



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY



# **REQUEST FOR** **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**FOR USE OF THE NEW JERSEY  
SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION CAMPUS  
AT  
STOKES STATE FOREST  
SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**Issued by:**

**Montclair State University**

**ISSUE DATE: June 25, 2020**

**DUE DATE: July 24, 2020**

# **UTILIZATION OF THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION CAMPUS**

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT**

Montclair State University (“University”) is seeking ideas, concepts and information regarding the use of the campus of the New Jersey School of Conservation (“NJSOC”) located in Stokes State Forest (“Forest”), Sussex County, New Jersey. This Request for Expression of Interest (“RFEI”) is to solicit recommendations for economically self-sustaining educational programming that considers and leverages both the unique campus setting and the existing relationship with the Department of Environmental Protection (“NJDEP”). The proposal must include maintenance of the buildings and grounds. Respondents are invited to submit proposals for programming and campus use that provide environmental field study opportunities in an economically sustainable manner. The information and recommendations obtained from responses to this RFEI may result in the development and issuance of a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for the NJSOC campus, at the discretion of the University with input from the NJDEP. However, there is no assurance or certainty that the University shall issue an RFP for the use of the NJSOC campus.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Originally purchased in 1924 by the State Department of Conservation, the NJSOC campus was partially developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (“CCC”), who created Lake Wapalanne, 12 cabins and supporting buildings to provide a summer camping experience for underserved youths. In 1949, the camp’s administration was transferred to the University, transforming NJSOC into a conservation field campus for New Jersey’s state colleges. Since this time, the NJSOC has annually served thousands of students and teachers from kindergarten through college with programs that provided experiences in the environmental and social sciences, humanities and outdoor pursuits, with a central focus on conservation science. In 1981 the Legislature designated the campus to serve as a school for environmental field study, and granted MSU the authority to use the land and buildings in perpetuity under the direction of the Trustees of Montclair State, while the 240-acre tract of land and all buildings thereon remained the property of the State of New Jersey, under the management and control of the NJDEP pursuant to NJSA 18A:64I-1.

The NJSOC is the oldest and the largest university-based environmental education facility in the nation. The campus can accommodate up to 200 people for sleeping, dining and educational activities. Additionally, the campus has been utilized as the site for various research activities by faculty and students. The campus includes approximately 40 buildings and structures, including student housing, laboratories, office space, a wastewater treatment plant and a solar field. Annual expenses for the NJSOC in a typical year are about \$2 million, of which about \$1.5 million is employee compensation related to 19 full-time staff members. The School earns revenues of approximately \$600,000, leaving an operating deficit of approximately \$1.4 million annually.

### **3.0 SETTING AND SITE**

Situated in the most north western portion of New Jersey, the tract of Stokes State Forest used and maintained by the University is accessible via routes 80 or 206. The surrounding deciduous forest and exceptional natural resources make NJSOC an ideal location for outdoor activities and environmental education. The NJSOC campus is split into three sections around Lake Wapalanne. The western and eastern portion of the campus are south of Skellenger Road and sit on the corresponding banks of Lake Wapalanne. Skellenger Road and Wapalanne Road traverse around the lake connecting these two sections of the campus. Foot access between these sections is provided via a pedestrian bridge across the lake. The Northern portion of the campus sits on the opposite side of Skellenger Road.

Facilities on the northern portion of the campus are a vehicle maintenance shop and the solar panel field. There is also a trout stream and a student activity area that has been used for educational programming. On the western portion of the campus are 2 maintenance buildings, 3 residences, a laboratory, the Longhouse house, open pit bathrooms, a storage structure, a fire pit, a nature center, 2 blacksmith shops, and a cabin. Also located in this area are 2 student lodging buildings that accommodate 100 students. In the eastern section of the campus are 12 student cabins, 3 bathroom buildings, and multiple support buildings including a hall, a dining hall, a trading post/souvenir shop, an office, an infirmary, a lounge, a storage building and a space for music rehearsal. A pump room and generator building are also located on the eastern shore.

Many of the buildings at NJSOC have important historical elements that must be maintained, and most of the buildings and some of the grounds are in significant need of renovation and maintenance investments. Important items needing attention include: the lowering and dredging of Lake Wapalanne, a 20-year maintenance item that is overdue by 10 years; replacement of the maintenance shop which is no longer usable; the replacement of Long House and Onandaga Lodge, two main buildings used by visitors, which are only barely usable; repair and paving of the Wapalanne, Oil, and Stone Sequoya campus roads; and the replacement of roofs on 15 Wapalanne cabins, which have leaks and are 10 years past their useful life. In addition, the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the NJSOC water system, which processes all waste and rain water requires monthly maintenance which totals to \$108,000 annually.

### **4.0 CAMPUS UTILIZATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this RFEI is to assess proposals that provide environmental field study opportunities in an economically sustainable manner. All proposals must account for the maintenance of the campus's resources and, if applicable, the retention of the resource's historical elements. Utilization of the NJSOC campus and the accompanying programming may take many potential forms including but not limited to: an educational facility; an environmentally focused camp; a field training operation; or an environmental research facility. Proposals may come from public or private organizations, public/private partnerships, and may include partnership proposals

with the University. Proposals may include utilization of the whole tract, sections of the campus, or select buildings.

Respondents should provide financial models and strategies that demonstrate the ability to reach the campus utilization goals and objectives, including the identification of potential funding gaps, if any, and the plan for addressing those potential gaps. Respondents should indicate if their proposal contemplates employing any or all of the current personnel. (A list of positions is attached.)

## **5.0 CAMPUS UTILIZATION GUIDELINES**

The following factors will be considered in the review of any submission for the use of the NJSOC campus:

- Compatibility with NJSOC’s mission to provide environmental field study opportunities.
- Purpose and operational plan for the intended proposal for use of the campus.
- Plans for user experiences, public access and interpretation capabilities.
- Quality and nature of the environmental impact on the Stokes State Forest.
- Plans for the preservation, adaptation, and use of existing historic structures and features.
- Plans for new building or structure construction.
- Plans for the preservation of the campus’ natural features.
- Long term financial viability of an operating plan.
- Financial or other benefit to the University.
- Parking and traffic flow.

As noted in 2.0 above, the NJSOC is located on lands owned by the State of New Jersey. Therefore, the traditional municipal land use planning and approval requirements do not apply, rather the NJSOC is governed by the State Government’s approval process for proposed land uses and development. In addition, ADA or other applicable code compliance having an impact on any one historic building, must be uniformly applied to all buildings.

## **6.0 REQUIRED INFORMATION**

All responses received, and any information contained therein, are subject to disclosure in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”). A respondent may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to OPRA found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1 or the common law Right to Know, when the respondent has a good faith legal and/or factual basis for such assertion. In the event of any challenge to the responder’s assertions of confidentiality with which the University does not concur, the responder shall be notified and shall be solely responsible for defending its designation. All proposals shall become the property of the University once submitted.

In accordance with the provisions of this RFEI, you are requested to provide a project description and narrative that includes four elements:

1. Compelling vision of your concept;
2. Building use proposal for each structure or section of the campus in which you are interested;
3. Supporting Financial, Business and Management Concepts including financial information on the organization and the proposed project; a description of the estimated capital investment needed to meet campus utilization guidelines as well as the proposed usage; and the identification of potential funding gaps (if any) that may occur with the use; and
4. Other factors not accounted for in the RFEI that support the respondent's submission.

## **7.0 SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL**

All respondents are required to limit their proposals to twenty (20) pages or less at no smaller than 12 point type. Excess pages and extraneous materials or appendices will detract from the overall quality of the response.

Respondents must submit an electronic copy for the proposal by the submission deadline to:

**Donna McMonagle, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer**  
**[mcmonagled@montclair.edu](mailto:mcmonagled@montclair.edu)**

If you have questions or require clarification on any aspect of this RFEI, please forward the request(s) via email to the University. There is no deadline for submitting questions. However, responses to questions could require up to five (5) business days. A concerted effort will be made to answer all questions in a timely manner, but the issuance of answers prior to the deadline for submission of responses to this RFEI cannot be guaranteed.

The University will not be responsible for any expenses in the preparation and/or presentation of the proposals and oral interviews, if any, or for other disclosure of any information or material received in connection with the solicitation, regardless of circumstances. The University reserves the right to request additional information or clarification, if necessary. This RFEI is not intended to result in the selection of any respondent's proposal. For-profit organizations, individuals, governmental agencies, not-for-profit and educational institutions are welcome to submit proposals.

Upon submission of a response to this RFEI, the Respondent acknowledges and consents to the following conditions relative to the submission, review and consideration of its proposal:

- All costs incurred by the Respondent in connection with responding to this RFEI shall be borne solely by the Respondent.
- The University reserves the right (in its sole judgment) to reject any Respondent that submits incomplete responses to this RFEI, or a response that is not responsive to the requirements of this RFEI.
- The University reserves the right, without prior notice, to supplement, amend, or otherwise modify this RFEI, or otherwise request additional information.

- No Proposals or Responses shall be returned.
- The University may request Respondents to send representatives at a date and time mutually convenient to the parties for interviews.
- Any and all Proposals and Responses not received by the University by 4:00 p.m. Prevailing Time on the date due may be rejected.
- Neither the University nor their respective staff, consultants, volunteers or advisors, shall be liable for any claims or damages resulting from the solicitation, preparation or submissions of the Proposal and Response.
- The University may waive any technical non-conformance with the terms of this RFEI.
- The University may suspend or terminate the process described in this RFEI at any time (in its sole discretion.) If terminated, the University may determine to commence a new process or exercise any other rights provided under applicable law without any obligation to the Respondents.

## **8.0 OPTIONAL SITE VISIT**

Interested parties are invited to attend a site visit on **July 9, 2020**. The site visit will begin at 10:00 AM at the New Jersey School of Conservation, 1 Wapalanne Road, Branchville, NJ 07826. The visit will include a tour of the site and interior inspection of all the buildings, structures, and areas utilized and maintained by the NJSOC. Reservations are required. Please RSVP by 4:00 p.m. on July 7, 2020 at the email provided above.

## **9.0 SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

All responses to this RFEI are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on **July 24, 2020**.

## **10.0 EVALUATION OF SUBMISSIONS**

After expiration of the response period, all responses to this RFEI shall be reviewed by the University with technical assistance from:

- a. NJ Historic Preservation Office;
- b. The Office Of Leases and Concessions; and
- c. The State Park Service.

At the conclusion of the review of all responses to this RFEI, the University may make a written recommendation on how to proceed in order to preserve, restore and make use of the building(s)/structure(s)/facilities and/or campus, either by:

- a. Working directly with one or more interested non-profit organizations and/or governmental entities;
- b. Working with one or more interested for-profit organizations; and/or

- c. Issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for development.

Because the 240-acre campus is part of Stokes State Forest, which is managed by DEP Division of Parks and Forestry, the DEP must agree with either the recommendation of the University, or otherwise agree on a plan to allow reuse of all or any portion of the building(s)/structure(s)/facilities and/or campus.

## **11.0 POST-EVALUATION PROCESS**

If the University recommends working directly with one or more non-profit organizations and/or governmental entities, or one or more for-profit organizations, and said recommendation is approved by the NJDEP, a lease, license, or other contract will be developed to govern the implementation of the recommended proposal. The lease, license or other contract must be executed with at least one such organization/entity within three (3) months of approval of the recommendation by the University and the NJDEP.

If the University recommends issuing one or more RFPs for development, one or more RFPs must be issued for use of any or all of the building(s)/structure(s)/facilities and/or campus as recommended by the University and approved by the DEP. The RFP process will include issuance of the RFP, a thirty (30) day response time and subsequent evaluation similar to the process described above for evaluation of responses to this RFEI.

## EXISTING SITE PLAN



### Map Legend

- |                                       |                                |                               |                      |                            |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 MAINTENANCE BUILDING                | 10 MAIN FIRE PIT (ORIENTATION) | 19 BATHROOMS                  | 28 BATHROOM BUILDING | 37 STUDENT CABIN           |
| 2 ONONDAGA RESIDENCE<br>STAFF/INTERNS | 11 NATURE CENTER               | 20 MAIN OFFICE                | 29 STUDENT CABIN     | 38 BATHROOM BUILDING       |
| 3 ONEIDA RESIDENCE<br>DIRECTOR'S RES  | 12 CHIEF'S CABIN<br>FOR GUEST  | 21 BIG TIMBER CAFETERIA       | 30 STUDENT CABIN     | 39 STUDENT CABIN           |
| 4 BIOLOGY LABORATORY                  | 13 NEW BLACKSMITH SHOP         | 22 PUMP ROOM                  | 31 STUDENT CABIN     | 40 STUDENT CABIN           |
| 5 LONGHOUSE HOUSE                     | 14 DEERCAT CABIN               | 23 STORAGE/PANTRY SHED        | 32 STUDENT CABIN     | 41 STUDENT CABIN           |
| 6 OPEN PIT BATHROOMS                  | 15 OLD BLACKSMITH SHOP         | 24 PROPRANE TANKS/ GENERATOR  | 33 STUDENT CABIN     | 42 STUDENT CABIN           |
| 7 TELESCOPE STORAGE                   | 16 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SHOP    | 25 MUSICAL REHEARSAL/ STORAGE | 34 STUDENT CABIN     | 43 SOLARPANEL FIELD        |
| 8 LENAPE LODGING<br>(80) STUDENTS     | 17 KITCHEN/ HALL               | 26 STAFF LOUNGE               | 35 STUDENT CABIN     | 44 TROUT STREAM            |
| 9 SENECA LODGING<br>(20) STUDENTS     | 18 TRADING POST/ SOUVENIR SHOP | 27 INFIRMARY/ RESIDENTIAL     | 36 BATH HOUSE        | 45 STUDENT ACTIVITIES AREA |



LLC

Nov. 14, 2017

**Existing Site Plan**  
 Montclair State University  
 New Jersey School of Conservation  
 Stokes State Forest  
 Sandyston, NJ



EX-01



## LIST OF POSITIONS AT NJ SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION

### Job Profile (Primary)

7370 - Cook

7370 - Cook

7353 - Senior Food Service Handler

7353 - Senior Food Service Handler

Professional Services Specialist 4 (AFT)

Professional Services Specialist 3 (AFT)

6232 - Professional Services Specialist 4/  
Administrative Service (CWA)

6235 - Program Assistant/Administrative  
Services

7375 - Head Cook I

6243 - Professional Services Specialist  
3/Administrative Services (CWA)

7350 - Supervisor Maintenance/School of  
Conservation

6105 - Staff Nurse (10M)

6235 - Program Assistant/Administrative  
Services

7280 - Repairer

7280 - Repairer

7310 - Building Maintenance Worker

7310 - Building Maintenance Worker

Manager D33

Manager D28 (10M)

### Business Title

Cook

Cook

Senior Food Service Handler

Senior Food Service Handler

Environmental Educator

Environmental

Educator/Researcher

Professional Services Specialist  
4/Administrative Service (CWA)

Program Assistant

Head Cook I

Professional Services Specialist  
III/Administrative Service (CWA)

Supervisor Maintenance/School  
of Conservation

Staff Nurse

Program

Assistant/Administrative Services

Repairer

Repairer

Building Maintenance Worker

Building Maintenance Worker

Director of the New Jersey  
School of Conservation

Associate Director of the NJ School of

Conservation (10M)