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Greenbelt Foundation

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Request for Proposals

Value of Nature for Recreation in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Background

In 2012, the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial governments collaborated to undertake a survey measuring Canadians' awareness, participation, and investments in nature-based activities. The results of the Canadian Nature Survey demonstrate the significant contribution nature makes to the lives of Canadians and the Canadian economy. The results have since been widely used in other studies and to inform environmental managers, decision-makers, and others in understanding how society benefits from nature.¹

The Greenbelt Foundation would like to undertake a similar survey in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region in Southern Ontario that will provide information about how much time people are spending in nature, the kinds of activities they engage in, how much money they are spending on nature-based activities, and how they value nature experiences. A survey specifically for the GGH would help provincial and municipal governments, conservation authorities, nature-based businesses, and non-profit and community organizations better understand the value of, and opportunities for, nature for recreation.

This survey seeks to understand residents' perceptions of the various benefits of nature to society, including physical and mental health, ecosystem services, and economic benefits. In 2019 and 2020, the Greenbelt Foundation conducted focus groups and surveys with New Canadians to understand their familiarity of and participation in nature-based recreational and agri-tourism activities in the Greenbelt, as well as how to effectively target and reach New Canadians with information regarding these activities. We also recently completed a tourism strategy for the Greenbelt with a focus on supporting and promoting nature recreation. The results of this survey will contribute to our understanding of the perceived values of nature and help inform our grants, program, and communications priorities.

The need for this information has been made clearer by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is highlighting the physical health, mental health, and other benefits and importance of nature to Canadians. For instance, a study by Parks People found that 82% of Canadians said that parks have become more important to their mental health during COVID-19, and 55% of cities said that park use has increased during COVID-19.² Having concrete evidence of the

¹ Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Governments of Canada. 2014. *2012 Canadian Nature Survey: Awareness, participation, and expenditures in nature-based recreation, conservation, and subsistence activities.*

² Parks People, 2020. *The Canadian City Parks Report.*

recreational value of nature would help build the case for continued protection of and investment in parks and natural areas that support recreational uses.

Purpose

Similar to the 2012 Canadian Nature Survey, the purpose of this research is to collect information about GGH residents' participation in an array of nature-based recreational activities over the last 12 months, including:

- what activities they participated in and why (e.g., hiking, cycling, camping, agritourism, fishing, etc.);
- the amount of time they participated in these activities;
- where they went (e.g., city parks, Provincial parks, specific locations);
- how much money was spent to participate in these activities (e.g., on transportation, accommodation, equipment);
- whether they participated in volunteer activities in natural areas (e.g., litter cleanup, tree planting, invasive species removal, leading interpretive walks, etc.);
- the values and benefits they got from their nature experiences (e.g., improved mental health, connection to place, exercise);
- any barriers they faced with accessing nature (e.g., lack of transportation, money, and/or time, fear of nature, discrimination, etc.); and,
- the ways they obtain information about nature-based recreation.

The survey should also contain demographic questions to identify any differences or similarities in how different demographics experience nature, and to assess whether certain demographics face more barriers than others with accessing nature.

Respondents are invited to comment on the feasibility of asking all or some of the questions related to the topics listed above, and to suggest any other questions that could be included in the survey.

Survey findings will inform the Greenbelt Foundation's current and future research, grant, program, and communication priorities. Findings will also be shared with key Foundation partners and collaboratives, including municipal and provincial governments, conservation authorities, environmental non-profit organizations, community groups, tourism organizations, and nature-based businesses, as well as the public.

Scope of Work

This project will involve conducting an online survey and/or telephone polling with residents in the GGH to achieve the purposes of the research as outlined above. The survey should



achieve at minimum 1000 responses, though the respondent is invited to include options for a higher number of responses. The survey responses should be representative of the demographics of the GGH to attain responses from the diverse geographic locations, ethnicities, places of birth, income levels, etc. in the GGH.

The final deliverables will include a survey questionnaire of around 30-40 questions for review by Foundation staff, a report summarizing the results, and one presentation on the findings to Foundation staff.

Other research activities may be proposed by the consultant.

Project Timeline

The project should be completed by **July 31st, 2021**

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following:

- A description of your understanding of the assignment and the proposed approach;
- A proposed project timeline with key decisions, touchstone meetings, milestones and project completion dates;
- CV for the consultant (and any other team members) that clearly outlines their qualifications relevant to this assignment;
- Three examples of similar projects completed;
- Three references relevant to this assignment;
- A time/task breakdown by project team member (if more than one consultant); and,
- A proposed budget.

The Greenbelt Foundation reserves the right to choose any or none of the vendors responding to this request for proposals.

Any questions and completed proposals should be directed to:

Anna Shortly
Research and Policy Analyst
Greenbelt Foundation
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Proposals must be received by email no later than April 6th, 2021

