

Grand River Conservation Authority

Report number: GM-02-25-10

Date: February 28, 2025

To: Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority

Subject: Afforestation Services for Spring 2025

Recommendation:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2025 contract for hand planting of seedlings to Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. in the amount of \$102,700.00 (excluding HST) and a total budget of \$118,105.00 (excluding HST) be approved;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2025 contract for hand planting of tall stock to Black River Tree Planting Inc. in the amount of \$59,625.00 (excluding HST) and a total budget of \$68,568.75 (excluding HST) be approved.

Summary:

The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) carries out a variety of tree-planting projects on both private land and GRCA properties each spring. Afforestation contractors are utilized to implement these projects.

The GRCA advertised for prequalification of companies interested in participating in the GRCA's 2025 afforestation program. Three companies submitted their prequalification documents and met the criteria for receiving the subsequent Request for Proposals.

Report:

The GRCA has planted trees on private land and GRCA property for over 50 years with over 30 million trees planted throughout the Grand River watershed to date. The GRCA offers watershed residents access to a coordinated approach for afforestation services. Forestry specialists assist landowners with the design of their projects and access to funding programs. The GRCA grows trees and shrubs at its nursery and also purchases nursery stock at bulk pricing from a variety of external nurseries. The services of qualified tree planting contractors are retained to complete the projects.

To ensure that planting projects are successful, the GRCA seeks contractors with expertise in afforestation and naturalization-style tree planting. The bare root tree planting season is compressed into a three to four week period that starts as soon as the frost leaves the ground. To accommodate this compressed season, the GRCA's afforestation projects are contracted out according to the planting method and nursery stock size/type. Not all contractors are able to fulfill the variety of requirements and timelines, so it sometimes results in multiple contractors working simultaneously to ensure the completion of projects during this short time period.

The GRCA provided Request for Proposals (RFPs) to the three companies that prequalified, indicating the estimated number of trees to plant utilizing the planting method that typically provides the best survival rate, is appropriate for the site conditions, is the most efficient, and provides the anticipated lowest planting cost. The proposals were opened at 2:00 p.m. on January 31, 2025. The opening committee consisted of Brandon Heyer, Manager of Central Services; Kayleigh Keighan, Manager of Finance; and Nathan Munn, Supervisor of Forestry Operations.

The following tables show the bids submitted for the two tree planting contracts which are based on an estimated number of trees to plant in the spring of 2025.

Table 1: Proposal results for Contract 1 – hand planting of seedlings

Company	Bid Price per 1000	Total Estimated Number of Trees to Plant	Total Contract Value
Black River Tree Planting	NO BID	65,000	N/A
Tamarack Reforestation	NO BID	65,000	N/A
Brinkman Reforestation	\$1,580.00	65,000	\$102,700.00

Table 2: Proposal results for Contract 2 – hand planting of tall stock

Company	Bid Price per tree	Total Estimated Number of Trees to Plant	Total Contract Value
Black River Tree Planting	\$7.95	7500	\$59,625.00
Tamarack Reforestation	\$8.37	7500	\$62,775.00
Brinkman & Associates	\$9.44	7500	\$70,800.00

The cost of afforestation projects on private lands are paid for by the individual property owners requiring the service. If eligible, these costs may be offset by programs such as the Rural Water Quality Program, Forests Canada’s 50 Million Tree Program, and the federal government’s 2 Billion Tree Program. Tree planting on GRCA land is funded through programs such as, Forests Canada’s 50 MTP, the federal government’s 2 Billion Tree Program, and/or the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

The GRCA’s tree planting program aims to recover the costs of these contracts plus recover some of the GRCA’s overhead costs. The amount charged to landowners for planting trees is estimated to allow for the costs of paying contractors to plant these trees, as well as, all of the internal shipping, handling, and storage costs.

The RFP did not include a contingency, however, it is proposed that a budget be approved with an internal 15% contingency added. The contingency is due to the fact that tree planting plans are still being developed and confirmed with various landowners, so the actual number of trees to plant may vary from the total estimated at the time of proposal submissions. The total proposed budget is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Budget

Total Value of Contract 1	\$102,700.00
Contingency	\$15,405.00
Total Budget Excluding HST	\$118,105.00
Total Value of Contract 2	\$59,625.00
Contingency	\$8,943.75
Total Budget Excluding HST	\$68,568.75

Financial Implications:

With the proposed recommendations for awarding each contract, cost-recovery of these costs will be achieved. The overall \$1,012,400 budget for Burford Tree Nursery & Planting Services and the GRCA tree program relies on self-generated revenue (approximately 2/3) and other GRCA programs & services surplus allocation (approximately 1/3).

Conservation Services staff time associated with delivering the tree planting program is supported by a category 2 MOU with municipalities.

Other Department Considerations:

Conservation Services, Natural Heritage, and Central Services staff are involved in the planning and coordination of afforestation projects on both private and GRCA lands.

Prepared by:

Nathan Munn
Supervisor of Forestry Operations

Brandon Heyer
Manager of Central Services

Approved by:

Karen Armstrong
Deputy CAO/Secretary-Treasurer