

Division of Forestry
Community Forestry Program
RFP – Part II

3. Proposal Content

3.1 Organizational Information

The Kenai Peninsula-Cooperative Weed Management Area (KP-CWMA) is a proactive partnership that brings together those responsible for invasive species management across the Kenai Peninsula. Convened in 2003, the KP-CWMA has been regionally upheld as a highly successful approach for strategically and collaboratively addressing landscape issues. The KP-CWMA is composed of all relevant and interested agencies including non-profits, government entities, tribal and private landowners, educational institutions, businesses, and more.

The Homer Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) serves as the host agency for the KP-CWMA and will serve as the project manager for this project. The HSWCD invasive species program coordinator, who also serves as the coordinator for the KP-CWMA partnership, will be the lead implementer. The coordinator will engage with all KP-CWMA partners, landowners, and contractors in the completion of this project, including completing *Prunus* species surveys, acquisition of landowner permissions, assisting with tree and sapling removal, coordination of education/outreach activities, and grant administration and reporting. All herbicide work will be done by DEC Certified Pesticide Applicators under the umbrella of the HSWCD DEC General Permit for Pesticide Use, which is already in-hand.

Other organizations contributing to this project include the Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS.) The KWF, a non-profit organization based in Soldotna, is a member of the KP-CWMA, and the KWF invasive species specialist will provide key support in the completion of this project. Additionally the USFWS, also a member of the KP-CWMA, is providing administrative and technical assistance for this project and also leveraging funds.

3.2 Project Overview

The goal of this project is to reduce the production of invasive *Prunus* seeds and decrease *Prunus* spread to key habitats, including riparian areas, throughout the KP-CWMA. This will be achieved through the mechanical removal of trees and manual removal of saplings, with herbicide being used as appropriate. The abundance of *Prunus padus* and *P. virginiana* trees located on private parcels (average property size 1 to 7 acres) in the communities of Homer, Hope, Cooper Landing, Seward, and in the Kenai/Soldotna area, is astounding. Funds from this grant will be used to (1) provide financial assistance to landowners in cutting down invasive *Prunus* trees immediately followed by cut-stump application of glyphosate herbicide; (2) fund staff travel to communities within the KP-CWMA geography to coordinate and complete removal activities; (3) purchase equipment and supplies needed to complete cut-stump applications on removal sites; and (4) fund community education and outreach. The education & outreach component will include a *Prunus* fact page on the KP-CWMA website

(kenaiweeds.org) that links to statewide resources, including a collaborative state-of-the-science one pager. We would like to use funds to hire a contractor to assist with the production of this state-of-the-science page, if appropriate. A community sapling pull event is planned for spring 2021, pending the COVID-19 safety situation. An in-person outreach event will be subject to COVID-19 safety protocols, and as such a virtual event that addresses common Q&A's may be an alternate should an in-person event not be feasible.

3.3 Partnering Organizations

The KP-CWMA partnership members will provide technical assistance and leadership to the staff implementing this project. Members include non-profits, government entities, tribal and private landowners, educational institutions, businesses, and more. Partnership members will also assist in implementing education and outreach within local communities, including the planned outreach event as part of this project.

The HSWCD will be the lead organization implementing this project and will be responsible for deliverables and reporting. The HSWCD invasive species program coordinator will lead completion of *Prunus* species surveys (currently underway and being funded by a Copper River Watershed Project mini-grant), the results of which will guide this project. The coordinator will also manage identifying landowner participants, securing permissions, coordinating with tree removal contractors, assisting with *Prunus* removals, and developing and implementing education and outreach activities.

The KWF invasive species specialist will assist in completing the *Prunus* surveys, identifying landowner participants, securing permissions, conducting tree and sapling removal, and implementation of education and outreach activities.

The USFWS is providing administrative and technical assistance for this project. Additionally, the USFWS provides funding for the HSWCD invasive species program coordinator position and the KWF invasive species specialist; these are reflected as leveraging funds in Form A.

Landowners that participate in the removal assistance program will contribute their own time to coordination and scheduling of the event and contribute to disposal of downed trees. Some interested landowners are willing to manually remove their own trees, and only interested in herbicide application assistance from HSWCD or KWF. Some landowners also require assistance in manual/mechanical removal of their trees. The [REDACTED] has expressed interest in hosting a community sapling pull on their 600-acre property to help build awareness of the problem and engage a wider audience. This would serve as the 2021 education and outreach event (should this not materialize, an alternate site will be identified.)

3.4 Project Details and Activities

Location of infestations: The communities of Homer, Hope, Cooper Landing, Soldotna, Kenai, Seldovia, and Seward all have well established invasive *Prunus* trees. Multiple landowners throughout these communities have already expressed interest in removing their trees, and several have signed landowner agreements for assistance. The month of August, should this

grant be awarded, will be spent advertising the program and soliciting more landowner participants for removal projects.

Control Methods/Herbicide Application: IPM methods will include mechanical removal of large trees (either by landowners, HSWCD, KWF, or a contract arborist) and mechanical and manual removal of younger trees, both of which will be immediately followed by glyphosate solution treatment to cut stumps by a DEC Certified Pesticide Applicator. Hand pulling of young trees/saplings will also be conducted as feasible. Herbicide application is dependent on landowner decisions; some landowners are opting for mechanical removal only. Assistance in removing downed trees/limbs from properties and transporting them to the local landfill for burning will also be offered, though we will encourage landowners to take advantage of their new source of firewood or smoking chips.

Mitigation Methods for Environmental Protection: Round-up Custom (EPA #524-343) and Agridex (surfactant) will be mixed to a solution that is 50% glyphosate (active ingredient) for application via a spray bottle to cut stumps. Label instructions will be closely followed, and it may be determined that at some sites a stronger concentration is needed (label allows for 100% to be applied to cut stumps). Pesticides will be applied only to dry land sites.

Application sites will be monitored by landowners, and a second herbicide application may be required to ensure efficacy. Intervals between treatments will follow label instructions. Secondary applications will occur at least 4 weeks after initial application, and will follow label instructions. Applications will occur only in dry weather between August 1st – November 30th, with the majority of applications occurring in September or October. Herbicide will be properly stored and disposed of as per DEC regulations.

Required Permitting: In April 2020, HSWCD was granted a DEC General Permit To Apply Pesticides for the Control of Invasive Weeds (20-GP-WEED) for terrestrial plants within the entire KP-CWMA geography. Herbicide application to invasive *Prunus* trees will operate under this permit, which expires December 2023. Landowner agreements for herbicide use are required before any work is performed, and all herbicide applications are reported to DEC annually. DEC Certified Applicators may include Katherine Schake (#10399-2103-1/2/6/9); Maura Schumacher (10420-2206-9); Janice Chumley (10281-2106); and Casey Greenstein (# pending). See attachment B for copies of applicator licenses.

Confirmed Locations Requesting Removal Assistance:

*Signed Landowner Agreements are included in Attachment C. Acreage is estimated based on parcel size and general distribution of infestations.

- AK DNR Land: 28765 and 28555 Coastline St, Kasliof Beach, Parcel IDs: 13112005 & 13112006 (5 acres infested with >6 trees and numerous saplings extending into wetland) Photos from 6/18/20 here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iRKe_-vze2MQjFMUvFjj6YY7wjIvoNrP/view?usp=sharing
- [REDACTED] Homer (>30 acres infested with >45 trees)



- [REDACTED] (>100 acres infested with >100 trees) & [REDACTED] Property, Homer (>1 acre with 6 trees)
- [REDACTED] Homer (0.25 acre infested with 15 trees)
- [REDACTED] Homer (0.25 acre infested with 2 trees)
- [REDACTED] Homer (0.1 acre infested with 1 tree)
- [REDACTED] 2070 East End Road, Homer (>2 acres infested with >10 trees)
- [REDACTED] 64817 Paystreke Way, Hope (>1 acre infested with >5 trees)

Additional landowners in Homer who have expressed interest in removals (surveys are in-progress): [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Furthermore, there are two confirmed *prunus padus* trees within the DOT ROW that could be removed using this funding, pending modified permits for 2020 herbicide treatment.

*Should this grant be awarded, HSWCD will pursue securing additional landowner agreements with interested property owners in August, and submit a modification request to Division of Forestry for removal activities beginning in September.

3.5 Project Timeline

June, 2020: *Prunus* surveys complete in major communities throughout KP-CWMA geography (in-progress, funded by Copper River Watershed Project.)

July, 2020: Gather names and contact information of landowners interested in assistance with *Prunus* removal (funded by CRWP and USFWS)

August to November, 2020: All landowner agreements submitted to DNR Division of Forestry, and grant modification requested. Invasive *Prunus* trees and saplings removed by IPM techniques from approximately 25 private properties. Educational outreach material created, consolidated, and shared widely via social media, websites, and flyers.

November to April, 2020-21: Spring outreach and education events planned and advertised.

May 2021: *Prunus* community sapling pull outreach event to promote removal of *Prunus*.

3.6 Deliverables and Outcomes

✓ Applicant acknowledges that they are required to submit a mid-report and a final report to DNR documenting the activities undertaken, barriers and lessons learned, maps and other relevant graphics, and the deliverables and outcomes achieved.

✓ Applicant acknowledges that if they issue formal news release it must be vetted by DNR staff and include appropriate recognition of DNR and the USDA Forest Service.

✓ Successful grantees acknowledge that upon project completion, they will provide a short article telling the story of their project, with references to DNR and the US Forest Service, local project partners, location, purpose, and outcomes, as well as provide 1-2 high quality images to accompany the article.



3.6.1 Deliverables

- Synthesis of spring 2020 survey data of invasive *Prunus* trees within the KP-CWMA geography.
- Extensive landowner outreach and education regarding invasive *Prunus* trees, including online materials.
- Removal of *Prunus* trees on private properties (up to 25 infestations ranging from 1 to 7 acres in size with an estimated 1 to 20 trees per property.)
- Spring 2021 outreach event and community sapling pull.
- Submission of article and high-quality photographs about project and outcomes.
- Submission of mid-report and final grant report on project.

3.6.2 Outcomes

- Reduce the seed bank and hence the spread of invasive *Prunus* species by reducing the number of 'mother trees' on private properties (and the cherries that birds transfer).
- Protect local riparian areas and wild landscapes from invasion of *Prunus*.
- Increase local landowner knowledge of invasive species in general and encourage planting of native species in gardens, or at the very least non-invasive species.
- Increase community awareness of invasive species and negative impacts of *Prunus* on wildlife species and habitats.

3.6.3 Metrics

- # of Landowners requesting assistance with removal
- # of Landowner parcels that invasive *Prunus* trees are successfully removed from
- # of invasive *Prunus* trees removed
- # of people reached through social media outreach
- # of people reached through community events (i.e. spring sapling pulls)

3.7 Budget

3.7.1 Proposed Expenses

See Budget Form A.

3.7.2 Leverage

Matching funds are being provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Copper River Watershed Project Invasives Mini-Grant, as referenced in Form A.

Attachment A: Budget Form

Attachment B: Pesticide Applicator Licenses

Attachment C: Current Landowner Agreements