



REQUEST FOR CONSULTANCY
PORTLAND, MAINE

JUNE 1, 2018

Sebago Clean Waters is an innovative new initiative that seeks to accelerate the pace of forest conservation and water protection in the Sebago Lake region of Maine. With a new investment by the Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program¹, Sebago Clean Waters seeks an accomplished, entrepreneurial conservation professional to advance the initiative, working with a strong, established partnership and a clear vision.

ABOUT SEBAGO CLEAN WATERS

Sebago Clean Waters seeks to protect water quality, community well-being, and the health of fish and wildlife in the Sebago watershed through voluntary forestland conservation and community engagement. The Sebago Clean Waters partners are committed to a healthy Sebago Lake Watershed that provides countless benefits to watershed residents, visitors, and downstream water users. We recognize the important role that forests play in producing clean water and emphasize forestland conservation to maintain the excellent water quality of Sebago Lake and the many lakes, ponds and streams that flow into it. The partnership includes Loon Echo Land Trust, Western Foothills Land Trust, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Highstead Foundation, Open Space Institute, Portland Water District, The Nature Conservancy, and The Trust for Public Land.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTING OPPORTUNITY

The selected consultant thrives on challenges, has excellent project management skills, can deliver on deadline, and has experience engaging and encouraging diverse stakeholders to work together to achieve significant results. The consultant will:

1. Guide a two-and-a-half-year process to design and establish a watershed investment fund that will build local support for conservation projects in the Sebago Lake Watershed.

¹ The [Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program](#) focuses on expanding the pace of proactive watershed protection in the U.S. through conservation and improving stewardship of hundreds of thousands of acres of lands that provide drinking water, flood risk reduction, and an array of economic and environmental benefits. The US Environmental Protection Agency co-funds the program with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U. S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, which manages the partnership

2. Manage the Sebago Clean Waters partnership and coordinate its working groups, which currently consist of governance/operations, conservation finance mechanisms, communications, land trust capacity building, and conservation prioritization.
3. Work collaboratively with the Sebago Clean Waters steering committee to accomplish the deliverables outlined below.

PRIMARY CONTRACT TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Lead development and coordinate implementation of the partnership's multi-year work plan and budget.
2. Establish and utilize a cooperative framework for tracking and managing the multi-year work plan among partner organizations.
3. Work with partners to transform an economics impact study into a business case for natural infrastructure investments.
4. Lead development of messaging and materials--based on diverse conservation priorities--that will compel water stakeholders to engage and invest in the initiative.
5. Foster relationships with local and regional businesses, municipalities, and consumers.
6. Produce an assessment of legal, financial, and governance options for launching a dedicated fund to protect forests for drinking water.
7. Develop a business plan for a dedicated fund to support land conservation in the Sebago Lake Watershed.
8. Support partners in their collective fundraising to capitalize the water fund;
9. Provide opportunities for information exchange between partners, as well as with external audiences.
10. Coordinate and support land trust partners in their landowner outreach, community engagement, and conservation projects.

AN IDEAL CONSULTANT WILL DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL TRAITS:

1. Be located in the Sebago Watershed or the Greater Portland region.
2. Appropriate education and work experience that indicates a readiness to be immediately effective.
3. Ability to coordinate and leverage the expertise of non-profit partners of different types and capacities, and local municipal and business partners;
4. Proven experience in building relationships with businesses, foundations, and philanthropists;
5. Experience managing complex, decentralized programs with diverse, multiple partners;
6. Ability to be flexible and ingenious in the face of ambiguity;
7. Demonstrated success working independently with little day to day supervision.

In addition, the following specific expertise is desirable:

1. Advanced financial literacy and fund management experience
2. Experience with economics of land use and conservation

SCOPE, RESPONSIBILITY AND OVERSIGHT

The consultant will have access to expertise and practical support through our partners, including best practices for water fund development, conservation finance mechanisms, and donor cultivation. The consultant will represent the initiative within the bounds of a scope of work, co-developed with and overseen by Highstead and the governance committee of Sebago Clean Waters. The scope of work will be revised and the contract will be renewed annually, contingent on satisfactory delivery.

COMPENSATION

We seek a consultant prepared to make a multi-year commitment to helping us launch this long-term initiative. Funds from a grant to Highstead on behalf of the partnership are currently available for 2.5 years. We will offer competitive consulting compensation based on terms negotiated in a Scope of Work, to be renewed annually. We will reimburse for mileage and other travel expenses.

TO APPLY

Please submit a letter stating your interest and relevant experience, along with your résumé and names of 2-3 references to:

Spencer Meyer, Senior Conservationist, Highstead Foundation: smeyer@Highstead.net.

We will begin reviewing proposals immediately and the opportunity will remain open until a suitable consultant is identified.



Sebago Clean Waters

Protecting Our Clean Water by Conserving Our Forests

www.SebagoCleanWaters.org

Sebago Lake Watershed

The 282,000-acre Sebago Lake watershed provides clean drinking water to 200,000+ users – nearly one out of every five Mainers. The abundant forests and cold-water lakes and streams host a world-renowned, native landlocked salmon population that attracts not only wildlife, but also a booming local recreation and fishing economy that brought 35,000 angler trips to the area in 2015. The watershed supports local businesses in other ways as well, including providing the key ingredient—water—to the region’s thriving food and brewing industry. The watershed exemplifies how healthy forests filter water to produce clean drinking water while offering myriad other benefits for Maine residents, tourists, and businesses.

The Vision: Sebago Clean Waters seeks to protect water quality, community well-being, and the health of fish and wildlife in the Sebago watershed through voluntary forestland protection. We are committed to a healthy Sebago Lake Watershed that provides countless benefits to residents and downstream water users. We recognize the essential role that forests play in producing clean water and emphasize forestland protection to maintain Sebago Lake’s excellent water quality.

The Challenge: US Forest Service identified the Sebago Watershed as one of the forest watersheds in the U.S. most at risk of development. Although now largely intact, the threat of forest loss and degradation—and therefore risks to watershed health—are significant as landowners age and development encroaches. With only about ten percent of the watershed conserved today, we must increase the pace of forestland conservation to protect the watershed’s values and benefits to the people and economies in the region.

The Opportunity: Sebago Clean Waters builds on a strong commitment from the Portland Water District—Maine’s largest drinking water utility—to conserve and steward its water source. Portland Water District contributes up to 25% of a property’s value to help landowners and land trusts purchase or put conservation easements on forests in the watershed. Many commercial water users, such as breweries and biomedical facilities, rely on Sebago’s clean water to produce high-quality products. Portland Water District’s largest 10 users account for ~25% of total water usage, but only ~10% of revenues.

Sebago Clean Waters seeks to accelerate the pace of watershed protection by attracting new funding to complement the Water District’s investments. Sebago Clean Waters is pioneering innovative approaches to investing in the clean water, community and recreation benefits of the healthy Sebago Lake watershed. Our first step will be to establish a water fund that works with large water users and others to invest voluntary contributions to ensure their clean water supply. The partnership will leverage funding from many state, federal and private sources, including Maine’s Natural Resource Mitigation fund, Land for Maine’s Future, Forest Legacy, Open Space Institute, The Nature Conservancy, and landowners.

Progress to Date

Sebago Clean Waters has made exciting progress since the partners came together in 2015:

- **Governance:** Established Sebago Clean Waters with eight organizations working toward common goals.
- **Outreach and Funding:** Conducted listening sessions with key business and community leaders; fostered relationships with Portland-based breweries; initiated an economic feasibility study; raised private funds for land trust capacity and project costs; received significant investment from Healthy Watersheds Initiative from U.S. Endowment, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- **Communication:** Launched our website, produced outreach materials; organized landowner outreach workshop.
- **Conservation:** Identified and mapped common conservation priorities and developed conservation action plan.

2018 Priorities

In 2018, Sebago Clean Waters will continue to focus on the partnership's priorities, recognizing that progress needs to occur on all fronts to be successful:

Funding - Diversifying sources of land protection funding and exploring the establishment of a water fund.

Build a compelling business case that links forest conservation with plentiful, inexpensive, and clean drinking water. Sebago Clean Waters has initiated an analysis of the economic contributions of clean water, intact forests, and land protection, as well as the many benefits of conservation: recreation, public health, carbon sequestration, fish and wildlife habitat, and agriculture and timber production. We will use the study results in concert with insights from watershed stakeholders to develop a strong business case for watershed investment. Simultaneously, Sebago Clean Waters partners are also exploring the use of federal water revolving loan funds for land conservation in the watershed.

Communications - Establishing robust programs to engage landowners, communities, and water users.

Sebago Clean Waters is developing a plan to build a visible presence with water users and in watershed communities. We are crafting a unified message aimed at empowering local organizations and communities to be engaged in land conservation. Immediate tasks include branding the initiative and developing outreach materials for SCW partners to use at events.

Land Protection - Bolstering the capacity of land trusts to partner with landowners to protect the watershed's most important places. Our two land trust partners, Loon Echo Land Trust and Western Foothills Land Trust have deep roots in the watershed communities. Sebago Clean Waters is helping the land trusts identify common goals for watershed protection and community development, engage with more landowners, and identify opportunities to keep forestland on local tax rolls while protecting the character of the communities, ecosystem health, and natural resources.

Sebago Clean Waters Partners

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership helps to conserve the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and its watershed through science, public stewardship and effective management.

Highstead Foundation is a regional conservation organization dedicated to conserving the forested landscape of New England through science, sound stewardship, and collaboration with our regional partners.

Loon Echo Land Trust protects land in the northern Sebago Lake region of Maine to conserve its natural resources and character for future generations.

Open Space Institute protects scenic, natural and historic landscapes to provide public enjoyment, conserve habitat and working lands, and sustain communities.

Portland Water District protects public health, safety, and the environment by providing their customers first-class water, wastewater, and related services.

The Nature Conservancy protects the lands and waters on which all life depends, and they've been working in Maine to do just that for more than 60 years.

Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Every park, playground, and public space we create is an open invitation to explore, wonder, discover, and play.

Western Foothills Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation and protection of native ecosystems, farm and forestlands, watersheds, and scenic landscapes for the benefit of wild and human communities in western Maine.

