



Request for Proposal

2026 China Lake Buffer Plant Bundles Material Supply

Proposal Due Date: March 6, 2026

SECTION I- GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Objective

The Kennebec Water District (KWD) and China Lake Association (CLA) are seeking qualified nurseries or plant suppliers to provide Maine native plant materials for the 2026 China Lake Buffer Bundle Project. This program continues KWD's and CLA's long-standing efforts to protect and improve water quality in China Lake by promoting shoreline stabilization using native vegetation.

This project follows the successful implementation of the 2025 China Lake Buffer Bundle Project, which was completed with support from Maine DEP Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Funding. The 2026 project will be funded primarily through the Maine Drinking Water Program's (DWP) Source Protection Grant; thus multiple proposals must be solicited.

The selected vendor will supply plant materials that are hardy, native to Maine, and well-suited to riparian zone planting to help stabilize soils, reduce erosion, and enhance water quality protection in the China Lake watershed.

B. Questions About and Clarifications of the Request for Proposal

All questions shall be submitted via e-mail on or before February 20, 2026, at 14:00 to Robbie Bickford, Water Quality Manager, rbickford@kennebecwater.org.

All interpretations, corrections, or additions to this RFP will be made only as an official addendum. Any addendum issued by KWD shall become part of the RFP and must be incorporated in the proposal where applicable.

C. Proposal Format

To be considered, each firm must submit a response to this RFP using the format provided in Section III. Each proposal must remain valid for at least ninety days from the due date of this RFP.

D. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Experience supplying native, riparian-suitable plant species in Maine.
- Availability and quality of proposed species.
- Pricing and delivery capabilities.
- Demonstrated understanding of shoreline stabilization and native habitat restoration goals.

KWD reserves the right to interview any selected respondents to clarify proposals and qualifications before making a final selection.

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated using a point system as shown in Section III. A selection committee comprised of staff from KWD will complete the evaluation.

E. Proposal Submission

All proposals are due and must be submitted by e-mail to the KWD on or before March 6, 2026, at 14:00 (local time).

Each respondent must submit:

- **One digital copy of the proposal attached to an email as one file in PDF format**

Proposals submitted must contain the subject line: “2026 China Lake Buffer Plant Bundles Material Supply” followed by the vendor’s name.

Proposals must be sent to: rbickford@kennebecwater.org

All proposals received on or before the due date will be opened and recorded on the due date. No immediate decisions will be rendered.

KWD will not be liable to any vendor for any unforeseen circumstances or delivery delays. Vendors are responsible for submission of their proposal. Additional time will not be granted to a single vendor. However, additional time may be granted to all vendors at the discretion of KWD.

F. Disclosures

Under the Freedom of Access Act, KWD is obligated to permit review of its files, if requested by others. All information in a vendor’s proposal is subject to disclosure under this provision. This act also provides for a complete disclosure of contracts and attachments thereto.

G. Schedule

The following is the schedule for this RFP process:

Activity/Event	Anticipated Date
Written Question Deadline	February 20, 2026 @ 14:00
Proposal Due Date	March 6, 2026 @ 14:00

The above schedule is for information purposes only and is subject to change at KWD’s discretion.

H. Reservation of Rights

1. KWD reserves the right in its sole and absolute discretion to accept or reject any or all proposals, or alternative proposals, in whole or in part, with or without cause.
2. KWD reserves the right to waive, or not waive, informalities or irregularities in terms or conditions of any proposal if determined by KWD to be in its best interest.
3. KWD reserves the right to request additional information from any or all vendors.
4. KWD reserves the right to reject any proposal that it determines to be unresponsive and deficient in any of the information requested within RFP.

5. KWD reserves the right to determine whether the scope of the project will be entirely as described in the RFP, a portion of the scope, or a revised scope be implemented.
6. KWD reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm of the conditions contained in this RFP.

SECTION II - SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Background

The China Lake Buffer Bundle Program is a collaborative initiative led by KWD and the China Lake Association to promote lake protection through the use of native vegetation at shoreline properties. Participating landowners receive pre-bundled sets of native plants, designed to stabilize soils, filter runoff, and enhance wildlife habitat.

The 2025 program successfully distributed 52 bundles funded through DEP Section 319 Grant support, Kennebec Savings Bank, and KWD. The 2026 program, primarily funded through the Maine DWP Source Protection Grant, will continue these efforts to promote sustainable shoreline management within the China Lake watershed.

B. Scope of Services

The selected vendor will:

1. Provide Plant Materials:
 - a. Supply 50 complete native plant bundles, in good condition and each including a diverse mix of hardy, Maine-native plants, shrubs, and small trees appropriate for riparian stabilization and buffer planting.
 - b. Each bundle should contain a minimum of 15 individual plants and represent a retail value of approximately \$200–\$250.
 - c. Species must be native to Maine and proven to thrive in a variety of shoreline conditions.
 - d. Species diversity and ecological benefit (e.g., deep-rooting, pollinator-friendly) are highly valued.
2. Prepare and Package Bundles
 - a. Clearly label each individual plant.
 - b. Label and divide plants into individual bundles either prior to or upon delivery.
3. Coordinate Delivery
 - a. Deliver all plant to: Kennebec Water District Water Treatment Plant (462 Main St, Vassalboro ME 04989)
 - b. Estimated Delivery Date: June 2026 (exact date to be coordinated with KWD staff).
4. Provide Availability and Substitutions
 - a. Vendors should note plant availability and recommend equivalent substitutions for species that may be difficult to source at the time of delivery.
5. Provide an itemized invoice at the time of delivery
 - a. KWD and CLA are Maine Sales Tax exempt entities
 - b. Payment will be rendered within 30 days of invoice

SECTION III - MINIMUM INFORMATION REQUIRED

A. Proposal Format

Vendors should organize proposals into the following sections:

1. Company Information
 - a. Full name, address, and contact information.
 - b. Description of business, years in operation, and relevant experience.
2. Proposed Plant List

- a. Species list, quantities, pot sizes, and individual plant pricing.
 - b. Breakdown of the plants to be provided in each bundle.
 - c. Identify any proposed substitutions or availability notes.
3. Pricing and Delivery Plan
 - a. Total cost for 50 bundles.
 - b. Delivery method and confirmation of June 2026 timeline.
4. References
 - a. If possible, provide two references for orders of similar scale.

SECTION IV – PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND FINAL SCOPE

A. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Plant suitability and diversity (20 points)
- Vendor experience and capacity (30 points)
- Pricing and delivery reliability (50 points)

KWD may request clarification or revisions before final award. Final decisions will consider both cost-effectiveness and alignment with the program's ecological objectives.