



Website Redesign • Water Quality Portal • Brand Refresh

Request for Proposal  
September 2023





## Request for Proposal

### SUMMARY

Riverkeeper is seeking a web design and development firm to design, build and launch an updated website for the organization. Riverkeeper is a 501(c)3 nonprofit whose mission is to protect and restore the Hudson River from source to sea and safeguard drinking water supplies, through advocacy rooted in community partnerships, science, and law. Residents of the Hudson Valley, municipalities, state and federal agencies, lawmakers, and water advocates view Riverkeeper as the leading, authoritative voice in protecting the health of the River.

The organization was founded in 1966, originally as the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, and changed its name to Riverkeeper in the 1980s. The organization has strong name recognition and is thought of as a force for change and fighting for environmental causes that affect the Hudson and the drinking water watershed of New York City.

Our work spans monitoring water quality, operating an iconic patrol boat, legislative advocacy, litigation, ecological restoration, public advocacy on often high-profile issues, and volunteer engagement in local projects. We are a source of information, data, and public engagement. Our corporate office is based in Ossining, NY, with a satellite office in Kingston, NY. Our staff is located throughout the region. Our work extends throughout the 13,000-square-mile Hudson River Watershed and deals with issues that are often statewide and/or national in scope.

We have an active donor base (known as members) of almost 4,000 with additional volunteers and other supporters that brings our email communication outreach to approximately 25,000 records.

Our current website is outdated and a redesigned website requires an updated look and functionality that reflect our leadership role in the field of water protection. We want to seize the opportunity that a website redesign presents to attract a wider audience, engage new followers and activists, and interact with the public in new ways.

This proposal is divided into three sections: [Website Redesign](#), [Water Quality Portal](#), and [Brand Refresh](#). We welcome bids on one, two, or all three of the sections.

## **WEBSITE REDESIGN**

### ***1.0 Background***

An updated web presence is critical as our work is varied, with many programs and campaigns spanning, in some cases decades. With years of posts and campaign updates, the site has become difficult to navigate and is not intuitive. As an example, the search function does not display dates or list results in chronological order, leaving the user to manually sift through search results creating a negative user experience.

Our goal is a streamlined, intuitive site that effectively communicates the breadth and impact of our work. It should convey a compelling and cohesive organizational identity, while also offering a deep dive for subject matter experts. We aim to attract a broad audience in a region that is hungry for information about the Hudson River, New York City, and the Hudson Valley.

### ***1.1 Our constituencies and priorities:***

- Engaging donors and prospective donors to give online with a website experience that confirms Riverkeeper as an effective organization, performing critically important work worthy of their support
- Providing clear information for foundations and others researching Riverkeeper's record of success, size, history, finances, and priorities
- Serving as a news source for the press and the general public from which newsworthy issues are easily shared
- Providing recent and historic information on emerging issues affecting the Hudson for students and the general public, increasing awareness of Riverkeeper and our work
- Informing and mobilizing activists and the public looking for environmental information, position statements, and volunteer activities and opportunities
- Connecting with environmental justice communities, ensuring our messaging is inclusive, including translation options for non-native speakers
- Enabling professional contacts including but not limited to, attorneys, legislators and agency staff, scientists, fellow NGOs, and academics to find information about the work we conduct and reach key staff members

Note: Riverkeeper will be looking for input and assessments of audiences and relevant messaging

### ***1.2 Challenges***

- Funding and staff time constraints

- Campaigns and projects change year-to-year and need to be updated with varying frequency to stay current. Keeping track of these needs has been a challenge
- Existing site content will need mapping and review, and messaging/content will require updating, including weeding out-of-date content. An archive should be considered for select old content.
- Retaining our ability to edit the site in-house, by staff with minimal web/coding skills, while maintaining a polished look
- Our water quality data is stored in Excel spreadsheets which are not currently consistent. A database should be considered as an option for storing our data

### **1.3 Strategies**

- Conduct thorough market research, competitive analysis, and internal focus groups
- Analyze site traffic and recommend best approach in regard to Responsive / Mobile First Design
- Create an existing content map and devise a new Information Architecture
- Address limited staff resources with improved efficiencies in web management
- Maximize both technical and content search engine optimization
- Establish a clear path for visitors to access information relevant to them. Consider multiple landing pages to target different audiences (i.e. water quality data users, action alert takers, donors)
- Create easy sharing to/from social media platforms
- Showcase the immense beauty and history of the Hudson River, and the opportunities for restoring it to health as well as the threats facing it (pollution, habitat loss). Leverage the power of visuals of this iconic river that flows from the Adirondacks to NYC.
- Provide an archival system for Riverkeeper’s press releases, documents, photos, and videos - and move historical data to a searchable database
- Follow best practices, voluntary standards and guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI); provide content translation

### **1.4 Goals** - A successful Riverkeeper.org website:

- Serves as an ambassador of our brand, and conveys a cohesive and compelling organizational identity while clearly conveying discrete aspects of our efforts
- Engages and welcomes visitors with attractive visual content, intuitive navigation, and cogent messaging
- Is safe and secure and meets all technical standards for existing and future updates
- Spurs users to act—i.e. donating, contacting legislators, signing up for emails, volunteering, attending events—with clear and effective calls to action
- Site navigation is intuitive, with easily searchable resources
- Showcases our programs clearly and dynamically (both in terms of enthusiasm and their evolving nature)

- Presents the Riverkeeper team as experts and thought leaders that produce results
- Has multiple landing pages that welcome key constituencies and present primary pillars and programs
- Has well-integrated content allowing for easy sharing on social media accounts
- Back-end platform is flexible and can be maintained by staff with minimal coding requirements
- Search engine optimized, both content and technical

### **1.5 Scope**

- Assess brand strategy and positioning built around key campaigns and development efforts. Provide messaging recommendations
- Identify key user personas
- Conduct discovery interviews with key Riverkeeper staff and stakeholders to ensure website achieves cohesive organizational goals
- Conduct a content audit and establish a new information architecture that supports the goals of the organization with an optimal user journey
- Build wireframes for the entire site
- 3-4 design options for homepage and most common landing pages
- Provide CMS recommendations(s) [the current site is built on WordPress] taking into account integration of EveryAction/Raiser's Edge for donations, emails, action alerts. In addition to useability and flexibility, cybersecurity is a central concern.
- Page templates incorporated into the content management system, manageable by both technical and non-technical staff. Note: pages must accommodate embedded videos
- Microsites / landing pages for marketing campaigns, which support our environmental and advocacy campaigns
- Donation page template that allows for drag and drop placement of copy and images for creating campaign-specific landing pages
- Redesign of Action Alert page and function in EveryAction
- Secure contact forms
- SEO-optimized copywriting and editorial support
- Build/code the site
- Redirection of all existing content from the current site to the new one
- Handle technical aspects of website launch
- Recommendations for ongoing development/technical support

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## **WATER QUALITY PORTAL**

### **2.0 Water Quality Reporting and Mapping**

Riverkeeper has a rich history of water quality testing, going back to the start of the program in 2006. Water samples are collected at approximately 400 sites by staff, volunteers, partner organizations, and other outside sources (i.e. EPA, DEC). The data is collected and compiled on a monthly basis and uploaded to our current water quality mapping and reporting pages.

The water quality section of our current website receives a high percentage of traffic and interest from site visitors but our reliance on outdated software and technologies has limited our ability to effectively and intuitively display and further engage users of our water quality improvement efforts. An updated interactive experience is required so we can leverage and grow the current interest.

We are open to off-the-shelf mapping products and/or proposals for custom builds.

### ***2.1 General Objectives and Goals***

To reinforce Riverkeeper's leadership role, and in tandem with the rebuild of the Riverkeeper.org website, the organization is looking to feature a state of the art, visually engaging, interactive mapping tool to display our water quality data and related datasets. This Water Quality Portal (WQP) will be open to all audiences, informing users as to current water quality in various locations in the Hudson River and its tributaries, primarily to report if sites listed are considered safe and swimmable.

The water quality portal should be developed with the user in mind but is also a tool that strengthens the bond with Riverkeeper, supporting actions on the site including making donations, joining our email list, taking action alerts, and increasing their involvement with the organization. The WQP should be expandable, allowing for the addition of new datasets without development support.

### ***2.2 Challenges and Opportunities***

There are multiple sources of the data, and data formats, so compiling data is a manual and labor-intensive effort. Uploading the data can be difficult with complete re-uploads required should there be minor revisions needed on select pieces for data. We would like to streamline this process and would consider moving to a database approach.

Rainfall is a key variable relative to water quality so our site needs to communicate with a third party database that will provide precipitation data, to update that data point as it corresponds with sampling data. In addition to weather data, there are new open-source datasets we would like to integrate into the new version of our water data portal, including water quality data from the NYS Department of Health, NYS Parks data on public access locations for paddlers, swimmers and boaters, and other datasets that provide insight to changing conditions and the health of our waterways. The WQP should be an open source data aggregator that will enable the creation of white papers, graphs, figures and report cards by interested groups, including

Riverkeeper. It will be mobile-friendly and designed to easily add additional water quality parameters to support expanded data collection by Riverkeeper and contributions by partners involved in water quality monitoring in the Hudson River watershed.

Riverkeeper has considered the possibility of developing an app for the WQP. Input and evaluation as to the usage and performance of an app should be addressed.

### ***2.3 Mapping, Scoring, and Displaying Data***

Riverkeeper will require the design firm to provide an assessment and review of capabilities of select mapping software options and their alignment with our needs. Riverkeeper will submit suggested recommendations and the design firm is encouraged to also provide recommendations. We would like feedback and pros and cons of employing a custom build.

Additional data points and/or map layers will be provided that are of interest to our users, some of which will be from open data sources. Those will include but are not limited to:

- Customizable layers to display datasets not currently gathered but planned for in the coming 1-5 years
- Locations of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and wastewater treatment plants
- Points of public access to the water
- River topography and/or other natural features
- Effects of climate change, projections for sea-level rise (possibly pulling from ClimateCentral.org)
- Data reporting/graphics that reflects testing from previous years
- Water quality data from a variety of sources in a variety of formats
- Demographic data including environmental justice communities (e.g. <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>)
- Other relevant data/layers from open-source mapping tools (e.g., <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/search-superfund-sites-where-you-live#map> )

Each water sampling location will be identified by a marker on the map (pin) based on geo lat/long input. Information must be displayed by location including the assigned grade (with supporting key for reference), recency of testing and recency and volume of rainfall. Historic data and other related information must also be accessible.

See example at <https://soundhealthexplorer.org/swimmable/>

The system that generates grades will be provided as a scoring system that uses the full data set for each sampling location in combination with precipitation data to generate a grade. The mapping feature must allow for sampling locations to be added or removed by Riverkeeper staff.

### ***2.4 Data and Forms***

Riverkeeper needs to update and improve our current data management practices with a focus on data integrity and streamlining the process for compiling, uploading, and displaying data. We want an easy interface for staff and partners outside the organization to download raw data and prescribed data reports. Uploads should be limited to people with Admin access to the site and/or associated database.

- Please provide recommendations for databases or other solutions.
- Historical data should be easily accessible and displayed in a clear way, allowing for downloads of various data sets.
- Design firm should provide recommendations on form creation and layout, compiling data and uploading by multiple partners and storing data
- Data from open source database should be displayed on the map and uploads of data from these sources should be automated (i.e. EPA'S WQX database, additional sources to be named, weather data)
- Capability for adding new types/sources of data in the future

## ***2.5 Other Resources / Library***

Riverkeeper would like to provide useful information and reference materials to the users of the water quality data site. These can include, but are not limited to:

- **Best Practices** – For example, tips for homeowners and businesses to reduce spill off into the Hudson
- **Guidelines** – For example, how to track down a fecal bacteria (sewage) pollution source
- **Directions** – For example, how to sign-up or organize a habitat cleanup
- **General Information** – For example, information on political and legislative tools available to reduce debris
- **Toolkits** – For example, a course or presentation prepared with supportive data for teachers or legislators

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## **BRAND REFRESH**

### **3.0 Overview**

The Riverkeeper brand is recognizable, but its look and feel has become outdated. Moreover, the digital landscape has changed considerably since the creation of [our current style guide](#). We seek an update to the brand/style guide with a brand refresh that casts us as both timeless and hip, and which builds further connection with our key external constituents - i.e. members, donors, action-takers, legislators.



These new design elements and usage guidelines must feed seamlessly into the design of the new website.

### **3.1 Scope**

- Update the logo, maintaining the current design concept (Please note that no change can be made to the logo “Riverkeeper” font)
- Logo lockup in full color, knockout, and black delivered in png, ai, and jpg formats
- Reimagine color palate with a focus on the secondary palate, which is currently overly similar to the primary palate and includes no low saturation hues
- Select brand fonts and create usage guidelines, with readily accessible options for use in both documents (Word and GSuite) and design programs such as Adobe and Canva (Though no change can be made to the logo “Riverkeeper” font, selection and usage of fonts in other contexts is fair game)
- Recommendations for tagline content and its presence in logo lockup
- Review and update Riverkeeper brand/style guidelines
- Creation of password-protected online portal for brand/style guidelines and downloads of assets (i.e. Frontify)
- Template design for key assets: slide decks (PPT, Google Slides), fact sheets (Canva), event flier (Canva), Member newsletter (Adobe or Canva), membership tri-fold (Canva)

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## **STATEMENT OF INTEREST AND ESTIMATE OF COSTS**

### ***4.0 Response to Proposal***

Please respond as follows:

- Section(s) of the project you’re bidding on (Website Resign, Brand Refresh, and/or Water Quality Portal)
- Outline of proposed solution, including the features, benefits, and uniqueness of your solution
- Statement of interest and qualifications
- Proposed timeline of activities and description of services and deliverables based on your understanding of our goals
- Budget (can be a reasonable range) - Please break down by section of the project (if bidding on more than one) and also detail bundled rate, if applicable
- Provide 3 references and examples of active sites, with mapping components (if you're bidding on the WQP)
- Identify staff who will be working on the project
- Include standard hourly rates for scope detailed above
- Include standard hourly rates for additional programming if required in the future

- Maximum proposal length including title page, cover letter, proposal, qualifications, and costs should not exceed thirty (30) pages
- Participating firms may request one 30 minute meeting with Riverkeeper team to address questions (see details below)

**Budget Range:** Total budget for all three sections up to \$120,000 - \$200,000

Please submit to Sean Keller, Special Assistant to the President, Riverkeeper, at [SKeller@riverkeeper.org](mailto:SKeller@riverkeeper.org) by 10/13/23

#### ***4.1 Questions***

Riverkeeper leadership for this project will make themselves available to answer questions via email or a 30 minute Zoom meeting. Please send questions, or a meeting request to [SKeller@riverkeeper.org](mailto:SKeller@riverkeeper.org)

#### ***4.2 Timeline***

Deadline for submission - October 13, 2024

Selection of design and development firm – November 15, 2023

Contract and scope finalization - December 2023

Kickoff of Brand Refresh and Website Redesign Project - January 2024

Brand refresh completion - mid-March 2024

Kickoff of Water Quality Portal project - Spring 2024

Website completion and launch – September 2024 or prior

Water Quality Portal goes live - Winter 2025

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