates an Environmentally Sensitive Development Area (ESDA) that includes most of the Big Darby watershed in Franklin County. The plan recognizes that while “the City of Columbus will ultimately provide centralized service within a portion of it, no service whatsoever shall be provided within the ESDA until the following conditions are met for the area to be served:

- Riparian buffer restrictions are in place;
- Comprehensive stormwater management planning has occurred;
- Conservation development restrictions are in place which involve the concept of clustering development to preserve tracts of open space, including farmland; and
- Adequate public facilities, including roadways, exist or are planned to support any proposed development.”

## The Hellbranch Forum

The Hellbranch Watershed Forum was created by a cooperative agreement signed May 22, 2002 by elected officials of Franklin County; the cities of Columbus, Hilliard, and Grove City; and Brown, Norwich, Pleasant, and Prairie townships. The Forum was organized to develop collaboratively consistent stormwater policies and regulations, develop a pilot restoration project, and cooperate in and support a watershed plan for responsible development and stewardship of the watershed. Assisting the Forum in this work is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District. The Hellbranch Watershed Action Plan is expected to be complete by fall, 2005.

## The Need for Consultant Assistance

This Request for Proposals is designed for use in retaining a consultant, or team of consultants, to fulfill the Mission of the Big Darby Accord, through the development of a process and plan for growth that may occur within the Big Darby watershed of Franklin County.

**Proposals are due by 5:00 P.M. on October 25, 2004 at the offices of the city of Columbus Planning Division, 109 N. Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. If you plan to submit a proposal, notify Steve McClary at 614-645-8030 or [srmclary@columbus.gov](mailto:srmclary@columbus.gov) by 5:00 P.M. on October 13, 2004.**

## Consultant Selection

A review committee will evaluate each proposal including the qualifications of the consultant team, the quality and feasibility of the proposal and past performance on related projects. The evaluation will focus on the degree to which the proposals respond to the criteria listed below:

- Proven understanding of Ohio law related to planning, development and inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Proven ability to work with competing interests on a multi-jurisdictional plan.
- Proven ability to formulate a planning regime that successfully links policies to action and implementation on a regional level.
- Environmental development expertise that includes watershed planning and has been demonstrated on a national scale.

- Proven ability to work with a range of other planning topics, especially those listed in the project Mission Statement.
- Proven record of environmental protection.
- Responsiveness to the Project Description and Submittal Requirements as outlined in this Request for Proposals

After submission of the proposals, the review committee will select no fewer than three and not more than four firms to be interviewed.

### **Study Area**

The intergovernmental planning accord will address the entire Big Darby Watershed that lies within Franklin County (see Attachment A: Big Darby Watershed). In that regard, the study area includes the entire Environmentally Sensitive Development Area (ESDA), as defined in the city of Columbus' Sewer Facilities Plan Update, the area addressed in Columbus' Hellbranch Run Watershed Protection Overlay, as well as territory within the other jurisdictions, or their future growth areas, that is located within the watershed.

### **Project Description**

The first phase of the consultant's activity will be to interview Big Darby stakeholders and interested parties, and review all relevant planning initiatives to identify relevant information and recommendations that will serve as a point of departure and expedite development of the Big Darby Accord. The remaining phases of the project are identified in Attachment B: Preliminary Timeframes.

### **Stakeholder Groups**

- Property owners and residents
- Franklin County officials
- Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission
- Metro Park officials
- Prairie, Pleasant, Brown, Norwich and Washington Township officials
- Columbus, Hilliard, Grove City and Harrisburg officials
- Columbus Public Schools, Hilliard City Schools and South-Western City Schools officials
- Columbus Metropolitan Library
- Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- The Ohio State University Extension Office

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Environmental advocacy groups, development interests, affordable housing groups, social service agencies and all other appropriate interests

### Planning Initiatives

- Environmentally Sensitive Development Area External Advisory Group
- Hellbranch Forum
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Growth Policy Team
- Ohio EPA's TMDL Study
- Darby Creek Storm Water Standards and Strategies
- Existing Municipal, County, and Township Plans
- Any other appropriate plans and studies.

Following completion of the stakeholder interviews and plan review, the consultant will recommend the various elements that the plan will address and the process to be followed in the development of the plan. It is anticipated that the plan will address the following critical issues and possibly others as identified by the consultant.

### Plan Elements: Preliminary Identification

- Land Use
- Development Standards
- Infrastructure
- Adequate Public Facilities and Services
- Stormwater Management
- Environmental Preservation/Protection
- Implementation, Intergovernmental Cooperation and Enforcement

The consultant will present their recommendations to the participating jurisdictions in the form of a work program that identifies:

- Public and stakeholder involvement process
- Phased approach to the development of the plan including the consideration of alternatives
- Timeframes for each phase of the planning process
- Governance structure and process including how decisions are made and the rules of engagement.

## **Timeframes**

It is important to have a Big Darby Accord in place when the development ban expires on December 31, 2005. While this is an ambitious goal, it is believed to be feasible if the participating jurisdictions agree to an aggressive planning process. Preliminary timeframes are identified in Attachment A.

## **Submittal Requirements**

The consultant's proposal should provide a detailed scope and estimate of the hours for completion of each phase of the project, as defined by the consultant, and a billable hourly rate for each type of service provided in each phase. The consultant may recommend changes to the scope, as identified in the Project Description above, budget and time frame. These recommended changes must be based on the firm's experience in preparing similar projects. The format of the proposal shall include the following:

### *Title Page*

Please indicate on the title page:

Big Darby Accord Consultant Proposal

Your Company Name  
Date of Submittal

### *Cover Letter*

A cover letter acknowledging transmittal of the enclosed proposal should follow the title page.

### *Introduction*

An introduction should follow, describing your understanding of your company's role in the project and an introduction to the proposed services and budget.

### *Qualifications*

The qualifications of the firm must be shown, including resumes of the primary staff that would be working on the project, and a description of your three most relevant previous projects.

### *Scope of Services*

Your proposed scope of services should be based upon the RFP as presented and should be described in narrative form. The scope should include a discussion of the proposed approach and methodology. All deliverables should be clearly noted.

Please specify the project manager and specific staff responsibilities by task. We will assess your ability to provide specific services based on the description of your qualifications, interviews with previous clients, and the degree to which you demonstrate your understanding of our needs.

### *Proposed Budget*

Your proposed budget should include a detailed breakdown of each phase and aspect of the project (i.e., preparing written material, graphics, etc.) and an estimate of hours for completion of each phase of the project and an hourly rate for each type of service provided in each phase. A total estimated fee should be provided. Please note the hourly billing rates for each staff person.

### *Proposed Schedule*

The proposed schedule should be presented for each task and phase.

### *References*

Submit references for your three most relevant previous projects.

### *Appendix*

Any secondary information should be presented in an appendix.

The format of the proposals should also be responsive to the following submittal requirements:

- Proposal should be presented in an 8 ½ by 11-inch format and bound.
- Fonts should be no smaller than 10 point and lines may be double-spaced.
- Proposals should clearly respond to this Request for Proposals, yet be brief in presentation.
- 15 copies of the proposal shall be submitted

Please indicate on your envelope or package in bold letters **Big Darby Accord**. The mailing address to be used for the proposal is: Stephen R. McClary, Planning Division, 109 N. Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

# Attachment A

## Big Darby Watershed in Franklin County



