

# Request for Proposals

**Title: Describe California’s Stewardship workforce training opportunities and plan new value added opportunities (March 2023-December 2024)**

**For the California Biodiversity Network’s Stewardship Roundtable**

## **About the California Biodiversity Network:**

CBN brings together key environmental experts and community leaders who are united to conserve California’s globally renowned and highly threatened natural heritage. The network is a key partner in the launch and implementation of [California’s 30x30](#) conservation initiative. This inaugural network aims to be inclusive across all sectors, engaging environmental stewards, governmental and tribal representatives, scientists, and educators working at local, regional, and statewide scales. The network provides a collaborative forum for California’s diverse conservation organizations and scientific institutions prioritizing biodiversity protection, stewardship, environmental education, and scientific inquiry.

## **About the CBN Stewardship Roundtable:**

The Stewardship roundtable is intended to be a community of practice among professionals working on land and water stewardship of protected area networks and working lands in California. Here ideas about stewardship, ecosystem restoration, landscape resilience, and related topics can be shared freely from all perspectives. To start, we will be identifying near-term research priorities and information needs as part of the California Pathways to 30x30 report. The Roundtable structure and activities will be further defined by the participants and adapt to changing interests and times moving forward.

Since time immemorial, the Indigenous peoples in what is now known as California upheld traditional responsibilities to steward the lands and waters through kinship systems and reciprocity and remain committed to the stewardship of their homelands. This stewardship has shaped the genetic, species, and ecological diversity that is found in California today. The CBN Stewardship Roundtable respects and honors the relationships, knowledge, and traditions that connect Indigenous peoples to their homelands, and also acknowledges the exclusions and erasures of many Indigenous peoples in this state as well as their conservation actions. Recognizing the inherent relationship between biodiversity and Indigenous cultures, we seek to embrace ecocultural equality as a central tenet of biodiversity conservation and stewardship.

## **About the project:**

The need for environmental stewardship is on the rise as California and other nation states try to meet biodiversity conservation targets such as 30x30. In California, this effort requires expanding habitat protection as well as ecosystem restoration and ongoing stewardship. Without active stewardship, protected landscape networks will increasingly become homogenized, support less biodiversity, and be less climate resilient. At a time when we need more hands restoring and maintaining ecosystems for biodiversity conservation, access to the workforce is inequitable, and those already working are often ill-equipped to conduct climate-smart, place-shaped interventions; they also generally do not work with Indigenous communities in a way that honors the importance of Indigenous-led stewardship.

The first step towards expanding opportunities for underserved people is to gather information on current opportunities and challenges across existing stewardship training efforts including internships, certificate programs, re-training for more specialized work, and other trainings offered by organizational members of the CBN and beyond.

### **Role of the Consultant/Facilitator**

The outside consultant will work with a 4-6 person core team from the CBN Stewardship Roundtable to identify existing workforce education programs that prepare trainees for employment in California land stewardship. Consultant will collect metadata about each program to be shared and easily updated. Consultant will use this information and stakeholder feedback to evaluate needs for additional training programs and/or resources in alignment with existing job opportunities. Consultant will work with core team to scope potential new efforts or existing ones that could be made more impactful and co-create a plan with an education/workforce institution interested in implementation. The end products are a database of training programs, an online portal to share the database, and summary document of potential pilot projects.

### **The primary tasks of the consultant:**

- Co-create a work plan with the core team.
- Collect information on existing environmental stewardship training opportunities in California focused on workforce and document challenges and opportunities faced by these programs.
- Gather metadata for each program and enter it into an online searchable database tool (created by [UCANR IGIS](#)) that will have an option for new programs to be added over time.
- Document opportunities and challenges identified by leaders from these programs and other stakeholders.
- Identify gaps in the types of skills trained/needed.
- Synthesize the opportunities and challenges into priority options to advance and improve equitable delivery of workforce training in land stewardship.
- With input from the Roundtable, select a program and interested implementation partner to plan at least one new program or strengthen the impact of an existing program.

### **Identify and qualify existing workforce training opportunities related to land stewardship in California - Desired outputs:**

1. Collect qualitative data from interviews of experienced professionals, leaders of existing programs, and participants (~20-30) and auxiliary program materials including the following types of information.
  - a. Where, what and for whom is the program?
  - b. What jobs do you try to prepare your participants for?
  - c. Are employers involved in your program?
  - d. What percentage of participants succeed in obtaining stewardship employment post training?
  - e. What skills, certifications and qualifications do the participants acquire?
    - i. Does this include soft-skills?
  - f. Does the program build expertise in a specific California's bioregion?
    - i. If so, which bioregion(s)
  - g. How do participants gain experience?

- h. How are participants recruited and selected?
  - i. How many people go through the program?
  - j. What do the participants do following training?
  - k. What barriers exist to fully realizing the potential impact of the program?
  - l. What are the barriers to participating in the program?
  - m. What are the keys to successful training and securing employment?
  - n. What opportunities are there if any for partnership, augmenting training, or scaling to increase impact?
  - o. How can we improve outcomes for better stewardship, equity/diversity/inclusion, and employment?
2. Summarize the opportunities for land and water stewardship workforce training opportunities in California and challenges around inclusion, access, quality or other areas in need of improvement.
  3. Enter qualitative and quantitative data about each identified program into data sheets designed by [UCANR](#) Informatics and GIS program for use in an online searchable database.
  4. Identify institutional partner(s) interested in starting a new program or augmenting an existing one that would make a significant advancement in expanding access to stewardship careers through training opportunities for Indigenous Californians and other underrepresented groups.
    - a. Workshop these new or augmented program opportunities in a meeting with the CBN Stewardship Roundtable to get their input.

**Pilot program strategic planning - Desired outputs:**

1. Set up a planning team to include interested implementation partners and experts.
2. Align project goals and develop a workplan with Roundtable and existing programs.
3. Develop a streamlined strategic plan for a new program that fills gaps to advance equity, inclusion and diversity in stewardship training opportunities focused on improving both land stewardship and access to employment in the restoration and environmental land management sectors that will help implement nature based solutions and advance climate resilience.
4. Write a pilot program implementation plan.
5. Create a business plan to help design a self-sustaining model.

At minimum, proposed process should include:

1. Assessment of all major environmental workforce training opportunities for young adults in California.
2. Basic meta-data for all identified programs.
3. Identify gaps in existing training, and scope opportunities to develop new training or opportunities to improve existing training to address those gaps.
4. Identify partners interested in a new or improved model.
5. Strategic and related plans for the new model.

**To Apply**

To apply for consideration, please send a proposal letter describing the following: (1) an understanding and approach to the work, (2) proposed scope of services (including your proposed approach to collecting the necessary information and leading the ultimate planning process), (3) plan for communicating with the core team, (4) project management and coordination, (5) personnel and their relevant related project

experience, (6) note whether you are a State of California certified small business, and (7) budget.

It is important to note that the CBN operates within parameters set by the CBN charter and that the funding for this project will be administered by UCANR and all laws pertaining to the University of California and the State of California will be followed. registered in California.

For full consideration, please submit your letter by email to Adina Merenlender <[adinam@berkeley.edu](mailto:adinam@berkeley.edu)> subject line: “CBN RFP” by February 28, 2023. A follow up zoom meeting will likely be scheduled with qualifying consultants prior to final selection.