

Tribal Forest & Watershed Planning & Engagement Projects RFP

Date of Committee Meeting: 11/25/2026

Evaluation Committee:

Natalia Shaw, Tribal Resource & Restoration Coordinator 

Erin McElroy, Forest Resilience Officer 

Lindsey Quam, Deputy Director & Tribal Liaison 

Overall Scores:

Applicant	Average Committee Score	Budget Score	Total Score (Rounded to nearest 10 th)	Committee Decision
Coalitions & Collaboratives	72.5	5.6	78.1	No Award
Chloeta	59.3	4.3	63.6	No Award
Forest Stewards Guild	80.8	7.1	87.9	Award
High Water Mark	77.7	6.1	83.8	No Award
Institute for Applied Ecology	66.7	6.2	72.9	No Award
Kaufman & Associates	50	3.2	53.2	No Award
Southwest Decision Resources	74	5.3	79.3	Award
Trees, Water, People	77.7	6.1	83.8	Award

The State of New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) New Mexico Forestry Division (Division) sought proposals for this RFP to assist the Division in building capacity for tribal engagement across the state with a focus on project areas of forestry and watershed planning and implementation, meeting facilitation and

coordination, and workforce development. Proposals were evaluated with key projects in mind, such as facilitation and coordination of the Tribal Fire & Forestry Working Group (TFFWG), planning and coordination of the Annual Tribal Fire Summit, and the ability to seek additional opportunities for the Division to further build and strengthen relationships with Tribes/Nations/Pueblos in New Mexico. Through careful review, all applicants were evaluated based on their experience, expertise, and ability to provide the above services as proven through their application narratives, work product highlights, and reference testimonials. Additionally, applicants were evaluated based on the best available budget offer.

While all applications displayed strengths in particular areas related to the scope of work, many with shared skill sets and experience, offerors were ultimately chosen based on their breadth of skills and expertise and ability to lead projects addressing multiple criteria as identified in the RFP to increase efficient spending of state and federal dollars.

Applicant Review Notes/Score Justification:

Forest Stewards Guild (FSG):

This application highlighted FSG's multi-year experience working with 5+ Pueblos in planning and implementing RX burns, developing MOU's, facilitating meetings and workshops, hiring and engaging youth in post-fire restoration work, and coordinating training opportunities. While their strengths lie in prescribed burn and post-fire applications, they display a strong understanding for the full breadth of forest and watershed health projects and the ability to coordinate cross-boundary projects with agencies such as the BIA and USFS. Finally, their application spoke to their ability to communicate and integrate tribal values and priorities within project planning and outcomes.

This applicant had the highest overall score and was chosen as an offeror due to their strong application that addressed all areas of the RFP scope of work and provided ample evidence to support their claims, as evident through their work products and reference testimonials. Additionally, the application highlighted a comprehensive set of experience and expertise that would contribute to a broad scope of work as highlighted in the RFP.

Trees, Water, People (TWP):

This application highlighted the applicant's expertise related to Tribal collaboration, forest and watershed health project implementation (with a focus on reforestation), coordination of cross-boundary projects, and planning and facilitation of annual conferences, workshops, and training opportunities as they relate to Tribes/Pueblos of New Mexico. Their

experience and established relationships with Tribes/Pueblos and adjacent land management agencies, including the BIA. The application further highlights their familiarity with tribal governance and ability to work with Tribes/Pueblos on a large scope of projects, and although they have a smaller funding portfolio, they display the highly relevant and impactful use of funds.

TWP had the second highest overall score, tied with HWM, but was chosen because of their large range of experience related to facilitation, project implementation and management, cross boundary coordination, and conference and workshop planning.

High Water Mark:

High Water Mark's (HWM) application strongly highlighted their expertise in project management and technical report writing as they relate to Tribal engagement. While these were considered as strong skill sets related to the scope of work, the application was lacking in evidence showcasing their expertise relating to meeting or workshop facilitation and work products lacked a focus on forest and watershed health. While this applicant scored highly, their expertise leaned heavily towards strategic project management and implementation and less away from a need for facilitation and coordination of forest and watershed health activities.

Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE):

IAE strongly demonstrated their expertise and experience in collaborative work, especially as it relates to tribes. They were one of the few candidates with evidence of youth engagement, curriculum development, and enhanced expertise in botany. While they displayed a strong ability to work with tribes, in a way that expressed an understanding of tribal governance, values, and priorities their skill set leaned heavily towards botany and seed management and less so related to larger forestry and watershed health topics. Due to this their expertise ranked amongst a unique niche that was not considered applicable to the direct scope of work for this RFP.

Kaufman & Associates Inc. LLC (KAI):

This application exhibited experience related to facilitation and ability to develop technical reports but lacked applicability to forest and watershed health, especially as it relates to New Mexico and its Tribes/Pueblos. Application narratives were brief and lacked evidence to support their claims. Additionally, the reference testimonials for this applicant had not been received.

Chloeta:

This application demonstrated some experience related to training development and facilitation, especially related to RX and ability to produce technical reports as evident

through their work product highlight. The application lacked relevancy and information regarding the extent of their experience related to engaging with Tribes/Pueblos on forestry and watershed health projects. Experience with tribal engagement did not extend beyond grazing and fire/post fire and failed to demonstrate experience and expertise that would support the scope of work related to the breadth of forest and watershed management. Additionally, only one reference testimonial was received.

Coalitions & Collaboratives (CoCo):

This application demonstrated strong experience related to meeting coordination and facilitation and leveraging various sources of funding for project support. While these were valuable skills, applicable to the scope of work, it was evident that most involvement in tribal forest & watershed projects was as a supporting role, rather than serving as the project lead and in some instances, it was unclear as to the full extent of their involvement in projects. While they seem to be a growing organization that is becoming more involved in projects in NM related to tribal natural resource management and they do have great experience in driving outcomes and facilitation, as evident in their reference testimonials, it was noted that their experience and expertise could likely be provided by another contractor with additional experience related to the scope of work.

Southwest Decision Resources (SDR):

This application exhibited an extensive background in facilitation and technical writing skills, public speaking, creating engaging meetings, developing meeting summaries, strategic planning, and implementation roadmaps. Additionally, their application highlighted their experience in coordinating collaborative projects amongst multiple tribes and pueblos and federal agencies and a strong understanding of tribal governance in New Mexico. Their application spoke to their wide range of experience and expertise working with tribal and non-tribal partners alike in areas of forestry, watershed management, climate adaptation, traditional ecological knowledge, prescribed fire, land management, and place-based restoration.

This applicant scored amongst the top applicants as their application thoroughly described their well-rounded experience related to the scope of work for this RFP. Their application narratives described and provided evidence of their ability to provide expertise in various areas of forest and watershed management, especially as they relate to Tribes/Pueblos of New Mexico, and the ability to integrate traditional ecological knowledge into land stewardship and collaborative projects with tribal partners and adjacent land management agencies. Based on their vast expertise on forest and watershed management and their expansive network of relationships across New Mexico and the greater Southwest, SDR was chosen as an awardee that could accomplish several goals under the RFP.

Budget Scoring:

Each application was scored on the budget that was required as part of the RFP proposal contents. Budgets were weighed equally based on the lowest responsive offerors' cost of hourly rate and travel expenses. A total of 10 points were possible for this budget category and were added to each applicant's overall score.

Hourly Rate: Each application was asked to provide a list of the staff anticipated to be involved in implementing the RFP scope of work and their hourly rate, including fringe and benefits. These were averaged across positions and weighed against the lowest offerors' cost.

Each Offerors Average Hourly Rate/ Lowest Offerors Rate * 10 (total possible points) = total score for hourly rate

Travel Expenses: Each applicant was asked to state whether each of their staff, included in the Hourly Rate, would be traveling from out of state or would be considered in-state. This was asked of applicants under the assumption that out-of-state travel costs would be higher due to the additional costs for airfare and lodging. The criteria below were used to assign a score of 1-3 based on the number of staff each applicant had that was out-of-state.

Offerors Score (based on criteria below)/lowest offerors score* 10 (total possible points) = total travel score for travel expenses

Score	1	2	3
Criteria	No out-of-state travel required.	Out-of-state travel is required for less than 1/2 of staff.	Out-of-state travel is required for more than 1/2 of staff.

Total Score for Hourly Rate + Total Score for Travel Expenses= Offerors total budget score out of 10 points