



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



Outdoor Discovery Center
By: Wikwemikong Development Commission

Date of Issue: January 30, 2026

Proposal Deadline: February 27, 2026, by 4:00 p.m.

1.0 Project Overview

The Wikwemikong Development Commission is seeking a final design and implementation of the new Outdoor Discovery Centre (“the project”) located within Point Grondine Park, owned and operated by Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory in Ontario along the shores of Georgian Bay in Lake Huron. The design will be based on and feature designated elements of the 2022 conceptual design. It is the intent of Wikwemikong Development Commission that the final design and implementation of the project embody the *two eyed seeing philosophy*, integrating Anishinaabe teachings, stewardship principles and Western knowledge to create a land based-learning space that supports community, education, culture and tourism. The Discovery Centre will become a signature outdoor Anishinaabe teaching and day-use experience for locals, schools and park users of all ages. The space will encapsulate Anishinaabe place-keeping to promote cultural reclamation and Anishinaabe-led knowledge sharing. The space will encapsulate a culturally authentic and sensitive area that reflects the local and great lakes history, governance, including Treaty history and Indigenous rights contextualization culture and connection to this traditional territory of the Odawa of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory.

2.0 Rationale

As part of our Point Grondine Park Business Plan, one of the pillars identified is tourist engagement. To complement the trend of grassroots tourism development, communities

and municipalities are recognizing the contribution of culture to sense of place, quality of life and community and economic prosperity through a process called ‘cultural planning’. Led by local governments, cultural planning involves community engagement to identify and leverage a community’s cultural resources, strengthen them, and integrate them into local planning and decision-making. We are also seeing this as a global trend toward more place-based approaches to planning and development that highlight the pillars of economic prosperity, social equity, environmental responsibility, and cultural vitality.

3.0 Background

In 2014, Wikwemikong Tourism, a department of Wikwemikong Development Commission, developed a five-year Tourism Strategy that outlined key pillars for development including Product Development. As a result, the first Point Grondine Park Business Plan was developed in 2014. Since that time, the Business Plan has been updated in 2019 and again in 2021 to reflect evolving economic conditions, including changes arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Point Grondine Park opened its first phase in 2016 with the launch of the backcountry wilderness park featuring hiking trails, backcountry routes, and interior camping. In 2024, a soft opening of the Point Grondine Resort and Campground was initiated, including twelve drive-in campground sites, and the park’s first Cabin and a temporary gatehouse.

In 2025, the park reached another major milestone with the opening of the Mahiingan Miikan Lake access road and associated waterfront development. The park will begin its final phases of construction in 2026, with a full park opening anticipated in 2027–2028.

Due in large part to the Wikwemikong Development Commission otherwise operating as Enaadmaagehjik and its strong Tourism Strategy, Wiikwemkoong has grown to become a leader in Indigenous Tourism, receiving provincial and national accolades including the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada 2023 Original Award as Exceptional Leader in Indigenous Tourism in Canada.

4.0 Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory

Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve is undertaking a name change to what is linguistically more familiar as Wiikwemkoong and, or Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, and may also be referenced as Wiikwemkoong Indian Reserve. The name change comes as Wiikwemikoong redefines our history and position under Gchi Naaknigewin, our Constitution.

Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve (WUIR) (Figure 1) is one of 133 First Nation communities within the province of Ontario. Wiikwemkoong is home to a membership of approximately 9,600 with about 45% resident in the community.



Figure 1: Location of Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve

Located on the eastern peninsula of Manitoulin Island, Wikwemikong spans over 42,000 hectares with 220 kilometers of prime Georgian Bay shoreline. Our large land base is ideal for potential commercial, industrial, agricultural, aquaculture, renewable energy, and tourism development.

Wiikwemkoong is surrounded by Lake Huron, the Georgian Coast, and the North Channel. Lake Huron is central to all the great lakes and has been historically a place of settlement and trade. In the 1800's the Jesuits recorded the people of Wiikwemkoong trading over 500,000 pounds of maple sugar to visiting schooners and steam ships as far away as Cleveland, Ohio.

In addition to our primary location on Manitoulin Island, Wikwemikong's land base extends to 14,000 hectares of scenic undeveloped land at Point Grondine Park, an area nestled between the Killarney and French River Provincial Parks. Within Point Grondine, the Wikwemikong Development Commission's tourism department has been investing and building out the Point Grondine Park.

5.0 Wikwemikong Development Commission

Enaadmaagehjik (Wikwemikong Development Commission) is a non-profit corporation, which is incorporated without share capital. It operates as the Economic Development branch of the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory (WUT). Our mandate is to develop the natural and human resources for WUT, thereby enhancing the socio-economic conditions and quality of life for the Wiikwemikoong membership.

As part of the Strategic and Business Plan, Enaadmaagehjik is to identify economic opportunities for the community and members. Within the strategic plan, tourism is a one of four priority areas of focus for the community.

6.0 Scope of Work and Deliverables

The Wikwemikong Development Commission is seeking an architectural and landscape design and construction administration service to implement the project. The project scope also includes the provision of landscaping and hardscape design, shade structures, 120 V and low-voltage electrical and lighting installation.

While the intent of the project is to be installed while minimizing ground, excavation, and tree canopy disturbance. A key feature will include an amphitheater-like seating element that may require civil, geotechnical and structural engineering services. Proponents shall be prepared to include these services in their project delivery. The project delivery model is design -bid-build. The approximate limit(s) of construction is a two-acre parcel.

7.0 Existing Status of Conceptual Plan

The existing Conceptual Design provided is included as “Attachment 1”. Key design features from the Conceptual Design to be included in the project are:

- The proposed limits of development
- The proposed orientation of the amphitheater structure
- The proposed inclusion of educational nodes
- The proposed inclusion of a foot path or foot paths to connect the various design features
- The proposed placement of the privy(s).
- Consideration of the orientation of the equinoxes and solstice and cardinal directions.

8.0 Key Design Considerations:

- Incorporate Anishinaabe cultural installations to be utilized at nodes for the purpose of land-based learning including but not limited to Traditional harvesting space for wild game, fish, plants and medicines, dwellings and a culinary teaching space. Design elements should consider a user’s experience that considers engaging with natural world from Anishinaabe perspective.
- Leave net positive cumulative environmental and social impacts to the area upon completion and utilization of sustainable, local and, or culturally meaningful materials in the final design.
- Be utilized as an outdoor classroom environment for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous student groups and tourists.
- Minimize the amount of vegetative and tree canopy disturbance for installation.
- Utilize wayfinding and other interactive methods to promote learning of Indigenous world views for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and tourists.
- Inclusion of Community Priorities, i.e. employment, identification of resources for economic opportunity.
- Inclusion of Community Values, .e. protection of natural resources, air, water, land, fish habitat
- Consideration of stewardship values to the land

- Utilize community engagement process to reveal biological, cultural, social, economic and cultural factors which have the impact of the spatial environment to be considered for incorporation into architectural and landscape elements in the final design.

8.1 Key Design Components

- Unique children's playground incorporating natural features and materials for natural, innovative play.
- Amphitheatre-like installation to host up to fifty (50) adults.
- Innovative shade structures that enhance sustainability are designed for longevity and employ eco-friendly materials.
- A footpath connecting the existing parking lot to the amphitheater installation and existing nodes.
- The existing Conception Design "Attachment" depicts the approximate placement and alignment of these features.

9.0 Scope of Work

Proponents should be prepared to provide the following services:

9.1 Project Management

The Proponent will prepare the agenda and meeting notes for each monthly meeting. The Proponent will collaborate closely with the Wikwemikong Development Commission on an ongoing basis for the duration of the contract on project planning and management. The Proponent will develop an agenda and participate virtually in one virtual kick-off meeting.

Proponent is expected to participate in monthly status update meetings with the project team.

9.2 Conceptual Design and Renderings

Conceptual Design renderings for review by Wikwemikong Development Commission. The Wikwemikong Development Commission will determine the preferred Conceptual Design for the development of the remaining design deliverables. Conceptual Design renderings are intended to be utilized by Wikwemikong Development Commission for the purposes of marketing and internal communications and reporting.

9.3 Design Deliverables

A highly detailed, trade-based cost breakdown using 100% complete construction drawings issued for Construction. Provide an accurate budget (+5-10%) for tendering, balancing risk and budget before construction, and requiring full mechanical and structural details for final approval and contractor reconciliation.

Complete one (1) local topographic survey.

Provide two (2) Conceptual Design renderings to Wikwemikong Development Commission to determine the Preferred Conceptual Design with the completion of the 30% Conceptual Design drawings.

Provide one (1) set each of 30-60-90 Design drawings with trade-specific breakdowns, each based on the preferred Conceptual Design.

Provide one (1) set of Design renderings with 90% Near-Final Design drawings

Prepare one (1) set of Draft Final Design drawings and specifications for review by Owner with a Pre-tender Estimate.

Provide one (1) set of Final Design Issued for Construction with trade-specific breakdowns with Final Class A estimate and specifications for tendering.

Provide one (1) set of Design Renderings with the Final Design Issued for Construction drawings.

Provide one (1) set of As-Built-Drawings.

9.4 Construction Maximum Upset Fee

Wikwemikong Development Commission will provide the successful Proponent with a Maximum Upset Fee for the Class A.

9.5 Construction and Construction Support

Proponent is expected to manage the tendering of the project design for implementation.

Proponent will provide Construction Administration

Wikwemikong Development Commission will be available to assist in identifying available community-based subcontractors and vendors

Proponents will ensure that a minimum of 10% of the contract value utilizes Indigenous-owned subcontractors, vendors or trade-skilled people during the construction of the project.

10.0 Proposal Requirements

Proponents should have experience working with Indigenous groups and will be required to meet with Point Grondine Park Technical Working Group.

The purpose of the Technical Working Group will be to assess the historical and cultural uses and importance of the site, as well as cultural understandings to be utilized in architectural elements, landscaping features, or the multipurpose use of various project nodes. Proponents are strongly encouraged to consider four dimensions in the final design and how the site is contextualized with the rest of the Point Grondine Park.

The Point Grondine Park Technical Working Group will assist with the planning and design integration to ensure cultural authenticity, environmental stewardship and community benefit. Proponents are strongly encouraged to consider four dimensions in the final design and how the site is contextualized with the rest of the Point Grondine Park.

All information gathered during the course of the project, and the resulting reports and presentations become the property of WDC.

The Proponent will address, in sequence, the following mandatory items in their proposal:

- Background information on your company. The profile should include the company's legal name and indicate the principal business and corporate directorships of the members. The profile should also include a statement of the management, ownership, and history of the company.
- Provide resume(s) of the individual service providers and staff leads for the project.
- Provide at least three references from appropriate clientele for projects conducted of comparable size and scope. For each reference, provide the contact's name, phone number, e-mail address, description of project, project timeframe, approximate budget, and results achieved.
- Portfolios of similar work.
- Include a number of project team meetings, detailed work plan and timeframe that identifies the proposed methods to be used in addressing the objectives and deliverables of the project.
- Provide a detailed budget with estimated days, cost per day, payment terms, and all anticipated expenses.
- Complete and attach a Non-Disclosure Agreement (to be provided to the successful proponent).

10.1 Evaluation of Proposals

All proposals will be evaluated upon the following criteria. All criteria to be rated are to be considered mandatory for the proposal to be considered compliant.

All decisions to the degree on which a proposal meets the requirements of this RFP are the sole judgment of the Wikwemikong Development Commission.

Weight Factors	Cover Letter
25%	Company Qualification and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide relevant company expertise, experience, references on up to 3 recent projects of similar size, scope, and nature to the Project.• Preference will be given to Proponents who can demonstrate previous experience with architectural and landscape architectural projects in support of an Indigenous community and/or with an Indigenous-led design process.• Provide sufficient information to understand and evaluate relevant experience, qualifications, and competencies, etc. of the proposed project staff. Proponents should demonstrate how they will structure their own team to meet the Scope of Work. Please include an organizational chart of the proposed project team with key team members identified. For each key team member, provide their experience and relationships with First Nations.

	If applicable, please list relevant sub-consultants, sub-contractors and suppliers including their roles, expertise, experience, reference and the Proponent's history with each.
25%	<p>Proposed Project Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sufficient information to understand and evaluate roles, relevant experience, qualifications, and competencies, etc. of the proposed project staff. Proponents should demonstrate how they will structure their own team to meet the Scope of Work. Please include an organizational chart of the proposed project team with key team members identified. For each key team member, provide their experience and relationships with First Nations. Explain the nature of any project these key team members have worked on and their project experience in relation to these First Nations. Consideration will be given for identified Indigenous personnel on the project team. Provide evidence of relevant experience of the proposed project staff on projects of similar size, scope and nature to the Services, including associated references and their current contact information.
20%	<p>Project Work Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The successful Proponent shall not change key team members without prior written permission from the WDC; however, such permission will not be unreasonably withheld. Proposed realistic timeframes, allocation of personnel to tasks and effort. Describe your approach to project management including quality control, cost control, schedule control, and construction administration capacity.
15%	<p>Financial Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a clearly delineated project budget for all proposed activities, including travel, number of meetings required and meeting costs associated with the project development.
10%	<p>Written Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All project requirements addressed. Overall completeness and clarity of proposal.
5%	Identification of challenges and mitigation strategy

10.0 Project Schedule: Key Milestone Dates

Activity	Scheduled Date
Request for Proposals Issued	Friday, January 30, 2026
Request for Information Due Date	Monday, February 13, 2026
Successful Proponent Selection Notification	Friday, March 13, 2026
Contract Signing	Friday, March 23, 2026

Integrated Design Plan Due	Monday, June 1, 2026
Final Discovery Centre Design Package	Thursday, July 2, 2026
Prepare and Administer Tender Packages for Construction	Friday, July 17, 2026
Award Contract and Construction Start Date	Monday, September 7, 2026
Substantial Completion Review with WDC	Friday, November 6, 2026
Construction Completion	Friday, December 11, 2026
As-Built Drawings Due	Friday, January 8, 2027

11.0 Privacy, Confidentiality Agreement and Term Definition

In this procurement context, the terminology reflects a specific progression of status for an entity:

- **Proponent:** A candidate currently bidding on the Request for Proposal (RFP).
- **Preferred Proponent:** The top-ranked candidate selected to enter final negotiations.
- **Consultant:** The final party that has signed the formal legal agreement with the Wikwemikong Development Commission, assuming all contractual liability.

This structure ensures a clear distinction between a bidder, a negotiator, and a contracted service provider.

All proposals and supporting material will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating the proposal for selection and may be disclosed by the WDC to third party references, partners, funders or advisors as part of the approval and due diligence process.

All proposals and supporting materials shall become the property of the WDC and the WDC shall not be required to return the proposal or any supporting material.

A Non-Disclosure Agreement will be signed and submitted prior to contracting services.

12.0 General

No payment will be made to Proponents for work related to and material supplied in the preparation and presentation of the proposal submitted in response to this RFP.

WDC Reserves the Right to:

- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification to the Proponent.
- Adjust or correct cost or cost figures with the concurrence of the Proponent if errors exist and can be documented to the satisfaction of the WDC.
- Request clarification or further information or both, from one or more Proponent's after closing without becoming obligated to offer the same opportunity, to all Proponents. Enter into negotiations with one or more Proponents without being obligated to negotiate with or offer the same to all Proponents.

Proponents are advised, however, to submit a complete offer as their bid. Any waiver, clarification or negotiation will not be considered as an opportunity for Proponents to correct errors in their bids.

13.0 Contract

Upon selecting the successful proposal, WDC expects to sign a contract with the Proponent that establishes terms, including, but not limited to project scope; schedule of activities and methodology; content of the final report; milestone and reporting dates; budget; and payment schedule.

All reports draft and final, become the property of the WDC. The successful Proponent must agree to the terms and conditions set out by the WDC.

14.0 Contacts

All inquiries and questions concerning this Request for Proposals should be directed in writing to:

Luke Wassegijig
Tourism Manager
2102 Wikwemikong Way
Wikwemikong, ON P0P 2J0
Tel: 705 859- 3477
Fax: 705 859 2000
Email: lwassegijig@wikydevcom.ca

15.0 Proposal Submission

One (1) signed original could be delivered in a sealed package no later than 4:00 p.m. on February 27, 2026. Alternately, electronic copy in PDF format should also be forwarded to lwassegijig@wikydevcom.ca and mlodjig@wikydevcom.ca

Any proposal that is received by the WDC after the closing date and time will be rejected and returned unopened. It is the Proponent's responsibility to ensure delivery of proposal by the stated date. No exceptions will be made.