

Request for Proposals for Sierra Recreation Area Planning

Purpose: The Sierra Tri-County Recreation Commission (STRC) has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a qualified vendor (consulting group) to guide and execute a strategic visioning and planning process associated with various forms of winter recreation, including hiking and snowshoeing trails, cross-country ski access, winter youth camps, and Over Snow Vehicle (OSV) tours.

Who May Respond: STRC seeks a consulting group who has demonstrated experience in successfully designing and implementing consensus-based planning processes. Applicants must have strong facilitation skills and proven experience in guiding joint-inquiry sessions and helping groups craft agreements around controversial resource use issues.

About STRC: Founded in 1987, the STRC (a public authority) provides advocacy, education, research, and planning support for local, state, and federal government partners working with nonprofit and private sector contractors and partners to strengthen recreational opportunities, care for natural resources, and build economic tourism benefits in the tri-county region. The STRC and its members promote regional strategies, collaborations, and solutions to improve quality of life in the Sierras.

Project Overview: The STRC coordinates work across three Sierra counties—two small, rural counties and one rapidly growing suburban county. The immense popularity and international reputation of nearby Tahoe, as well as the work of STRC and its partners, has contributed to tourism demand and benefits, but it has also resulted in dramatic increases in visitation over the past two decades.

Certain activities such as OSV tours bring significant financial benefits to the STRC region, but also generate concerns about environmental impact (e.g., watershed and wildlife behavior disruption) as well as noise pollution and potential hazards for snowshoers, campers, and cross-country skiers who share the recreational terrain. Tribal leaders have advocated stricter controls on the numbers of OSV tours, and environmental groups have recently begun agitating to prohibit OSV tours entirely in one STRC county. The local Snowshoers Association has also complained that current park areas provide too much preference to ski and OSV activities. Chamber of Commerce members from the largest city in STRC jurisdiction have recently advocated for expanded OSV terrain. Some vocal public access advocates, especially those concerned about ADA access and aging populations, argue that OSVs provide underserved populations a chance to gain closer proximity to popular Sierra recreation areas.

STRC members have varied perspectives on the value of different winter activities and the STRC is overdue in establishing a more comprehensive shared recreation plan for the region.

Scope of Work and Deliverables: We expect the project to include the following:

- Design and execution of a strategic visioning and comprehensive planning process
- Stakeholder engagement and facilitation of joint-inquiry
- Project management

Proposals should outline a collaborative policy process that informs planning and decisions relative to winter recreation in STRC regions. This process should seek to acknowledge and, to the extent possible, accommodate the economic, social, and environmental interests of a wide range of stakeholders.

Proposals Must Include:

- General information about your consulting team qualifications and roles
- A plan for identifying and engaging critical stakeholders in the STRC planning process
- An outline of key planning and engagement phases and/or steps
- A description of the relevant facilitation competencies your team will bring to this project
- Identification of potential risks and/or notable events project leaders should anticipate
- Evaluation indicators and strategies the STRC should use to assess collaborative relations and the outcomes of your work
- [Budgets would normally be required as well, but will be optional in this case]

Please note that all proposals must be double-spaced and no more than 7 pages in length.