National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

Chellberg Farm
Request for Proposals

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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
1100 N. Mineral Springs Rd., Porter IN 46304

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Introduction

I Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued by the National Park Service (NPS) to solicit proposals from the private sector to lease on a long-term basis, historic properties in Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. NPS Regulations - 36 CFR Part 18,§10 allow for lease terms to be up to sixty (60) years. The NPS estimates the lease for this property would be at least ten (10) years in length. A lease term longer than ten (10) years may be considered by the NPS should circumstances warrant.

The properties offered for lease in this RFP include the outbuildings and fields at the Chellberg Farm located at 900 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter, IN. The NPS will also consider an option to include the Charles P. Nelson House directly across N. Mineral Springs Road to be used as a residence.

Permitted Uses

The NPS seeks proposals to conduct sustainable agriculture enterprises thereon and to help reestablish a working agricultural landscape within Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in order to help preserve and protect the historic, scenic, natural and recreational values of the park. A truly sustainable practice would be economically profitable, socially responsible, and ecologically healthy. The NPS welcomes the submission of proposals for innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture and marketing methods.

Applicants should note that the following activities will not be considered appropriate uses of the properties:

- Private residence
- Adult Entertainment
- Gambling Enterprises

In addition, proposed uses for living history demonstrations or similar purposes must be consistent with the provisions of NPS Management Policies 2006, Chapter 7.1, for the conduct of interpretive and educational programs in an area of the National Park System (Appendix A). The complete NPS Management Policies are available on the NPS website at www.nps.gov.

The Park

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was established by Congress on November 5, 1966 in order to "preserve for the educational, inspirational, and recreational use of the public certain portions of the Indiana dunes and other areas of scenic, scientific, and historic interest and recreational value in the State of Indiana."

The National Lakeshore spans the lower shoreline of Lake Michigan from Gary, Indiana to Michigan City, Indiana, totaling over 15,000 acres. Annually, an average two million visitors enjoy the beaches, hiking, biking and equestrian trails, camping, picnicking, birding, and environmental and interpretive programs. The National Lakeshore contains four National Natural Landmarks and one National Historical Landmark. In addition, there are several National Register and National Register eligible properties, including the properties that are the subject of this RFP. The National Historical Landmark, the Bailly Homestead, is located to the west of the Chellberg Farm. The two properties are connected by a walking trail through the woods and ravine. The recently completed segment of the Dunes Kankakee Bike Trail runs adjacent to the farm, along Howe Road, through the Northwest corner of the woods and across Oak Hill Road at the northern end of the Farm. This bike path will eventually connect with the Calumet trail that continues on to Michigan City. The Farm is situated between US Highways 20 and 12 and is easily accessible from either road. Also located on Howe Road is the NPS supported Dunes Environmental Learning Center on the grounds of the former Good Fellow Club Youth Camp.

The properties to be leased :

The Chellberg Farm is located in Westchester Township approximately two miles south of Lake Michigan along an historic roadway referred to as Mineral Springs Road. While three of the fields abut Mineral Springs Road, the buildings on the property sit a distance to the west side of Mineral Springs Road, near a wooded ravine. The large historic house, located in the middle of the property, has several deciduous trees around it and lining the entrance drive. Spring flower gardens and other vegetation surrounding the house provide a historic framework to the grouping of buildings composing the farm. The Chellberg Farm retains substantial integrity in terms of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The House (1885) and Maple Sugar Shack (c.1935) are used by the NPS for interpretive programming and will not be a part of a lease. However, NPS will consider proposals for use of the House and Sugar Shack to support operational and public activities at the Farm under a separate agreement. Examples of acceptable uses of the House and Sugar Shack include maple sugar processing, canning demonstrations and/or lessons, and other activities that support the cultural and historic uses of the property.

Outbuildings

The structures which still remain on site include the barn, chicken coop, corncrib, granary, maple sugar shack, and the pump house & windmill. Any or all of these buildings could be included in a lease. Proposals should include a listing of structures desired to be included in a lease and the intended use of those structures.

Barn, ca. 1875, 51' x 24'6

In form it most closely resembles the "English" or "threshing" barn, built sometime between 1870 and 1879 while the form was in the height of its popularity. The barn has a cedar shingle roof, a vented cupola, and horizontal "drop" wood siding. Its basic structure is a heavy timber frame held together by mortise and tenon joints. The barn stands on a recently reestablished foundation of reinforced concrete with field stone facings added to simulate rubble piers.

Chicken Coop, ca. 1885, 10'x24' one story

The chicken coop stands southwest of the barn. The building has a solid brick foundation and is covered with vertical board-and-batten siding, and a cedar-shingled gable roof. For light and ventilation the coop has six four-over-four windows, one at each gable end and four along the east wall, as well as two roof vents. The interior has a concrete floor covered with sand. Unlike most chicken coops the walls were finished with plaster and painted.

Corncrib, ca. 1941, 8'x17'9"

The corncrib is oriented in a north-south direction and stands on large barrel-shaped concrete piers, one at each of the corners, with small intermediary piers supporting the east and west walls. Large squared timber beams support the structure and are topped by a wood floor.

The flooring, like the horizontal wood siding, is laid open-spaced for air circulation. The shed roof has a flat pitch. The crib has only one door which opens on the north side with a large field stone serving as a step.

Granary, ca. 1885, 14'x18' two story

The two-story wood-frame granary stands west of the farmhouse near the edge of the ravine. Eleven masonry piers, including one at the center, elevate the structure. Vertical board-and batten siding covers all of the exterior walls. A cedar-shingled gable roof orients the building on a north-south axis. Each of its two windows has two-over-two lites, one in the north gable wall and two on the south. The door, cross boards attached to vertical boards, faces east towards the farmyard.

a) Barn

b) Corncrib

c) Chicken coop

d) Maple sugar shack

e) Granary, pump house and windmill

a

b

c

d

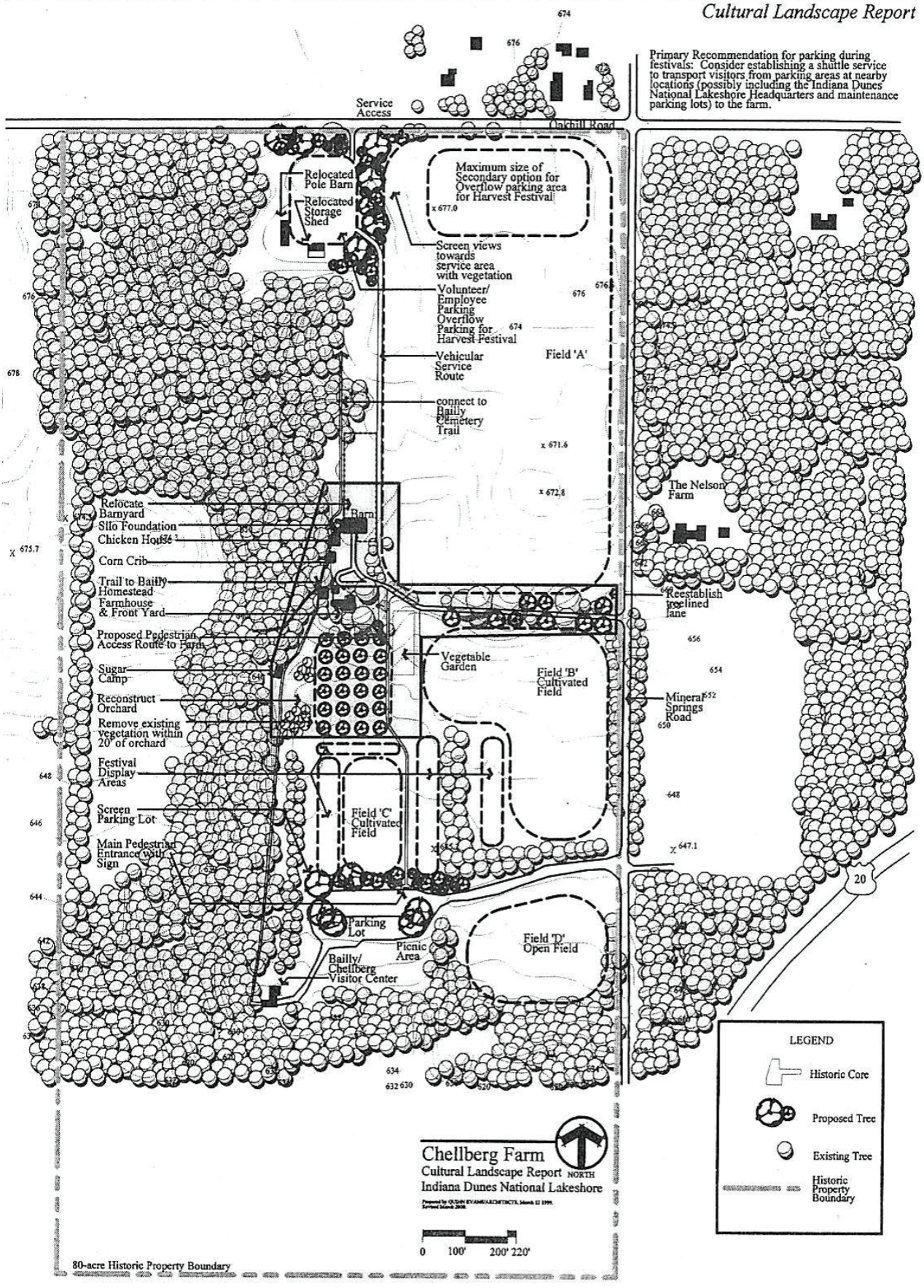
e

Maple sugar shack, ca. 1935.

The sugar shack stands southwest of the farmhouse directly at the edge of the ravine. The gable-roof structure parallels the ravine and stands on a concrete foundation. Its walls are made of handmade concrete blocks. Two four-over-four windows provide light on the east, north, and west walls. Doors into the building include a large double door dominating the south wall, and a single door into the small concrete extension on the east wall. The roof, covered in standing-seam metal, extends south into an overhang one-third again the size of the concrete block portion of the structure. A brick chimney, a galvanized metal chimney, and a cupola ventilator all extend from the roof. Maple sugaring equipment fills the interior space.

Pump house & Windmill, ca. 1980/1905.

The pump house is a reproduction of a previous structure which was removed ca. 1935. The pump house is an open-stud building tapered upward with horizontal wood siding and a wood-shingled pyramidal roof. The door is on the south side. The entire metal windmill frame is the original. It is an Aermometer windmill which likely dated from ca. 1901-1907. The windmill and pump are functional and are available as part of a lease. and position of the house, fields, gardens, and out buildings.


Primary Recommendation for parking during festivals: Consider establishing a shuttle service to transport visitors from parking areas at nearby locations (possibly including the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Headquarters and maintenance parking lots) to the farm.
Service Access
Oakhill Road
Relocated Pole Barn
Relocated Storage Shed
Maximum size of Secondary option for Overflow parking area for Harvest Festival
Screen views towards service area with vegetation
Volunteer/ Employee Parking Overflow Parking for Harvest Festival
Vehicular Service Route
connect to Bailly Cemetery Trail
Field 'A'
Relocate Barnyard
Silo Foundation
Chicken House
Barn
Corn Crib
Trail to Bailly Homestead Farmhouse & Front Yard
Proposed Pedestrian Access Route to Farm
Sugar Camp
Reconstruct Orchard
Remove existing vegetation within 20' of orchard
Festival Display Areas
Screen Parking Lot
Main Pedestrian Entrance with Sign
Vegetable Garden
Field 'B' Cultivated Field
Field 'C' Cultivated Field
Parking Lot
Picnic Area
Bailly/ Chellberg Visitor Center
Field 'D' Open Field
The Nelson Farm
Reestablish lined lane
Mineral Springs Road
20
Chellberg Farm
Cultural Landscape Report
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
NORTH
0 100' 200' 220'
80-acre Historic Property Boundary
LEGEND
Historic Core
Proposed Tree
Existing Tree
Historic Property Boundary

The approximate acreage of each field is:

- Field “A” – +/- 11 acres
- Field “B” – +/- 4 acres
- Field “C” - +/- 1.3 acres
- Field “D” - +/- 1 acre
- Orchard - +/- 1 acre

The use of mechanized farming equipment is permitted with the exception of Field “D”. Field “D” is in an environmentally sensitive area which precludes the use of mechanized farm equipment. Horse-drawn plows are acceptable for use on this field.

Although the vegetable garden has been maintained by NPS staff and volunteers, the NPS will consider proposals for use of the vegetable garden area as part of the overall operation of the farm.

Extensive research exists that identifies the types of crops that were cultivated over the years as well as the types of fruits cultivated in the orchard. None of the fruit trees remain today. There are a large number of maple trees in the ravine to the west of the farm house that are used by the NPS for a maple sugar program each year. The NPS will consider proposals for tapping the maple trees for syrup production and/or for interpretive programs as part of the overall operation of the farm.

Optional Property: Charles P. Nelson House and Site

The C.P. Nelson house and outbuildings are located across Mineral Springs Road from the Chellberg Farm in Westchester Township, Porter County, in an area that was originally referred to as Baileytown. The area is approximately two miles from the shore of Lake Michigan. The Nelson Farm originally dates from ca. 1887. The property currently consists of two nineteenth century buildings and one historic structure. The buildings are located in an open grassy area with mature vegetation surrounding the property. The house is flanked by tall trees and has been extensively landscaped with flowers and shrubs. Wooded areas flank the property on the east and south sides.

The brick farmhouse is one and a half stories tall and was built in 1891, according to the datestone located in the upper story’s rear face. The interior of the original house has remarkable integrity. One gets a strong sense of the kitchen and dining area layout within the one story portion; it appears as if the interior partitions remain unchanged. The only major alterations involved the addition of a bathroom to the second floor. Upstairs there are two bedrooms with a twentieth century bathroom.

Workshop/Shed: Contributing, ca. 1880-1890

This frame agricultural outbuilding is rectangular in shape and is one and a half stories high. It has a gable roof covered with roll asphalt roofing. The older portion of the outbuilding is built of vertical boards. Nails and construction techniques indicate that the workshop was probably built in the nineteenth century. It looks as if the small addition, on the north side, was built with recycled materials and repairs to the main structure were also made with reused wood. There are a variety of doors and windows.

Windmill: Contributing, ca. 1890

The base (pumphouse) of the windmill is rectangular with a rising pyramidal shape to the structure. The base is covered with horizontal wood siding while the roof is gabled. Small fixed windows allow interior light into the pumphouse. The actual metal wind catcher sits on top of the metal pole. A metal ladder rises up the east side of the pole to the wind catcher. According to long-time resident, the windmill has always been located near the house. The Nelson windmill was used as the model for the windmill at the Chellberg Farm located across the road.

II Historic Preservation Considerations

As of the release of this RFP, the buildings are listed in Good condition on the NPS List of Classified Structures. They have been restored and maintained by NPS staff and the barn received a new coat of paint in 2013.

Building Preservation, maintenance and farming/planting plans of the lessees must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and related policies and procedures. (see Appendix B to this RFP). All proposed building Preservation and maintenance plans of selected lessees will be reviewed by the NPS in consultation with the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office to assure consistency with these standards and plans already developed and approved by the NPS and the State Historic Preservation Office. Farming and field use and techniques will be reviewed by NPS for adherence to the Cultural Landscape Plan for the Chellberg Farm (available at www.nps.gov/indu) as well as approved cultivation and integrated pest management.

III Term of the Lease and Rent

36 C.F.R. Part 18 (see Appendix C to the RFP) states that the term of an NPS lease may be up to 60 years but directs that the term be as short as possible, taking into account the financial obligations of the lessee and other relevant factors.

Farm leases are commonly based on two distinct financial factors: the rental value of a residence, and the rental value of agricultural buildings and land (or the productive income from using the buildings and land). For the optional Charles P. Nelson House, the determination of fair market value rent will take into account the lessee's Preservation and/or maintenance costs associated with the leased property, the limitations on the uses of the property, and other relevant considerations.

For the Chellberg Farm outbuildings and fields, a productive component of fair market value rent would be computed as a percentage of gross farm revenue derived from farming and all other sources related to the use of the property. Off-site sources of lessee revenue shall have no bearing on this rental component. This method of determining farm rent is one of several methods commonly referred to in the market place as flexible cash rent.

The precise percentage paid by Midwestern farmers for rental of land varies widely by agricultural enterprise: 30% to 40% of gross revenue in conventional corn and soybean operations and 10% to 20% of gross revenue in chemically intensive fruit/vegetable enterprises. The desired enterprise will more closely resemble the latter, and carries an affirmative responsibility to use only approved sustainable production practices. Hence, the productive component of farm rent will be benchmarked at 10% of gross farm income. That benchmark will be reduced by 1% of gross income for certified organic producers since verification of sustainable production practices will be largely assumed by the certifying agency.

Lessees are expected to be active land stewards, enhancing soil health and productivity through ecologically natural and beneficial practices which are relatively slow. Such practices often require five to ten years to reach (and stabilize at) optimum levels of production. Similarly, lessees are expected to create new retail markets where none currently exist – a process which also typically follows a slow growth curve, requiring five to ten years to achieve a high optimum level should a longer than 10-year lease be required. A lessee's productive component of rent will be discounted during the first ten years of operation: beginning at 5% of gross farm income in year one (4% for certified organic enterprises), and increasing thereafter 0.5% annually until reaching 10% in year ten (9% for certified organic).

IV Proposal Instructions

This request for proposals is advertised on or about September 5, 2014 and closes January 9, 2015.

E-mail or faxed proposals will not be accepted. One Electronic copy (on thumb drive or CD) and six paper copies of each proposal must be submitted (one copy must be the signed original). The copies will be on 8-1/2" x 11" paper, unstapled, and in 3-ring binders.

The NPS will evaluate responsive proposals that offer to further reuse the land and associated building in conformance with the requirements of this RFP.

Each applicant is advised to furnish all the information required by this RFP. Failure to do so may result in a less favorable evaluation or a determination of non-responsiveness. A non-responsive proposal is a proposal that is not timely submitted or fails to meet the material terms and conditions of this RFP.

Proposals must be signed by an official authorized to act on behalf of the applicant. Proposals and modifications must be enclosed in sealed container and submitted in a timely manner. The face of the envelope must show the hour and date specified on the title page of the RFP and the name and address of the applicant. Proposals should be addressed to Concession and Leasing Manager, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 601 Riverfront Dr., Omaha, NE 68102.

Any questions an applicant may have regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance of the submission date in order to allow the NPS sufficient time to reply in writing to the requestor. No NPS employee or agent is authorized to make binding oral commitments of any nature regarding this RFP and/or the proposed leases.

Site visits are recommended to understand the condition of the outbuildings and fields. Applicants should contact Liz McConnell at liz_mcconnell@nps.gov or 219-395-1703 to schedule a site visit.

If applicants wish to have the NPS withhold proprietary financial information from potential disclosure, please refer to Appendix C to this RFP for information regarding use and disclosure of information contained in proposals.

This RFP and the lease to be awarded under it are subject to 36 C.F.R. Part 18. (See Appendix C to this RFP).

Proposals must contain specific detailed development/usage and investment plans and evidence of financial and management capability.

Innovative proposals are welcomed. Proposals should be persuasive as to their feasibility and should reflect a realistic understanding of the properties and their value. The terms and conditions of selected proposals, to the extent acceptable to the NPS, will be incorporated into the final lease.

V Content of Proposals

A submitted proposal for these properties must consist of the following seven sections:

1. Property Use Proposal

2. Proposed Building Preservation and Maintenance Plan

3. Proposed Operations Plan

4. Proposed Environmental Plan

5. Financial Plan

6. Statement of Management Qualifications

7. Proposed Lease Terms and Conditions

1. Property Use Proposal

The property use proposal must specify the proposed use(s) of the out buildings, the proposed use(s) of the fields and grounds, the modifications or alterations to the buildings that will be required for the intended use(s), and the time schedule for completing these modifications or alterations. The proposal should explain how the use(s) are compatible with the preservation, protection and visitor enjoyment of the Park. It should include, if applicable, facts, information, and data that demonstrate that a viable market demand exists for proposed commercial uses.

2. Building Preservation & Maintenance Plan

The Preservation/Maintenance plan is to specify how the applicant intends to carry out the proposal and shall address the Preservation of the building(s) to be leased. The plan shall comprehensively describe the applicant's proposed Preservation work and outline a detailed schedule for program development, preservation, and beginning of operations. The appropriate preliminary plans and drawings should be included in the plan. Applicants should carefully review the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in this regard. (See Appendix B to this RFP) The use of green technologies and LEED standards in the preservation plans is greatly encouraged.

3. Operations Plan

The Operations Plan should describe how the applicant will carry out the proposed use(s). The plan shall include details for all proposal elements including crops, livestock, public programs, sales strategies and marketing. If the operation is to be phased in over a period of years, include details and a timeline from beginning to full production. The plan shall state the desired length of the lease in years, based on the proposed operations.

4. Environmental Plan

The Environmental Plan should describe how the applicant's proposed use(s) of the leased building(s) and fields will be conducted in an environmentally sound manner through, among other programs and actions, energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling. The environmental plan should include integrated pest management and farming practices, including appropriate crop rotations.

5. Financial Plan

The Financial Plan should specify and demonstrate the financial means to implement the proposal. The proposal should not presume the availability of any federal funds or the likelihood of philanthropic income from private sources. The following information should be provided in sufficient detail to allow the NPS to make an informed evaluation of the financial plan:

a. A statement of the financial circumstances of the applicant. The applicant should include a copy of the applicant's audited annual financial statements from its two most recent fiscal years. If a new joint venture or entity is created specifically to respond to this RFP, such audited financial statements from the participating entities should be included if available.

b. A plan describing the projected costs of implementing the applicant's proposal, including without limitation, estimated Preservation and other expenses (for each identified building), expected equity requirements, and the working capital necessary to undertake the proposal and related lease obligations over the proposed life of the lease. The plan should document the source of these funds to the applicant through deposit documentation, financing commitment letters, letters of credit and/or other supporting material.

c. Identification of any affiliation or other relationship between the applicant and any other company, parent company, or subsidiary.

d. If you have ever filed for bankruptcy, had fines and/or liens imposed on you or your business, or other legal proceedings against you or your business, please state the date(s) and nature of such actions. Please include names of employers/businesses/clients, as appropriate, dates, addresses, and phone numbers.

6. Statement of Management Qualifications

The Statement of Management Qualifications should detail the management capability of the applicant to carry out its proposal, as follows:

a. A statement describing the experience and qualifications for managing both the building Preservation and Maintenance, and the proposed building use(s), including, without limitation, experience in Historic Preservation, if any. Relevant experience in carrying out the types of activities stated in the applicant's operation and environmental plans should be included.

b. The name, address, and telephone number of the applicant and the name, address, and telephone number of a representative authorized to act on its behalf.

c. If the applicant is not an individual doing business under his/her own name, the statement of management qualifications must describe the status of the applicant (whether a corporation, a non-profit or charitable institution, a partnership, a business association or a joint venture) and indicate the jurisdiction under whose laws it is organized and operating.

d. Identify the known principals, partners, or co-ventures participating in the project, and the nature and share of each participant's interest in the project.

e. Provide the following information regarding your organization (existing or proposed); additional pages may be used in order to provide complete information:

If a corporation:

- Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
- Organizational Chart
- List of officers and directors

If a Partnership:

- Partnership agreement
- List of partners and their roles

If a sole proprietorship or other form of organization:

- An explanation of organization

7. Statement of Proposed Lease Terms and Conditions

State the applicant's expectations as to the term of the lease and state any particular other lease terms and conditions the applicant would expect its proposed lease to contain. Applicants should make these statements in consideration of the provisions of 36 C.F.R. Part 18 (See Appendix C to this RFP) as well as in consideration of the requirements of this RFP.

VI Criteria for Selection of Lease Proposals

The NPS will evaluate proposals in response to this RFP under the following criteria:
1. The compatibility of the applicant's proposed use of the leased property with the preservation, protection and visitor enjoyment of the Park. Visitor enjoyment of the Park encompasses consideration of the suitability of the proposed use to a national park environment, including, without limitation, activities suitable for family participation and activities compatible with NPS educational and interpretive programs.
2. The compatibility of the applicant's proposal with respect to the properties identified for lease and their proposed uses in comparison to other proposals received. The NPS seeks an overall use of these historic buildings and properties that is economically viable, visually consistent with the period of significance, and programmatically compatible with NPS interpretive themes.
3. The financial capability of the applicant to carry out the terms of the lease, including the financing of building Preservation/maintenance, and intended uses.
4. The experience of the applicant demonstrating its managerial capability to carry out the terms of the proposed lease.
5. The ability and commitment of the applicant to conduct its activities in the Park in an environmentally enhancing manner through, among other programs and actions, energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling.
6. The benefit to the NPS of the financial and other terms and conditions of the proposal, including, without limitation, the scope of Preservation work proposed, the term of the lease, and other proposed lease terms and conditions.
7. The compatibility of the proposal with the historic qualities of the buildings to be leased.

VII Proposal Review and Selection Process

The NPS will review all responsive proposals submitted in response to this RFP through an evaluation panel assisted by technical consultants as appropriate.
It is the intention of the NPS to select prospective lessees from the responsive lease proposals submitted without further submittals or presentations. However, after the submission of proposals and prior to the selection of the best overall proposal(s), the NPS may request from any applicant additional information (in writing and/or through presentations) or written clarification of a proposal.
The responsive proposal determined by the NPS to best meet on an overall basis the evaluation criteria will be selected for negotiation of a lease (subject to other terms and conditions of 36 CFR Part 18). Although each proposal is required to identify the building(s) to which it applies, the NPS may also evaluate proposals with respect to suitable additional buildings.
The NPS will then negotiate the terms of leases with the selected applicant(s), including specific provisions for building Preservation, rent, approvals, permitting, and coordination with the NPS within a time frame established by the NPS.
In the event that lease negotiations with a selected applicant fail to result in a lease of the applicable buildings, the NPS may offer to negotiate a lease for the buildings with additional applicants that submitted responsive proposals under this RFP that the NPS considers to be suitable for the applicable buildings.
In accordance with 36 CFR Part 18, the NPS may choose to reject all proposals and re-solicit or cancel this RFP. For administrative convenience, this RFP collectively refers to all the properties available for lease. However, for purposes of 36 CFR 18.8(d), each lease proposal is considered as submitted applicable only to the building or buildings identified in the proposal.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
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