



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE



**Request for**  
**Expression of Interest**

**Repurposing of**  
**Rockport Game Farm**  
**Mansfield Township, Warren County**

**Release Date:** Thursday, January 10, 2019

**Inspection Date:** Tuesday, January 29, 2019 at 11 a.m.

**Submission Due Date:** Tuesday, February 26, 2019

## **1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Purpose and Intent**

This Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) is issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department), Division of Fish and Wildlife (Division), on behalf of the State of New Jersey. The purpose of this RFEI is to solicit information from individuals or organizations outlining the possible uses of the former Rockport Game Farm, located at 700 Rockport Road, Hackettstown (Mansfield Township), Warren County, New Jersey. The former Rockport Game Farm site is shown on the map attached hereto as Exhibit A (below).

It is the goal of the Department to eventually bid out the former Rockport Game Farm site for agricultural purposes to a bidder that can improve and utilize the site while providing lease revenue to the Department. The Department welcomes the use of the Rockport Game Farm site for diverse uses. Such uses must not cause detrimental environmental impacts. The Department has been approached by various individuals who have expressed an interest in the site. However, the Department needs additional information about the types of activities that would be successful and how those activities would generate revenue before proceeding with a Request for Proposal. Ideas the Department are open to include, but are not limited to, a poultry-raising facility, farm, nursery, or a vineyard. Individuals are encouraged to submit an idea for the use of the entire property and/or ideas for multiple uses of the property if such uses are in keeping with the property as a rural, limited development area and provide an opportunity to generate revenue for the Department.

### **1.2 Background**

The Rockport Game Farm is an approximately 160-acre facility (within the 1,380-acre Rockport Wildlife Management Area), identified as parts of Block 1201, Lots 1 and 18, located in Mansfield Township, Warren County, and is within minutes of downtown Hackettstown. Rockport was formerly operated by the Division as a pheasant rearing facility. Acquisition of the production area began in 1912 and was completed by 1925. The monies the Department used to purchase the farm were from non-restricted funds and there are no restrictions on the use of the property due to the funding source. The first release of Rockport pheasants was made in 1923. Since 1923 over 2 million pheasants have been raised at Rockport. In 2004, the Rockport Game Farm and surrounding area became subject to the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act). See [www.nj.gov/njhighlands/act/](http://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/act/) for information about the Highlands Act, its regulations, and interactive maps. It is up to the Responders to this RFEI to become familiar with the Highlands Act and how the law may or may not factor into the response to this RFEI.

The Department has determined that the Rockport Game Farm is to no longer be used to rear pheasants. Because of recent changes in requirements in the USDA National Poultry Improvement Plan in response to Avian Influenza, the raising of pheasants would require costly

measures that the Division simply cannot afford. Recognizing the challenge ahead, the New Jersey Fish and Game Council voted in February 2018 to expand the purchase of adult pheasants to satisfy 100% of the birds needed for the stocking program. As a result, pheasants will no longer be reared at the Rockport Game Farm beginning in 2019.

The property that is available for limited development and use, otherwise known as the Operation Area, includes the approximately 160 acre Rockport Game Farm and the following permanent or semi-permanent buildings and outbuildings: barn and garage (with electricity service) located at 700 Rockport Road (Parcel A on Exhibit A and as shown in Exhibit B, below), and the pheasant rearing buildings, pens, Shack, Small and Large Houses, silos, and other facilities located at 250 Hazen Road (Parcel B on Exhibit A and as shown in Exhibit C, below). In 2010 an incubation and brooder building, the Large House, was constructed complementing the existing brooder building, the Small House, which was built after the 1994 tornado. In 2013, a new catch building was erected. There are 36 acres under pen, mostly top netting but some with hard wire tops. Included with the property are brooder runs extending from each brooder building and runways connecting the brooder houses to the range pens and the range pens to the catch building. The range pens are each about one acre in size. Responders may suggest that the various buildings and outbuildings be used, remodeled, or demolished as a part of their submissions.

In addition to the buildings, pens, etc. there are two streams running through the property which may affect a responder's submission..

Responders should note that the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages on Division lands is prohibited. The Division may consider relaxing this rule if a bidder can show the potential for significant revenue. Also, any proposals to raise poultry or game birds on this site must adhere to the requirements of the USDA National Poultry Improvement Plan.

### **1.2.1 Structures, Facilities, and Parking**

As stated above, there are permanent or semi-permanent buildings, outbuildings, and structures at the Rockport Game Farm site on the Rockport Road side (see Exhibit B, below) and the Hazen Road side (see Exhibit C, below). The Rockport Road side consists of approximately 60 acres of land. The Hazen Road side consists of approximately 100 acres. One or both of these areas can be included in a responder's proposal. Utilizing both areas in a single proposal is not a requirement. Responders should know that if the Department receives a proposal for one part of the property and not the other, the Department may release a Request for Proposal that separates the lots into two Operation Areas in order to maximize the use of the property and the revenue generated to the Department.

On the Rockport Road side of the Operation Area, there is a large barn and a garage with a tool room and old incubator room in the basement. Although the garage has electricity, it will have to be separately metered from the Division's Office building/residence which is not a part of the Operation Area or this RFEI. There is an asphalt parking area in the back and the front of the barn with enough space for approximately 10 to 15 cars total. The driveway also goes down to a grass parking lot next to the old pens (since removed) with enough space for 8 to 10 cars. There is a small shed on the property which is also available for use.

There are working railroad tracks separating the Rockport Road side from the Hazen Road side and which the Department does not own. The tracks are operated by Norfolk Southern Railway. A monument to the Train Wreck of 1925 is located on the western corner, where Hazen Road crosses the railroad track. A small garden and a brass plaque, laid on the 70th anniversary of the wreck, commemorate the site.

On the Hazen Road side, there is a front gate with a hardstone driveway leading into the 36-acres under pen, and two small parking lots to the south of the catch building with enough space for a total of 10 cars. The Operation Area includes the Shack, used as the employee breakroom, the Large House, also known as the western brooder house, and the Small House. Both the Shack and the Large House have functioning bathrooms. The Large House is 240' x 30' including a 240' x 12' hallway with computer controls and vitamin/medicine chemilizer medicator. The Larger House also has an egg cooling room, an incubator room holding 4 Nature Form incubators/hatchers, an egg sorting/trayover/hatching count room, a mechanical room, and a washroom. The Small House is 200' x 29.5' and has a work area with sink and computer controls in the middle of the building. The Hazen Road side has a non-secure perimeter fence running the length of the road footage on Hazen Road and about 36 total acres of range pens, which includes 32 acres under netting, 2 acres under hard wire, and 2 acres (200' x 30' and 240' x 30') of brooder pens under hard wire.

Both the Large and the Small Houses contain automatic feeding and watering systems and use natural gas hovers for heating.

The other buildings include a 200' x 30' Catch Building, a pole barn with enclosed tool room, and nine feed silos. The silos include four at ten-ton, three at six-ton, one at nine-ton, and one five-ton.

The Operation Area has well-water as the water source; however, it is not potable. A new well serves the Hazen Road side including the Large House whereas an old well near the Shack serves the Shack, Small House, Catch building, and the pens. Although the Rockport Road side has a separate well and septic system, it is not available as they only serve the Office building/residence which is not a part of the Operation Area.

### **1.3 INSPECTION DATE**

The Department has determined that the Rockport Game Farm will be available for inspection on Tuesday, January 29, 2019 at 11 a.m. Potential responders shall meet at the Hazen Road side Shack. Potential responders should call (609) 292-6685 prior to January 29<sup>th</sup> and let the secretary know that the responder will be attending the inspection. **If the Department receives no calls, the Department reserves the right to cancel the inspection without further notice to anyone.**

In case of inclement weather, the Department will notify those persons who called the above number prior to January 29<sup>th</sup> of a change in the inspection date.

## 2.0 REQUIRED INFORMATION

All informational requests must detail specific ideas, address the Highlands Act and stream issues, and provide enough detail about the activity or activities that the Department can make a decision about what use or uses the Department will include when issuing a Request for Proposal. Such information should include the type of activity or activities anticipated to take place at the Operation Area, the hours and days of operation, what an operator would need to conduct such activity (buildings, equipment, etc.) including the use, remodeling, or demolition of existing buildings, approximately how much revenue such activity would generate for the operator, information related to how the business would operate, and other ideas related to the activity the Department should consider.

**In addition to providing any initial ideas regarding the future operation of Rockport Game Farm Operation Area, please provide the following information:**

1. Please provide a brief description of your mission.
2. Please list and provide additional information, including marketing materials, regarding other types of amenities or services your company manages or provides.
3. Has your company ever held a government contract to manage a government facility/asset? If yes, please provide the name of the state(s).
4. Does your company provide services at a single facility or at multiple venues? Does your company contract with a single client or multiple clients?
5. Please describe your company's experience with the activity idea(s) presented by your company.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Documents submitted in response to this RFI are subject to public disclosure. A responder may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to the Open Public Records Act found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1 or the common law Right to Know, when the responder has a good faith legal and or factual basis for such assertion. The Department reserves the right to make the determination as to what is proprietary or confidential and will advise the responder accordingly. The location in the response of any such designation should be clearly stated in a cover letter. The Department will not honor any attempt by a responder to designate its entire proposal as proprietary or confidential and/or to claim copyright protection for its entire response. In the event of any challenge to the responder's assertion of confidentiality with which the Department does not concur, the responder shall be notified and shall be solely responsible for defending its designation. The submittals shall become the property of the Department upon submission.

## ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Department's analysis and evaluation process may include direct meetings with some or all respondents.

**PROPOSAL DUE DATE**

All proposals must be submitted in writing no later than 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 26, 2019, and be mailed to the attention of Carole Stanko at:

**NJ Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Mail Code: 501-03  
PO Box 420  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420**

EXHIBIT A



EXHIBIT B



EXHIBIT C

