Minnesota Dragonfly Society
Online Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2017

Online Facebook vote to hire a database contractor, given the two proposals we received. The vote was closed at 8pm on March 29th.

Copied from Facebook 3/31/17

Angela Isackson with Jacki Morrison and 12 others.
March 26 at 8:56pm

Online MDS Board Member discussion, open now

MDS received two responses to apply as contractors for our Data Management Planning and Implementation RFP. All board members have received those responses along with a scoring evaluation sheet to help determine our best fit.

The two proposals received:

Crystal Boyd, currently works for the MN DNR and serves on the MDS board

Roger Rohrbach (Nitid Bit, LLC), a five person, San Francisco-based software development consultancy.

The Request for Proposals was posted on SEEK, UpWork, and shared on Facebook to both the MDS and WDS. Emails were also sent throughout the University of Minnesota through known contacts. The RFP was also sent directly to individuals who declined to submit a proposal:
Dave Furth was too busy to take on another project.
Sandra Hunt-von Arb was too busy to take on another project.

Please post any questions, concerns, or discussion within this thread.

👍 Like   💬 Comment

✔ Seen by 28

Curt Oien My 2 cents.

Past Perfect is the "world's leader in collection and contact management software. Used by over 10,000 museums."

The U of M insect collection is a museum.

Crystal does great work and is very dependable. I have no doubt that she can accomplish anything that she wants to do and that she will do it very well.

She has a history of working with the DNR data people and also with Ralph and Robin at the U of M insect collection. She is familiar with Odonata Central and how it works.

She is here, with us, and will be much more convenient to work with than someone from out of state. She will be able to easily see the specimens and data that we have and understand anything that might come up.

In addition to working with the data, she cares about insects and the mission behind the data and will be motivated to see that the job is done right.

I vote to hire Crystal.

Like · Reply · 👍 2 · March 26 at 9:57pm · Edited

∧ Hide 11 Replies

Tina Morey I am trying to reconcile the comments made by Nitid regarding the data sharing limitations of Past Perfect. Does anyone share this concern?

Like · Reply · March 29 at 6:34am

Curt Oien As a member of the research committee, Crystal decided on Past Perfect. She knows that all our data needs to be available to the public, U of M insect collection, DNR, and Odonata Central. With her experience of being in charge of the bees for the DNR and those specimens at the U of M, I trust that she knows what she is talking about.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:10am

Curt Oien She has been talking to the Data people at the DNR and also to Ralph and Robin at the U of M.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:12am

Curt Oien There was also something about Past Perfect being used by the Historical Society and the funding we are hoping to get with the second grant. Not sure exactly what that is.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:17am

Tina Morey I remember that too. I just want to make certain we aren't limiting our capabilities in the future.

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · March 29 at 8:20am

Curt Oien I am not exactly sure what she was doing but I know that Crystal was working a lot at a computer in the U of M insect collection setting up all the data stuff for the DNR bees.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:20am

Curt Oien I agree that we do not want to have this be limited in the future but I trust Crystal. I know there was talk about what software will be supported in the future and stuff like that. It is all above my head. For the last four years we have been using something I made in Excel with drop down menus for the all the work we have been doing up north.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:26am

Curt Oien It sounded like it is easy for a person that knows what they are doing to pull the data out of a program like this and put it into something like Excel and to move it to other places. Again, this is all above my head.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:29am

Curt Oien Drop downs was a big thing. Not having them was one of the reasons the MOSP data got so messed up. Ron said something about an inventory at a museum that got all complicated because people called stuff by different names.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:32am

Tina Morey I don't have experience either. Which is why the comment was a "red flag" for me. I wish I had pros/cons so I could make an informed decision. I too trust Crystal as an expert.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:34am

Curt Oien It would have been nice if we could have sat down with everyone and had a question and answer session. I guess that fact that over 10,000 museums use this software makes me think it can do a lot and it will be around for a very long time.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:44am

Write a reply...

Angela Isackson I would agree, I think having the experience with museum specimens and what is collected in the field as well is a huge benefit to building the database. The location and prior knowledge of other groups such as the Insect Collection, University, Odonata Central, WDS, and DNR, will all be key in collaboration.

Like · Reply · March 27 at 8:44pm

Angela Isackson The Nitid group had great references and would be traveling to Minnesota to do the training on the database, they were aware of that requirement. They were extremely interested and came with lots of questions and challenged the use of PastPerfect, so ... See More

Like · Reply · March 27 at 8:46pm

Tina Morey Have we confirmed that travel to MN is included in the cost estimates?

Like · Reply · March 29 at 6:27am

Angela Isackson Yes, it would not be an additional cost to MDS, they know that what they are bidding for includes that travel to MN.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 10:59am

Tina Morey Thanks

Like · Reply · March 29 at 11:43am

Write a reply...

Crystal Boyd Hi, all. Thanks for considering my application. I abstain from the discussion and the vote. Managers of this facebook page are welcome to remove me temporarily, if this helps the discussion. Thanks!

Like · Reply · March 28 at 6:46am

Curt Oien I don't feel a need to do that but if anyone wants to be able to speak more freely and would like that, PM me and I will do that.

Like · Reply · March 28 at 6:59am

Barbara Heenan Andersen I think we should remove Crystal from the discussion per her request and to be perfectly fair.

Like · Reply · 2 · March 28 at 9:25am

Curt Oien OK

Like · Reply · March 28 at 9:28am

Curt Oien The lack of discussion here worries me a little.
I fear that if we go with Nitid, we will have to put in a ton of volunteer time that we do not have to spare in order to get things done the way we would like things done.
It is also very convenient for Crystal to work with the Data people at the DNR and the U of M insect collection.
Like · Reply · March 28 at 7:06am

> **Tina Morey** Sorry Curt, I haven't reviewed the proposals in detail for a discussion. What is our deadline??
> Like · Reply · March 28 at 7:26am
>
> **Curt Oien** Tina, I think voting will end after three days which would be tomorrow night at 9PM. ???
> Like · Reply · 👍 1 · March 28 at 7:31am
>
> Write a reply...   📷 ☺

Angela Isackson Voting will end tomorrow night
Like · Reply · March 28 at 8:36am

Curt Oien Crystal has been temporarily removed from this area of Facebook.
Like · Reply · 👍 1 · March 28 at 9:30am

Jenn Gillen Ashling I'm not worried that Nitid would mean we would have to ✕ put in more volunteer hours. I actually think it may be the opposite. But I am concerned about having someone not local working on this for us. I guess I am also concerned about putting so much ... See More
Like · Reply · 👍 3 · March 28 at 10:39am

Ami Thompson I asked my husband Jon about the pricing in their proposal (his company responds to many RFPs) where they say they are charging us half their normal price. Jon said that is a pretty normal practice when an RFP contains the budget - the proposal submitter decides if the proposed work is worth client's the budget or not, if they submit they have decided that it is worth it BUT the writer wants the client know not to expect that pricing for future work of if the project expands beyond the proposed scope. There are many reasons a proposer may be willing to work for less than their normal fee: to fill a lull in work, to develop a relationship with a new client or network, because the project sounds interesting.

Like · Reply · March 28 at 3:20pm

Write a reply...

Angela Isackson The evaluations templates were sent out to hopefully help guide decision making and support each of our decisions. Helps us to have a professional process and be transparent on how we came to our decisions. Please utilize them and feel free to include any discussion here. Send the evaluation sheets to me and vote here. Thank you and sorry for any confusion, trying to do too much at one time!

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · March 28 at 10:53am

Jacki Morrison Oh. I thought I was done voting when I sent the sheet. Sorry.

Like · Reply · March 28 at 11:04am

Jacki Morrison I vote Crystal.

Like · Reply · March 28 at 11:05am

> **Jacki Morrison** My vote is based on knowing that Crystal has the knowledge and qualifications for this job, and her background allows for good insight and a level of creative thought process that caters to our needs. Beyond that, she has great leadership skills. Her w... See More
>
> Like · Reply · 🔵 1 · March 29 at 3:31pm · Edited

Write a reply...

Ami Thompson I actually feel like either application would be a very good contractor. Benefits with Crystal are we know her and know she does excellent work and she is familiar with us, our needs, and our partners. However, I feel like it might be good to work with a new person and bring in some new knowledge - Roger and Nitbid Bit, LLC are eager and presented a strong proposal with excellent references. I think that Roger would challenge us on our choice of PastPerfect and offer us alternatives but I think he would ultimately do what we ask well if we decide not to accept his suggestions - based on my conversation with one of his references and his proposal. I do think it would be a little more of our time to work with Roger and his team, to bring them up to speed, but that doesn't immediately turn me off. I'm going to wait to vote because I want to hear from other board members; please add in your thoughts!

Like · Reply · March 28 at 3:11pm

Tina Morey Can someone remind me how we are funding phase 1 and the equipment?

Like · Reply · March 29 at 7:15am

Curt Oien We have $5000 from the initial Enbridge Ecofootprint grant for data. I think that is for this. Ami might be able to give more details.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 7:54am

Ami Thompson We have 5K from Enbridge #1 and 3k from Enbridge #2, we are applying for a grant from the MN Historical Society in a couple weeks for 10K. The RFP was released specifying sections of work and being clear that they are dependent on funding.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:01am

Tina Morey Thanks for the reminder.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:21am

Write a reply...

Tina Morey One thing missing from our discussion and RFP responses is data quality, both current and future. Data output is only as good as the input, how will ensure the quality of the input?

Like · Reply · March 29 at 7:19am

Ami Thompson This is an important question that we will need to sit down and discuss with the contractor. We have talked about this extensively in the research committee but we want to delegate the details of setting this up this to the contractor - it will be a lo... See More

Like · Reply · March 29 at 8:09am

Tina Morey My cautionary words about data input, "crap in, crap out". 😉

Like · Reply · 👍 2 · March 29 at 8:26am

Write a reply...

Curt Oien Mike Sweet has been working on how we will collect data and specimens. Some of the things we have done in the past will be changing but we wanted to get a data person hired before making final decisions on some things.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 7:58am

Curt Oien We have also talked about the importance of having things like drop down menus to prevent the mess we had with the MOSP data.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 7:59am

Mike Sweet Well, I am down to the last hour before I must leave for the day and will then not be able to cast my opinion, unless I want to do it late tonight. I have struggled with this vote because the rating I did brought points very close; I will send Angela my form after this post. Both potential contractors have strengths and relative weaknesses, and I suspect both are acceptable. I considered Nitid to have greater strength (i.e., experience) in all the contracting and technical aspects of the software related areas. I found Crystal to be stronger in knowing the resource, the players (i.e, us, DNR, museum people, MN in general), and has a better chance of understanding our community and communicating with it. I am concerned that Nitid will overwhelm volunteers (us) which may result with a product that may be difficult to work with, over time; this only relates to the time any of us have to digging in and ensuring we track, understand, and push back when necessary. Similarly, I question whether we would be able to have documentation that we could manage without going back to Nitid and paying more for its help. On the other hand, I have concern that we may accept the recommended software that Crystal identified. I know nothing about it other than what has been discussed; I should have done some research on the software but...too late now. My only hope is that if we choose PastPerfect and are later unhappy with it, that all the data can be easily transferred to a new choice, including a web based option. With all that mumbo jumbo and hesitation, my vote is ... ta, ta, ta, dah (the trumpets sounding).... to accept Crystal's proposal.

Barbara Heenan Andersen I vote for Crystal

Like · Reply · 🖒 1 · March 29 at 3:35pm

Tina Morey As others have stated there are pros and cons to both contractors. My biggest concern is regarding the potential limitations of Past Perfect and whether there is another option we haven't considered. My quick google search indicates Past Perfect has not been updated since 2/2010. I have completed the evaluation summary and my vote is for Crystal.

Like · Reply · 🖒 1 · March 29 at 6:24pm

Angela Isackson I think both amazing options, tough decision. Either way in good hands. My vote is Crystal, but only by a couple points.

Like · Reply · March 29 at 7:32pm

Mitch Haag My vote is for Crystal Boyd. As I thought about the importance of broadening our contractor diversity, I feel that having someone local for ease of trouble shooting is important. Also, she has a good understanding of our data and the knowledge to get the data to communicate to OC and DNR.

Like · Reply · 🖒 1 · March 29 at 7:46pm

Ami Thompson I think Crystal can (and probably will based on the vote so far 🙂) do an outstanding job. It feels really nice to be choosing between two really good candidates. I, however, am going to vote for Roger Rohrbach (Nitid Bit, LLC). I see reaching out to a contractor for this work as an opportunity to bring someone in who is an expert in databases and management; someone who knows a lot more than us and can advise us with that knowledge. I think Roger and his team would be perfect with that. It doesn't bother me so much that he is not an expert in insects or with our local partners, we have that knowledge in our team already. I liked in his proposal that he thought independently and critically about our goals and suggested alternative software while also stating he would respect our proposed software choice if we didn't want to change. That to me demonstrates the knowledge and skill that we are looking to bring in by hiring a contractor for this project.

Like · Reply · 🖒 2 · March 29 at 8:05pm

Ron Lawrenz While it is past the deadline for the vote, my vote would be for Crystal Boyd.

Like · Reply · 🔵 1 · March 29 at 10:37pm

Angela Isackson From my count that is 9 total votes, enough for quorum, even though many did not vote or participate. My tally is 8 for Crystal and 1 for Roger aka Nitid Bit, LLC. Kiah Brasch can you please cut and paste this discussion and email to me as submitted online voting minutes. It is officially decided we accept Crystal Boyds proposal as Database Management Planning Contractor. Thank you all for participating and giving such a deep discussion.

Like · Reply · Yesterday at 11:24am