



Council of Western State Foresters

Ponderosa Pine Symposium

Request for Proposals

Issue Date: March 21, 2025

Submission Deadline: April 18, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. MDT

Email Request To: info@westernforesters.org

Please include “Ponderosa Pine Symposium RFP” in the subject line.

Background

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) Forest Products Committee (FPC) comprises state forestry professionals across the western United States and the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands. Established by the CWSF membership in 2017, the FPC supports sustainable forest management and other forest-based benefits by working with CWSF leadership to maintain and enhance markets for traditional and non-traditional forest products.

CWSF is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan membership association of 17 western State Foresters and six U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Island Foresters. CWSF promotes the conservation, protection, and sustainable management of forests for today and generations to come by leading collective action, fostering learning, facilitating resource sharing, providing credible expertise and information, carrying out outreach and advocacy, and engaging with partners.

CWSF seeks companies and/or contractors interested in planning and executing a Ponderosa Pine Symposium (Symposium) in November 2025 in coordination with the CWSF FPC. A report with a summary and final recommendations will accompany the Symposium. This request for proposal (RFP) is meant for entities skilled in meeting planning, agenda development, facilitation, speaker preparation, and report writing.

All inquiries related to this RFP are to be directed, in writing, to the email address on the front cover. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon.

Project Overview and Purpose

The CWSF FPC recognizes that western lumber markets have faced significant challenges in recent years and that ponderosa pine, in particular, seems to be under more pressure than other species. Ponderosa pine is one of the most common conifer species in the western United States and is found in all western states except Kansas, Alaska, and Hawai'i. Ponderosa pine tends to inhabit fire-adapted ecosystems with a history of relatively common low-intensity wildfires. With the continuous development of the West, human settlement in the wildland urban interface and past management practices have increasingly conflicted with the natural management regime (fire). A wildfire crisis exists across the West, with many communities at increased risk of wildfire due to their proximity to these fire-prone ecosystems.

Therefore, ponderosa pine habitats should be the highest priority for fuels treatment. To facilitate treatments, it is highly beneficial, if not critical, that there be markets for traditional and non-traditional products derived from the ponderosa pine within those treatment areas.

With sufficient access to markets, the necessary fuels treatments needed to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire may be implemented at significantly lower costs or even profitably, resulting in more critical management. Recently, a handful of mills that historically manufactured ponderosa products have closed, and others are on the verge of closing. This has significant implications for the health and sustainability of ponderosa pine and serious impacts on the industry workforce. Not only are management opportunities lost, but so are the livelihoods of people in those rural communities who often rely on the forest products industry for their existence.

To this end, the CWSF FPC seeks to hold a Symposium that convenes industry, government, research and academia, economic development, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to examine the status of the ponderosa pine industry in the West. Panel and speaker presentations and facilitated group discussions will exchange the latest research and information on emerging technologies, examine current and future challenges, share success stories and lessons learned, and explore resources to support the ponderosa pine sector's long-term marketability and management. Outputs resulting from this symposium are intended to benefit a broad range of stakeholders, including mill owners, potential new technology operators, land managers, and policymakers. A report to accompany the Symposium will summarize the event and outline recommendations for action.

Scope of Work

The CWSF FPC seeks proposals from qualified parties to plan and hold a Symposium in Flagstaff, AZ, from November 18 - 20, 2025. The CWSF FPC anticipates up to 100 in-person participants from industry, government, research and academia, economic development, and NGOs, with additional attendance virtually for keynote presentations and report-outs. The Symposium will include a two-day meeting and a one-day optional field tour.

This scope of work includes but is not limited to:

- Develop the Symposium's two-day meeting agenda, which should balance presentations, demonstrations, breakout sessions, and panel discussions.
- Develop the Symposium "Save the Date" and coordinate with CWSF staff and the Symposium Planning Committee to distribute it to possible attendees and speakers.
- By July 1, 2025, submit to the Symposium Planning Committee for approval a list of proposed speakers, facilitators, and participants and a draft agenda.

- Issue invitations, confirm and conduct speaker and facilitator preparations, and provide speakers and facilitators with on-site support regarding their presentations, demonstrations, and discussions at the Symposium.
- Issue invitations for attendees.
- Identify possible Symposium sponsors and conduct outreach.
- Serve as the lead facilitator at the Symposium.
- Support virtual attendance, such as coordinating staff support, onsite use of the facility's technology, troubleshooting, and management of the Symposium's hybrid links and the Zoom meeting room.
- Work closely with CWSF staff to ensure that event logistics, including seating configurations, are handled efficiently and effectively.
- Plan optional networking events occurring during the Symposium.
- Capture the Symposium's notes, summaries, and key takeaways and collect presentations from each session.
- Develop a report following the Symposium that captures a synopsis of the event and includes recommendations for action that the CWSF FPC and/or other attendees can take to improve the marketability and management potential for ponderosa pine in the West.

The selected Respondent will conduct regular check-ins with the Symposium Planning Committee - comprised of CWSF staff and FPC subject matter experts - to provide project updates, address questions, seek feedback, review draft agendas, identify speakers and attendees, and more.

Deliverables

The end result of this project will be a successfully executed Symposium and a final report.

The report will comprise a synopsis of the event and recommendations for action. The report will be available as both a print and electronic publication. Sample questions for finding action items could include:

- What factors prevent industry from building or improving utilization capacity in areas adjacent to ponderosa pine forests? (Examples could include workforce, quality of the resource, capital investment, market, etc.)
- What are emerging technologies that may support new and ongoing projects?
- What are the barriers and solutions to utilizing ponderosa pine in traditional products (such as sawlogs and paper)?

- What efforts should be investigated and/or undertaken to stabilize and create markets for ponderosa pine?
- What can be done to remove barriers to entry, what kind of support/assurance does the industry need to make investments
- Are there opportunities for training and/or shared learning?
- Are there additional resources and information needed to address existing gaps linked to ponderosa pine markets, including additional research that needs to be done?
- Are there case studies and/or success stories that could be replicated?

The Symposium Planning Committee and CWSF staff will engage with the selected Respondent by facilitating the process and providing guidance, review, and approvals throughout the duration of the project. The selected Respondent will ultimately be responsible for planning and executing the Symposium and delivering the final report.

Upon project completion, CWSF will own the rights to all project data, content, and materials.

Budget

There is no set award for completing the project. Please provide your best estimate needed to accomplish the goals outlined in the scope of work. Furnished equipment including computer and workspace will not be provided by CWSF and are expected to be provided by the selected Respondent.

Project Timeline

The final product will be submitted as a report no later than December 19, 2025. All work products and deliverables will become the sole property of CWSF and will acknowledge USDA funding as required.

The selected Respondent will coordinate regular check-in meetings with the Symposium Planning Committee and CWSF staff throughout the project to ensure milestones are met.

RFP Submission Requirements and Process

Proposals must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time on April 18, 2025 to info@westernforesters.org with "Ponderosa Pine Symposium RFP" in the subject line. Late responses will not be accepted.

Information required in the Respondent's proposal includes:

- Statement of interest that references the solicitation and scope of work, a brief description of the individual or organization, and contact information;
- Budget proposal for this project;
- Completed Respondent Information Form (see Appendix A);
- Resume of the Respondent's experience, the experience of key team members, and a response to experience description and examples requests at the top of page 7 (within this section);
- Sample work (completed within the last two years) directly created by your organization for another organization;
- List of at least three professional references for whom you have provided or are providing communications services or related work. (For each reference, include the client's name, organization, telephone number and email address, duration of the relationship, and types of services provided.);
- Disclosure of any conflicts of interest; and
- [Certification statement](#) that the submitter is not presently suspended or debarred from conducting business with the Federal government.

The Respondent's proposals shall respond to the following technical questions in response to the scope of work:

- Considering the scope of work for this project, is your organization currently equipped with the skills, expertise, and workforce to complete all aspects of this project? (10%)
- Describe your strategy and timeline for organizing the Symposium. Include key steps such as coordinating with the Symposium Planning Committee for updates and inquiries, developing the agenda, managing attendee outreach, ensuring on-site event support, and executing post-event follow-up. (20%)
- Provide your vision for crafting a Symposium agenda that effectively balances presentations and demonstrations with group dialogue and discussions, supports large and small group discussions, and ensures a combination of information sharing, peer learning, and problem-solving as session purposes. (20%)
- Describe your planned approach for facilitating discussions, moderating, documenting outcomes, and driving action items with multiple partners at the Symposium. (20%)
- Outline your strategy for integrating a virtual attendee option at the Symposium that fosters engagement between both virtual and in-person participants. (5%)
- Explain your strategy for identifying and securing sponsorships for the Symposium. (5%)
- How do you plan to structure and organize the final report to effectively document event highlights and presentations while providing actionable recommendations for next steps? (20%)

The successful Respondent would ideally have the following experience. Please describe your experience with an example per bulleted item:

- Significant background in developing, marketing, facilitating, and hosting events, which must include multi-day events with at least 50 attendees, preferably natural resource or forestry-related events (40%);
- Outreach, selection, and preparation of presenters (20%);
- Developing reports or other products that synthesize and describe the outcomes of events and any recommendations for action (20%); and
- Proven capacity to deliver project requirements on time and budget (20%).

The principal of the company or organization must sign the RFP submittal prior to electronic submittal. An electronic signature is acceptable.

Evaluation Process

The RFP Review Committee comprises the CWSF Executive Director, the CWSF Partnerships and Program Implementation Director, and a Symposium Planning Committee member.

The RFP Review Committee will evaluate responses against the following RFP categories:

| RFP Category | Relative Weight |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Technical | 40% |
| Experience | 30% |
| Cost | 30% |

Submitted proposals not meeting mandatory criteria will not be considered for review. The RFP Review Committee will take into consideration the originality of the proposal, proposed project timeline, cost, examples from previous work, and probability of success when reviewing and selecting the successful response. The selected Respondent will be notified by May 7, 2025. The selected Respondent must be able to provide proof of liability insurance and eligibility to work in the U.S.

Restrictions and Rights

The Respondent should disclose conflicts of interest, in writing, to the RFP Review Committee, who will consider the nature of the Respondent's responsibilities and the degree of potential or apparent conflict in deciding the course of action that the Respondent needs to take to remedy the conflict of interest.

All RFPs and supporting documents, evaluation notes, and other information created during the process are confidential and will not be shared publicly.

Neither issuing this RFP nor receiving a response constitutes any form of contract with respect to the project. CWSF retains the right to cancel or amend the RFP, its contents, or the selection process. The RFP and the corresponding contract are subject to federal funding availability.

Questions

For questions regarding project scope, deliverables, proposal submission process, award, and contracting, please contact:

Kelsey Delaney
Director of Partnerships and Program Implementation
Council of Western State Foresters
2255 Sheridan Blvd., Suite C-327
Edgewater, CO 80214
info@westernforesters.org
303-893-0327

RFP APPENDIX A

Respondent Information Form

Provide the following information regarding the Respondent.

(NOTE: If Respondent is proposing as a team or joint venture with each entity signing the Contract, if awarded, each should complete this information. Subcontractor(s) are not co-Respondents and should not be identified here.)

| Question | Response |
|--|----------|
| Respondent Information | |
| Respondent Name: <i>(NOTE: Give exact legal name as it will appear on the contract, if awarded.)</i> | |
| Principal Address, City, State and Zip Code: | |
| Telephone number: | |
| Fax number: | |
| Website address: | |
| Year established: | |
| Provide the number of years in business under present name: | |
| Social Security number or Federal Employer Identification number: | |
| DUNS Number: | |
| Business Structure | |
| Indicate the business structure of the Respondent: Individual or Sole Proprietorship (List assumed name if any); Partnership; Limited Liability Company; For Profit Corporation; Nonprofit Corporation; Domestic; Foreign or Other (list business structure) | |
| Annual revenue: | |
| Total number of employees: | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Total number of current clients/customers: | |
| Briefly describe other lines of business that the company is directly or indirectly affiliated with: | |
| List related companies: | |
| Printed name of contract signatory and title: | |
| Provide any other names under which Respondent has operated within the last 10 years and length of time under for each: | |
| Provide address of office from which this project would be managed (Address, City, State and Zip Code. Telephone number and Fax number): | |
| Contact Information | |
| List the one person who CWSF may contact concerning your proposal or setting dates for meetings. (Address, City, State and Zip Code. Telephone number and Email Address): | |
| Does Respondent anticipate any mergers, transfer of organization ownership, management reorganization or departure of key personnel within the next twelve (12) months? | |
| Where is the Respondent's corporate headquarters located? | |
| Previous Contracts | |
| Has the Respondent ever failed to complete any contract awarded? If YES, state the name of the organization contracted with, services contracted, date, contract amount and reason for failing to complete the contract. | |
| Has any officer or partner proposed for this assignment ever been an officer or partner of some other organization that failed to | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>complete a contract? If <i>YES</i>, state the name of the individual, organization contracted with, services contracted, date, contract amount and reason for failing to complete the contract.</p> | |
| <p>Has any officer or partner proposed for this assignment ever failed to complete a contract handled in his or her own name? If <i>YES</i>, state the name of the individual, organization contracted with, services contracted, date, contract amount and reason for failing to complete the contract.</p> | |