



Sulphur Springs Water Alliance

Request for Proposal

Facilitator for Cooperative Watershed Management Planning

1. Introduction and Purpose

The Sulphur Springs Water Alliance (SSWA) is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals or firms to serve as a contracted “Facilitator” for activities funded through a Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) grant.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify a Facilitator who can guide SSWA and its stakeholders through a structured series of group development workshops, planning workshops, and educational meetings, supporting consensus-based decision-making and effective stakeholder engagement throughout the project period. The Facilitator will also provide assistance with planning, drafting, and creating a watershed restoration plan.

2. Background

The BoR CWMP contributes to the WaterSMART strategy by providing funding to watershed groups to encourage diverse stakeholders to form local solutions to address their water management needs. In 2012, BoR began providing funding for watershed group development, watershed restoration planning, and watershed management project design. A watershed group is a self-sustaining, non-regulatory, consensus-based group that is composed of a diverse array of stakeholders, which may include, but is not limited to, private property owners, non-profit organizations, Federal, state, or local agencies, and tribes. As part of Phase I activities, applicants may use funding to develop bylaws, a mission statement, complete stakeholder outreach, develop a watershed restoration plan, and watershed management project design.

The Sulphur Springs Water Alliance (SSWA) is a stakeholder-led collaborative focused on groundwater sustainability and long-term water planning in the Sulphur Springs

Valley of Cochise County, Arizona. The Alliance brings together agricultural producers, local governments, conservation organizations, technical experts, and community members to support informed dialogue and collaborative solutions to regional water challenges. SSWA works to promote data-informed decision-making, community engagement, and practical strategies that support community vitality, agricultural viability and long-term groundwater resilience. Through workshops, educational programming, and collaborative planning processes, SSWA seeks to build shared understanding and develop locally supported approaches to water management in the Willcox and Douglas Basins.

SSWA has been awarded a WaterSMART CWMP grant to support:

- The formation of a 501(c)(3)
- Stakeholder identification and outreach
- Group development
- A sequence of planning workshops
- Educational webinars and seminars
- Development of planning concepts and design review inputs
- The creation of a Watershed Restoration Plan

SSWA is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and uses consensus-based approaches to decision-making.

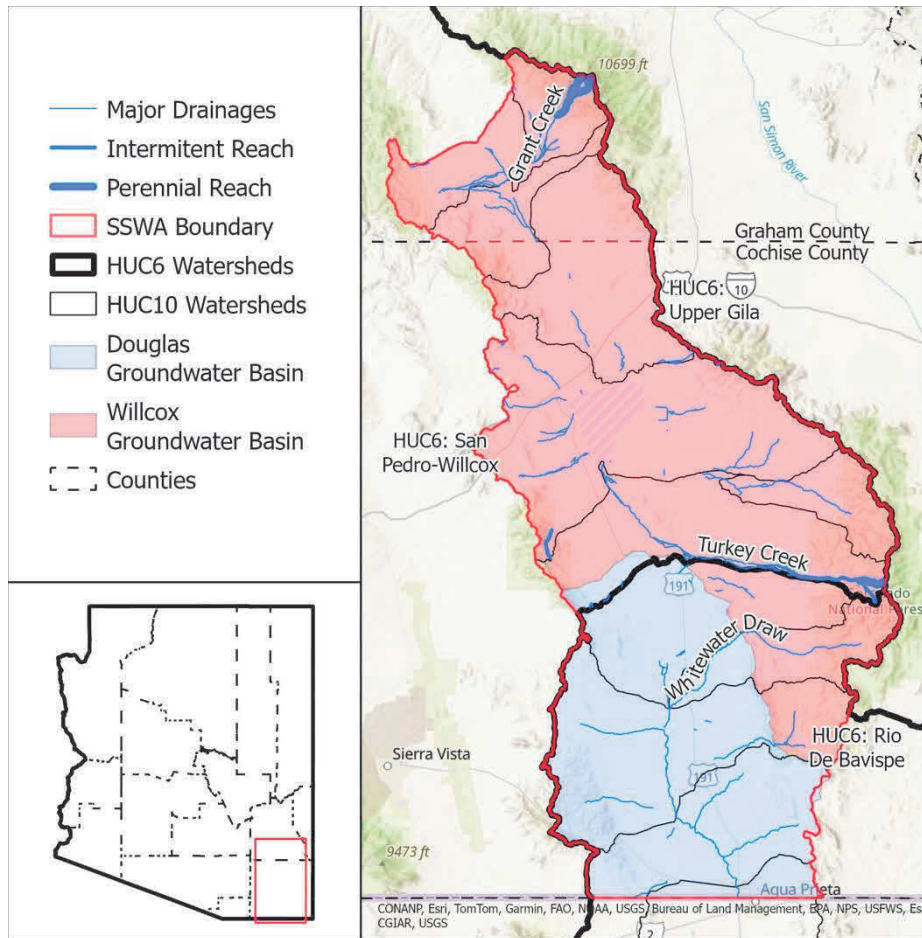
2.1 Fiscal Agent

The Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) is serving as the fiscal agent for this project and issuing this RFP on behalf of SSWA.

3. Scope of Work

3.1 Location

Work will primarily be performed remotely, however, frequent travel throughout southern Arizona will be required to support meetings, workshops, monitoring activities, and other project-related events. The Alliance's work area includes the Willcox and Douglas Basins in Cochise County, excluding the portion of the Willcox Basin located in Graham County.



3.2 Key responsibilities

3.2.1. Facilitation & Meeting Support

- Facilitate group development workshops, planning workshops, and educational meetings.
- Design agendas and meeting materials in coordination with SSWA staff and Board leadership.
- Support inclusive, productive, and consensus-based discussion among stakeholders.
Manage meeting flow, timekeeping, and group dynamics.
- Facilitate both in-person and virtual meetings as needed.

3.2.2. Workshop & Process Design

- Assist in structuring multi-phase planning workshops aligned with CWMP objectives.
- Collaborate with SSWA leadership prior to meetings to clarify goals, identify decision points, and design effective facilitation strategies.
- Support transitions between project phases (group development → planning → design review).
- Incorporate stakeholder feedback into iterative planning discussions.

3.2.3. Stakeholder Engagement

- Conduct stakeholder interviews as needed to inform workshop design and discussion.
- Support stakeholder engagement by helping identify key voices and encouraging participation in workshops and planning discussions.
- Assist with identifying educational topics and potential speakers for workshops or meetings.

3.2.4. Documentation & Follow-Up

- Prepare meeting summaries, key outcomes, and action items following workshops and meetings.
- Track consensus decisions and unresolved issues across planning sessions.
- Support SSWA in maintaining continuity across workshops and planning activities.
- Review draft planning materials and provide facilitation-oriented feedback to support collaborative decision-making.

3.2.5. Coordination (Facilitation-Focused)

- Coordinate with SSWA staff regarding schedules, logistics, and meeting materials.
- Participate in site visits or field tours as needed to better understand local conditions and inform workshop facilitation.

4. Schedule and Level of Effort

The Facilitator is expected to support activities over the CWMP project period (anticipated May 2026 – October 2028), including:

- Group Development Workshop(s)
- Five Planning Workshops

- Three Educational Webinars/Seminars
- Design Review facilitation support (as applicable)
- Assistance with creating and editing the final Watershed Restoration Plan

Specific dates will be coordinated with SSWA. Proposers should describe anticipated levels of effort and availability.

5. Milestones & Tasks

Table 1 shows the project schedule, broken out by task and subtask. The Facilitator will be responsible for completing most of the work listed in Table 1 with assistance from the SSWA Coordinator where applicable.

Table 2 outlines tasks that must be completed within the project timeline.

Table 1: Years 1-3 Watershed Milestones

Milestones	Description	Timeframe
Group Development Workshop 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kickoff Project • Finalize MOU/Articles of Incorporation, ETC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Becoming 501(c)(3) • Pre-planning - begin watershed assessment • Brainstorm and document watershed issues • Gather data sources and references from stakeholders • Team Building Element 	October 2026
Planning Workshop 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of watershed plan process • Outreach - plans for interviews - who should we talk to • Survey preparation • Brainstorm desired conditions, issues, potential projects, project cites. • Results to date • Educational Element 	May 2027

Planning Workshop 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review baseline assessment ● Document feedback on baseline assessment ● Refine list of desired conditions and potential projects ● Brainstorm project evaluation criteria ● Discuss data gaps and develop strategies to resolve 	August 2027
Planning Workshop 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review updated baseline assessment ● Document additional feedback on baseline assessment ● Refine project evaluation criteria ● Refine data gap resolution strategies ● Review concerns ● Brainstorm project types and locations 	November 2027
Planning Workshop 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First draft completed ● Review first draft of completed plan ● Review project prioritization plans ● Document feedback 	March 2028
Planning Workshop 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final draft completed ● Review final draft ● Discuss next steps, select one project for detail design 	July 2028
Design Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review 30% status of detail design 	September 2028

Table 2: SSWA General Meetings & Tasks

Task	Description	Timeline
Educational Webinars & Seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have 2 webinars/ seminars a year ● Work with stakeholders to identify topics of interest ● Identify and work with multiple subject matter experts (e.g., hydrogeologists, policy experts) to create workshops to educate our local stakeholders and community on rural groundwater ● Use our network of stakeholders (e.g., UA Extension, county experts), to identify speakers and hold educational webinars 	All Years
Monthly SSWA Meetings		All Years
Monthly Subcommittee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and Community ● Water Augmentation ● Economics, Planning, and Management 	All Years
Stakeholder Identification and Outreach	<p>Initial focused outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview based approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At the beginning, plan on asking all stakeholders you currently have, who else they think we should be talking to. ○ Then, have targeted outreach where we invite those stakeholders to participate. Also ask them who else they think we should be talking to. ○ Have a final round of targeted outreach to invite those stakeholders to participate. ● Search state (e.g., ADEQ, other permitting agencies) and federal records for stakeholders in the plan boundary, invite them to participate. 	All Years

	<p>Ongoing throughout the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue looking for new stakeholders and stakeholders who haven't participated. ● Tabling at events. ● Monthly email newsletters inclusive of status, breaking news, opportunities, etc. ● Annual paper newsletters with fundraising asks 	
Interviews with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look for landowners in areas with good recharge potential and prioritize outreach there. ● Site visits 	All Years

6. Proposal Requirements

Proposals that do not meet the following requirements may be disqualified from consideration:

- Page Limit:
 - 5 pages
- Formatting:
 - 1-inch margins
 - 12-point font (Arial or Times New Roman)
- Demonstrate understanding and capability of completing the scope of work as described in the Evaluation Criteria in Section 8 below.
- Include proposer point of contact
- Upon request, SSWA will share copies of awarded proposals; when submitting your proposal, include a copy with trade secrets and sensitive information redacted as necessary.
- Due Date: April 15, 2026, at 11:59 pm, Arizona Time
- Submit via the AACD portal

7. Proposal Review Process

Proposals will receive a format check to ensure they meet requirements prior to receiving a full evaluation. Proposals will be reviewed by SSWA against evaluation criteria. Proposers may be requested to have a virtual interview with SSWA.

Selected proposals will be notified of award on or around April 30, 2026.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant facilitation experience (40%)
 - Statement of qualifications must include descriptions of at least three (3) projects completed by the contractor that are similar in size and scope to the project described in this RFP
 - Past work with SSWA partners, including outreach and coordination, will receive higher scores
- Quality and clarity of proposed facilitation approach (40%)
 - Approach to collaborating with SSWA leadership, staff, and partners
 - Demonstrated ability to understand and perform the project
 - Quality of proposal/presentation.
 - Description of subcontracts/subawards
- Cost and reasonableness of budget (20%)
 - Reasonableness of estimate, including appropriate justification
 - Break out detail should include, at a minimum:
 - Labor/Personnel
 - Supplies/Equipment
 - Travel
 - Travel estimates should address remote nature of the Sulphur Springs Valley
 - Indirect Costs

Experience working with diverse stakeholder groups and public-interest collaboratives is strongly preferred.

9. Contract Information

The selected proposer will enter into a contract with the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), who is acting as the fiscal agent for the grant. Contract terms, payment schedule, and insurance requirements will be finalized upon selection.

10. Submission Requirements

Please submit all proposals to morin@aacd1944.com no later than April 15, 2026.