

Request for Proposals

Wellhead Protection Plan Development

Introduction

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians is requesting proposals from qualified consulting firms to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan for the Tribe's public water supply systems. The purpose of this project is to identify and protect groundwater resources that supply drinking water wells and to develop strategies that reduce the risk of contamination to these sources.

Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. Protecting this resource is essential to ensuring a safe and reliable drinking water supply for the Tribal community now and into the future. The selected consultant will assist the Tribe in developing a comprehensive plan that identifies areas contributing groundwater to public supply wells, evaluates potential threats to the aquifer, and establishes management strategies to reduce contamination risks. The plan should be consistent with applicable federal guidance related to drinking water protection and groundwater management.

Project Background

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians is located on the Rincon Reservation in northern San Diego County, California, approximately 40 miles northeast of the City of San Diego and near the community of Valley Center. The reservation encompasses approximately 6,000 acres and includes residential areas, Tribal government facilities, community services, and commercial development.

The Tribe operates two community public water systems that rely primarily on groundwater wells as their drinking water sources. These systems provide potable water to Tribal residents, Tribal government facilities, and other developments located on Tribal lands. Maintaining the quality of these groundwater resources is essential to protecting public health and ensuring a reliable water supply for the community.

The Tribe seeks to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan that identifies areas contributing groundwater recharge to the water supply wells and evaluates potential threats that could impact groundwater quality. The plan will provide the Tribe with technical information, mapping, and management strategies that support proactive protection of the drinking water supply. The completed plan will also serve as a planning tool to guide land use decisions, environmental management practices, and emergency response procedures.

Project Objectives

The objective of this project is to develop a comprehensive Wellhead Protection Plan that identifies groundwater areas contributing flow to the Tribe's public water supply wells and establishes strategies for protecting those areas from contamination.

The plan will evaluate hydrogeologic conditions, assess aquifer vulnerability, identify potential contaminant sources within contributing areas, and recommend management strategies that reduce contamination risks. The plan will also establish procedures for monitoring, public outreach, and emergency response in the event that groundwater contamination is detected. Through this planning effort, the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians seeks to strengthen long-term protection of its groundwater resources and support sustainable water supply management for both community public water systems.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will perform technical tasks necessary to develop the Wellhead Protection Plan for the Tribe's two community public water systems. These tasks will include project coordination, review of existing groundwater data, delineation of wellhead protection areas, identification of potential contamination sources, risk evaluation, and preparation of the final plan document. The Tribe anticipates that the Wellhead Protection Plan will rely primarily on review of existing hydrogeologic data and standard analytical methods.

Project Management

The consultant will provide overall project management and coordination for the duration of the project. This will include conducting a kickoff meeting with Tribal staff, preparing a detailed work plan and project schedule, and maintaining regular communication with the project team. The consultant will provide progress updates and ensure that project milestones and deliverables are completed according to the agreed schedule.

Data Collection and Review

The consultant will review available information related to the Tribe's groundwater system and public water supply wells associated with both community public water systems. This information will be provided to the selected consultant after contract award. The consultant will evaluate the completeness and quality of the available data and identify any limitations that may affect the analysis.

Existing System Information

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians operates two community public water systems on the Rincon Reservation that rely exclusively on groundwater as their drinking water source. The systems include fewer than eight active groundwater production wells.

Additional information regarding the water systems will be provided to the selected consultant after contract award as necessary to complete the scope of work.

Wellhead Protection Area Delineation

The consultant will delineate Wellhead Protection Areas for the public water supply wells serving the Tribe's two community public water systems. These areas represent the land surface zones that contribute groundwater flow to the wells and where potential contaminants could travel toward the drinking water supply. The delineation will be based on an evaluation of hydrogeologic conditions, groundwater flow direction, aquifer characteristics, and available monitoring data. Geographic information system tools and standard analytical methods commonly used for wellhead protection planning may be used to estimate groundwater capture zones and time-of-travel areas. Maps illustrating the delineated protection areas will be prepared as part of this task.

Vulnerability Assessment

The consultant will evaluate the susceptibility of the groundwater aquifer and water supply wells to potential contamination. The vulnerability assessment will consider factors such as soil conditions, aquifer properties, depth to groundwater, well construction characteristics, and groundwater flow patterns. This assessment will help determine the relative risk of contaminants reaching the water supply wells and will guide prioritization of protection strategies for both water systems.

Contaminant Source Inventory

The consultant will identify potential sources of groundwater contamination located within the Wellhead Protection Areas. This inventory will evaluate land uses and facilities that could pose a risk to groundwater quality. Potential sources may include fuel storage areas, septic systems, chemical storage facilities, agricultural activities, maintenance operations, waste disposal sites, and other activities that could release contaminants to the subsurface. The inventory will include mapping and documentation of identified potential contaminant sources.

Risk Assessment

The consultant will evaluate and rank identified contaminant sources based on their potential risk to the drinking water supply wells. The evaluation will consider factors such as proximity to the wells, type and volume of potential contaminants,

hydrogeologic conditions that influence contaminant transport, and any available records of spills or releases. This analysis will help prioritize protection actions and identify areas where management measures may be most effective.

Protection Strategies

The consultant will develop recommended strategies that the Tribe can implement to reduce the risk of groundwater contamination within the Wellhead Protection Areas. These strategies may include recommended best management practices, spill prevention measures, land use management considerations, monitoring programs, and other protective actions. The strategies should be practical, implementable, and tailored to conditions on the Rincon Reservation.

Emergency Response Planning

The consultant will develop procedures for responding to potential contamination events that may threaten the Tribe's drinking water wells. The emergency response section of the plan will identify response protocols, emergency contacts, and recommended steps to address potential contamination incidents. The goal of this task is to provide guidance that allows the Tribe to respond quickly and effectively if groundwater contamination occurs.

Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

The consultant will support outreach efforts to inform Tribal staff, community members, and other stakeholders about the Wellhead Protection Plan and the importance of groundwater protection. Outreach activities may include informational meetings, presentations, or educational materials that help increase awareness of groundwater protection practices within the community.

Final Wellhead Protection Plan

The consultant will prepare a draft Wellhead Protection Plan that compiles the results of all project tasks. The draft document will be submitted to the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians for review and comment. Following review, the consultant will revise the document as necessary and prepare the final Wellhead Protection Plan. The final document will include maps, technical analyses, recommended protection strategies, and guidance for implementation. All project mapping and geographic information system data will be provided to the Tribe in digital format.

Deliverables

The consultant will provide several deliverables throughout the project. These will include a project work plan and schedule, technical summaries of data review and analyses, maps showing delineated Wellhead Protection Areas, a contaminant source

inventory, results of the vulnerability assessment, recommended protection strategies, emergency response procedures, and the completed Wellhead Protection Plan document. Deliverables will be provided in digital format and in editable file formats where applicable.

Budget

The total budget for this project is \$50,000. Proposals must allocate the full project budget to the tasks described in the scope of work. Proposals should include a detailed cost estimate that clearly describes the level of effort required for each task described in the scope of work. The cost proposal should demonstrate how the proposed work can be completed within the available budget.

Proposal Format Requirements

To ensure that proposals can be evaluated in a consistent and transparent manner, consultants responding to this Request for Proposals must organize their submissions according to the format described below. Proposals should clearly address each section and follow the order listed. Failure to follow the requested format may result in the proposal receiving a lower evaluation score.

Each proposal should include the following sections.

Executive Summary. The consultant should provide a brief summary of the proposed approach, understanding of the project, and key qualifications of the firm and project team.

Firm Qualifications and Experience. The consultant should describe the firm's experience with groundwater protection planning, hydrogeologic studies, and development of Wellhead Protection Plans for public water systems. Experience working with Tribal governments, small community systems, or rural groundwater systems should be highlighted where applicable.

Project Team. The proposal should identify the project manager and key personnel who will work on the project. The proposal should describe each team member's role and provide a summary of relevant qualifications and experience.

Technical Approach. The consultant should describe the methodology that will be used to complete each element of the scope of work. This section should explain how the consultant will review existing data, delineate wellhead protection areas, conduct vulnerability assessments, inventory potential contaminant sources, and develop protection strategies.

Project Schedule. The consultant should provide a proposed project schedule that identifies major milestones and expected completion dates for each task. The schedule

should demonstrate that the work can be completed within the timeframe described in this Request for Proposals.

Cost Proposal. The consultant should provide a detailed budget and level of effort associated with each task described in the scope of work. The proposal should clearly show how the available project budget will be allocated across project tasks.

References. The consultant should provide at least three references for projects of similar scope completed within the last five years. References should include the name of the organization, contact information, and a brief description of the project.

Budget and Funding Requirements

This project is funded through a grant that requires all funds to be expended by September 30, 2026. The total project budget available for this effort is \$50,000.

Consultants should develop a project scope and level of effort that fully utilizes the available funding while remaining consistent with the scope of work described in this Request for Proposals. The proposal should include a detailed cost breakdown that demonstrates how the full project budget will be allocated across tasks, personnel, and project deliverables.

Project Schedule

The consultant must propose a schedule that allows sufficient time for review and acceptance of the final Wellhead Protection Plan before the grant deadline.

The Tribe anticipates selecting a consultant shortly after proposals are received so that work can begin as soon as possible. The consultant should anticipate completing the draft Wellhead Protection Plan several weeks before the final deadline in order to allow time for Tribal review and revisions. The final Wellhead Protection Plan must be submitted no later than August 31, 2026. No extensions for this project are possible.

The August 31, 2026 deadline is firm in order to allow time for Tribal review, revisions, and grant closeout requirements.

Minimum Consultant Qualifications

The consultant proposing to perform this work must demonstrate experience in groundwater protection planning and hydrogeologic analysis related to public drinking water systems. The proposing firm should have staff with relevant expertise in hydrogeology, groundwater flow analysis, geographic information systems, and drinking water source protection.

The project team should include at least one professional with demonstrated experience in groundwater or hydrogeologic analysis and development of Wellhead Protection

Plans or similar groundwater protection studies. Experience working with Tribal governments, rural water systems, or small community water systems is preferred.

The proposal should clearly identify the qualifications of key personnel who will perform the work and describe their specific roles in completing the project.

Required Mapping and Data Deliverables

All maps and spatial analyses prepared as part of the Wellhead Protection Plan must be provided in digital geographic information system format. Geographic data should be compatible with commonly used GIS software and should include appropriate coordinate system information and metadata.

Deliverables associated with mapping and spatial analysis should include digital shapefiles or geodatabase files representing Wellhead Protection Areas, potential contaminant sources, and other relevant project layers. All GIS data developed under this project will become the property of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians.

The final Wellhead Protection Plan should include high-resolution maps suitable for inclusion in the final report as well as digital GIS files that allow the Tribe to update or maintain the data in the future.

Right to Negotiate Scope and Contract

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians reserves the right to negotiate the final scope of work, schedule, and deliverables with the selected consultant prior to execution of a contract.

The Tribe may request clarification or adjustments to the proposed scope of work to ensure that the project objectives are met while remaining consistent with the approved project budget and grant requirements.

The Tribe also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities in proposals received, and select the proposal determined to be in the best interest of the Tribe.

Data Ownership and Confidentiality

All data, reports, maps, geographic information system files, analyses, and other materials developed or compiled as part of this project shall become the property of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians upon completion of the work.

The selected consultant shall provide all project deliverables, including draft and final reports, technical memoranda, mapping products, and associated data files, in digital format. Geographic information system data developed under this project shall be

provided in a format compatible with commonly used GIS software and shall include appropriate metadata and documentation.

The consultant shall not distribute, publish, or otherwise disclose project data, analyses, or reports developed under this contract without the prior written consent of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians.

Information provided by the Tribe to the consultant for purposes of completing the project shall be treated as confidential unless the Tribe authorizes its release. The consultant shall take reasonable steps to protect sensitive information related to Tribal infrastructure, environmental resources, or other matters that may be considered confidential.

All project records, data, and materials developed under this contract shall be provided to the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians upon completion of the project or upon request by the Tribe.

Use of Project Information

Data, analyses, maps, reports, and other materials developed under this project may not be reused, distributed, or incorporated into other projects by the consultant without the prior written permission of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians.

The consultant may retain copies of project materials for internal recordkeeping purposes but shall not publish, present, or otherwise distribute project information, including well locations, groundwater data, or infrastructure details, without written authorization from the Tribe.

Deliverable Schedule

The consultant should anticipate providing the following deliverables during the project.

The project work plan and schedule should be submitted shortly after project initiation. Technical memoranda summarizing data review and wellhead protection area delineation should be submitted during the early phases of the project. Mapping products and contaminant source inventories should be submitted once technical analysis is completed. A draft Wellhead Protection Plan should be submitted for Tribal review prior to finalization. The final Wellhead Protection Plan must be submitted and accepted before the grant funding deadline.

Proposal Evaluation Process

Proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee designated by the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. The committee will evaluate proposals based on the criteria listed below. The Tribe

reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from proposers as needed during the evaluation process.

Proposals will be evaluated on the consultant's experience, technical approach, qualifications of the proposed project team, ability to meet the project schedule, and the reasonableness of the proposed budget. The Tribe may also consider demonstrated experience working with Tribal governments or small community water systems.

Following evaluation of written proposals, the Tribe may elect to conduct interviews with one or more of the highest ranked firms before making a final selection.

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Each proposal will be evaluated using the following criteria and scoring system.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points
Relevant experience with groundwater protection planning and wellhead protection plans	25
Qualifications and experience of the proposed project team	20
Quality and clarity of the proposed technical approach	25
Ability to complete the project within the required schedule	15
Cost proposal and ability to complete the project within the available budget	10
Tribal firm preference	5

Total Possible Score:

100 points

Selection

The consultant receiving the highest overall score may be selected to enter contract negotiations with the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. The Tribe reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities, or request additional information as necessary to complete the evaluation process.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format in PDF form unless otherwise specified. The proposal must include all sections described in this Request for Proposals and must follow the required proposal format to ensure proposals can be evaluated consistently.

Proposals must be received by the submission deadline identified in the procurement schedule. Late proposals may not be accepted.

The proposal should clearly identify the proposing firm, include contact information for the project manager, and provide all information necessary to evaluate the proposal based on the evaluation criteria provided in this document.

Participation of Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Businesses

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians encourages participation in this procurement process by qualified minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, disadvantaged business enterprises, and other small businesses. Firms that meet these classifications are encouraged to submit proposals or participate as team members, subcontractors, or partners in responding to this Request for Proposals.

The Tribe supports equitable participation in contracting opportunities and encourages proposers to consider inclusive business practices when forming project teams. However, participation by these businesses will not result in additional evaluation points under the proposal scoring criteria unless the firm qualifies for Tribal preference as described below.

Tribal Preference

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians encourages proposals from qualified Tribal and Native-owned businesses. In accordance with Tribal policies and applicable grant requirements, preference may be given to firms owned by federally recognized Tribes or Tribal members.

Firms that are tribally owned or controlled may receive additional evaluation points under the proposal scoring criteria. Firms claiming Tribal preference should identify their status in the proposal and provide documentation demonstrating eligibility.

Proposals that fail to clearly address the scope of work described in this Request for Proposals or that provide only generic or boilerplate responses may be deemed non-responsive.

Insurance Requirements

The selected consultant shall maintain insurance coverage for the duration of the contract consistent with the insurance requirements of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians.

At a minimum, the consultant shall maintain the following insurance coverage:

Workers Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance providing statutory workers' compensation coverage and employer's liability coverage with limits of at least

\$1,000,000 for each accident, \$1,000,000 disease per employee, and \$1,000,000 disease policy limit.

Commercial General Liability Insurance with limits of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, including coverage for products and completed operations, contractual liability, personal and advertising injury, and medical expense coverage.

Automobile Liability Insurance with limits of at least \$1,000,000 combined single limit per accident, including coverage for owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles and uninsured or underinsured motorists.

Prior to contract execution, the selected consultant shall provide the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians with a certificate of insurance demonstrating compliance with these requirements.

All insurance policies shall provide at least thirty days prior written notice of cancellation, be issued by insurers with a minimum A.M. Best rating of A-VII, and be primary and non-contributory with respect to any insurance carried by the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. The policies, excluding workers' compensation, shall name the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians as an additional insured and shall include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the Tribe.

Failure to maintain the required insurance during the term of the contract may constitute a material breach and may result in termination of the agreement at the option of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians.

Existing Information Available

Once under contract, the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians will provide available background information to the selected consultant to support development of the Wellhead Protection Plan. This information may include available groundwater, water system, and environmental data maintained by the Tribe.

Key Dates:

- 🕒 RFP Release Date: March 26, 2026
- 🕒 Deadline for Questions: April 3, 2026
- 🕒 Proposal Submission Deadline: April 17, 2026