

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: STRATEGIC PLANNING

General Information

Project Objectives:

1. To develop a five-year strategic plan focused on the sustainability of Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm, Dayton, Ohio that honors Marie Aull's legacy and incorporates the strategic priorities of the 2016-2020 National Audubon Society Strategic Plan.
2. To develop a site plan for the Center and Farm consistent with the desired outcomes of the new strategic plan. The site plan may be subcontracted.

Issuing Organization:

Friends of Aullwood, Inc.
c/o Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm
1000 Aullwood Road
Dayton, OH 45414-1129

RFP Issue Date: March 1, 2017

Questions Received by: Alexis R. Faust, Executive Director, Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm,
afaust@audubon.org

Due Date for Proposals: April 3, 2017

Note: The policy of the Friends of Aullwood, Inc., is to solicit proposals with an honest intention to award a contract. This policy does not affect the right of the Friends of Aullwood, Inc. to reject any or all of the proposals.

Contact for more information: Alexis R. Faust, Executive Director, Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm, 1000 Aullwood Road, Dayton, OH 45414, afaust@audubon.org.

Summary

Friends of Aullwood, Inc. is seeking consulting services for the development of a five-year strategic plan consistent with the mission of Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm which is to provide conservation education and exemplify and teach sustainable agriculture. The project has been budgeted at a maximum of \$15,000.

Background

Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm, an Audubon Center of the National Audubon Society for environmental education and sustainable agriculture, provides activities that increase understanding and preservation of the planet by children and adults through education, research, and conservation.

The 70 acres of land comprising the Aullwood Audubon Center opened to the public in the fall of 1957. Mrs. Marie S. Aull, the donor of this former farm had approached John H. Baker, then President of the National Audubon Society with the idea of creating the first nature center in the Midwest. Marie Aull had a great love for plants and animals. It was her idea to create a nature sanctuary where teachers and children could learn about plants, animals and ecological concepts.

In 1962, the 120-acre Antrim farm adjacent to Aullwood Audubon Center was placed on the market. Mrs. Aull was horrified to learn that a proposed development would destroy the many fresh water springs that fed Aullwood Brook. As a result Mrs. Aull purchased the Antrim farm and donated a portion of it to create a public farm with livestock that children could see, touch, and hear, and fields where they could watch crops grow.

In 1978, the center and farm was combined into one operation with one staff. The facility was renamed Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm. In 1979, a non-profit Board, the Friends of Aullwood, was incorporated to generate greater community and financial support.

The Marie S. Aull Education Center, a new, 20,000 square-foot center, was dedicated in October, 2000 in honor of Marie's 103rd year. The education wing features a Bird and Wildlife Discovery Room, a Window on Wildlife Room, observation decks and patios, a large auditorium, and the Hallway of Wonder. Also featured in the expansion are six thematic classrooms which provide in-depth learning opportunities on mammals, arthropods, birds, plants, and amphibians and reptiles. The Naturalist Classroom explores the contributions of founder Marie Aull. The Habitat Discovery Room, Bird Watching Room and Library, Animal Care Room, Volunteer Room and staff offices are located in the original center. Outdoors, six miles of hiking trails link a variety of natural habitats and a new handicapped accessible trail, *Birds, Flight and the Wrights* which was completed in 2003.

The 120-acre educational farm acquired in 1962 is on the opposite end of the sanctuary, and is composed of a variety of educational exhibits, farm equipment, livestock, field crops, and grazing pastures. Approximately one half the land at Aullwood's farm is arable and is used for the purpose of agriculture education. Various farm crops such as alfalfa, soybeans and oats are grown. Livestock, including draft horses, beef cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys and ducks are displayed in a variety of buildings and pastures. Rotational grazing is practiced. Visitors may view a spring house, water pumping windmill, orchard, bee hives, hydraulic water ram, farm equipment, earth coupled heat pump, herb garden (with 80 species of herbs), sugar bush woods and vegetable garden. An 1889 restored bank barn is the focal point of the farm housing a variety of animals. The tractor barn holds a variety of equipment used on the farm. The maple sugar house is used to boil maple sap into syrup.

A new Farm Discovery Center was dedicated in May of 2012. The 11,500 square foot center has a welcoming entry filled with hands-on farm-related exhibits and large multi-purpose room, a roomy kitchen, a Head Start Preschool, a Farm Classroom, offices and a maintenance shop.

The Center obtained a gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. The green elements include cement siding, low-flush toilets, solar panels, clear-story windows for natural light, motion activated room lights and energy efficient appliances. Incorporating recycled building materials from the former education building gives a nostalgic ambience to the new Center. Over 95% of the construction materials were diverted from landfills; 22% of the building materials are from recycled products and 39% of the building materials were manufactured, harvested or extracted within 500 miles of the construction site.

The Head Start Preschool for economically disadvantaged children as well as area youngsters whose parents are able to pay market rates, is one of the jewels of the new Farm Discovery Center. The preschool is operated through the Miami Valley Child Development Centers (MVCDC) with Aullwood as a collaborator. There are two sessions, morning and afternoon, from Monday to Thursday. This is the

first Head Start Preschool in the country that is based on a working farm. The Preschool, which has three instructors, opened in late August of 2012. The Preschool opens in mid-August and closes in late June.

Aullwood offers more than a dozen programs for school and youth groups both at the Center, the Farm, and off-site in our regional communities. Pre-school to high school students participate in guided or self-guided field experiences which last from 90-minutes to a full day. Topics are diverse ranging from *Comparing Communities*, to *Geology Exploration*, from *Candle Dipping* to *Maple Syrup* and from *Feathers in Flight* to *Farmyard Adventures* to *STEMing Science in Conservation Action*. Many of the programs utilize the nature center, educational farm and hiking trails. Activities emphasize the interrelationship within the natural environment, providing children with sensitizing as well as concept building experiences.

In addition, special programs for children are offered throughout the year. *Summer Earth Adventures* and *Winter Earth Adventures* are seasonal classes for 3 to 14 year olds. Children attend daily sessions for in-depth study of a variety of outdoor experiences. Programs for scouts include special nature badges and scout overnights at the center or farm. *B'Earthday* parties are offered for children ages 4-12. *Aullwood READS* (Resources for Earth and Agriculture Discovered and Shared) is an after school program for children which integrates reading, writing and outdoor study. In order to better meet the needs of at-risk students, Aullwood created an outreach program, called **Aullwood REACHES** (**R**eal **E**xperiences **A**rouse **C**uriosity, **H**elping **E**veryone **S**ucceed). Students enrolled in select schools will have the opportunity to experience **Aullwood REACHES** assemblies at their school which meet the Ohio State Academic Standards for art, music and science in four different urban schools. In addition, Aullwood offers an *Artist in Residency* program. During the *Music Residency*, our outreach naturalist teaches children how to create music and write songs about nature or farming. At the end of the weeklong residency, a professional-quality recording is created. During the *Art Residency*, our outreach naturalist and students create a 6' x 10' acrylic on canvas mural about nature or farming. In 2014, Aullwood piloted a week-long, *Leadership Conservation Corps* program for economically disadvantaged youth in collaboration with Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. Church members provided transportation and lunches for the youth and Aullwood staff developed conservation activities that lasted the entire day.

College or graduate students and adults who would like to pursue an environmental career participate in Aullwood's semester-long intern program. Individuals receive hands-on training in environmental education, land management, farming, and nature center operation. Many receive college credit for their internship. Interns come from all over the United States as well as Europe and Canada.

A variety of programs are offered for the public on weekends and select week nights. These are primarily family oriented and cover a wide range of natural history, agricultural and environmental topics. Additionally, special events which draw thousands of people are offered including *Apple Fest* (in September) and *Farm Babies Fest* (in May). Workshops are offered yearly for youngsters through seniors. Topics are diverse including natural history, ornithology, organic gardening, healthful cooking and wildflowers. Special workshops for children include Chipmunk Adventures (preschool classes) and special classes for families. Additionally programs which involve research are conducted such as the Christmas Bird Count, Breeding Bird Count, Butterfly Census, Bluebird Nesting Surveys, and Feeder Watch.

Scope of Work

The Friends of Aullwood, Inc. is seeking a consultant to lead the staff and other stakeholders through the process of developing a five-year strategic plan. The plan will articulate Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm's mission and vision and include the goals, objectives and action steps that will guide the organization for the next five-year period. It will include a strategy for moving forward during a time of change in leadership, programming, and educational priorities both locally and at the National level. It will also include the development of a site plan that coincides with the priorities that emerge during the planning process as well as a facilities maintenance plan.

Respondents are encouraged to creatively identify additional local resources to conduct stakeholder research and other statistical analysis in order to keep the overall planning process affordable.

Some of the questions to be addressed are as follows:

- What should Aullwood's strategic focus be, both at the Center and at the Farm?
- How can we better connect the vision, mission, and programming of the Farm and the Center?
- What competitive advantage does Aullwood have over similar institutions in the region?
- What programming is considered by which stakeholders to be essential?
- What new partnerships can/should be developed?
- What programs/events could be delivered more efficiently and economically?
- Are there new areas of programming/events that should be considered?
- Are there areas of programming/events that should be dropped?
- Are there new funding opportunities or revenues that should be considered?
- What should our priorities be as we move forward?
- What revisions are necessary in our site plan to support these new priorities?
- How can Aullwood best connect to the priorities in the new National Audubon Strategic Plan?

We want the process to include staff, board members, volunteers, community and other stakeholders. The consultant will work directly with the Strategic Planning Committee comprised of members of the staff and Board as well as the Executive Director, on the details of the strategic planning process, scheduling of activities and collection of data and background information.

Deliverables

A final strategic plan document must include the following in detail:

- Strategic areas of focus and service priorities for the next three to five years.
- Goals and objectives to meet those priorities.
- Services and programs that will support the goals, including partnerships with new organizations.
- Necessary skills for staff to carry out programs.
- Possible new funding streams.
- A site plan for both the Center and Farm.

Timetable

Proposal Due Date:	April 3, 2017
Award Decision:	April 25, 2017
Planning Activities:	May - June 2017
Execution of Activities:	July - August 2017
Completion of Draft Plan:	September 1, 2017
Revisions to Draft:	September 15, 2017
Final Strategic Plan Due:	October 2, 2017

Selection Process

The Friends of Aullwood, Inc. will review all proposals. In evaluating the proposals, price will not be the sole factor. Other factors will be considered, as deemed necessary and appropriate, including but not limited to price, quality of service, response to this RFP, experience with similar institutions, staffing, and general reputation. The final decision rests with the Friends of Aullwood, Inc. and the staff of the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm.

Information Required of Respondents

Responses to the RFP should be no longer than five pages, plus attachments.

Section 1. Summary of the Proposal

Provide a brief summary of sections 2 through 6 of the proposal.

Section 2. General Description of the Planning Activities Recommended

Provide a brief statement of your understanding of the requested effort including the conclusions.

Section 3. Work Plan

Provide information about proposed activities that would involve key stakeholders such as Board members, staff, volunteers, interns, and community members. Also provide a timetable for completing the process within the timeframe outlined in the timetable section.

Section 4. Staffing Plan including CVs (Considered an Attachment)

Please identify each person to work on the project and identify his/her role. Also provide a CV for each team member. If the site plan is to be subcontracted, please identify the subcontractor and provide their qualifications as well.

Section 5. Budget (Considered an Attachment)

For each task listed in Section 3, please identify the expected hours of all staff members identified in Section 4 and the total cost. The Friends of Aullwood, Inc. will reimburse the consultant as tasks are completed.

Section 6. References (Considered an Attachment)

Please provide three references for which you have worked on similar projects, including their names and contact information (email and regular mail addresses) for each reference.

Proposal Submission

Proposals should be prepared in a straightforward manner to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

Email the proposal and attachments to btrick@audubon.org with a subject line "Strategic Planning Proposal." Proposals received after 5:00 p.m. EST on April 3, 2017 will not be accepted or reviewed.

The Friends of Aullwood, Inc. may request representatives of a bidding organization to appear for interviewing purposes. Travel expense and costs related to the interview will be the responsibility of the bidder.

Friends of Aullwood, Inc. will reach a decision no later than April 25, 2017.

Additional Information

Consultants may provide any additional information they feel would assist the Friends of Aullwood, Inc. in the selection process.

Confidentiality

The Friends of Aullwood, Inc., agree to keep responses to this RFP confidential.