



RFP QUESTIONS FROM POTENTIAL CONSULTANTS

*The Gateway to Adventure: Buchanan & Dickenson Counties Outdoor Recreation Initiative
April 21, 2026*

1. For the marketing materials, does the deliverable include fully produced digital assets (videos, photos), or an action plan that could be used for a future contract? Same question for the mapping assets – are those intended on being delivered as GIS files, or is the intent to have a fully-built-out interactive map?

The marketing deliverables are intended to include both strategy and execution. The selected consultant will be responsible for developing a comprehensive outdoor recreation marketing plan for each county, including an overall marketing strategy, campaign development, and a clear messaging framework aligned with Friends of Southwest Virginia and Visit SWVA branding. The scope also includes the creation of a project website or digital engagement platform, tools for surveys and stakeholder participation, and development of a project video for each county. In addition, the consultant should design select ready-to-use materials such as a rack card and print advertisement. Existing Friends photography and videography assets may be utilized where appropriate. The intent is to produce implementation-ready marketing materials and a cohesive campaign that supports both near-term awareness and long-term brand building, not a large-scale ongoing content production effort.

For mapping, the deliverables are expected to be provided as GIS-compatible files and supporting datasets, along with high-quality static maps suitable for planning, funding applications, and marketing use. The scope does not include development of a fully built-out interactive mapping platform; however, mapping outputs should be structured so they can be adapted for future digital or interactive applications if desired.

2) For the purposes of contracting, would the selected consultant be considered a sub-awardee to ARC, or a contractor to Friends of Southwest Virginia?

For the purposes of this project, the selected consultant will be contracted directly by Friends of Southwest Virginia and will be considered a contractor, not a sub-awardee to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Friends of Southwest Virginia is the grantee and retains responsibility for overall project management, compliance, and reporting. The consultant will operate under a professional services contract and will be required to comply with applicable federal requirements associated with ARC funding, including 2 CFR Part 200, as outlined in the RFP.

3) What are your goals for the county videos?

The goal of the county videos is to serve as high-quality, strategic storytelling tools that position Buchanan and Dickenson Counties as compelling outdoor recreation destinations. These videos should highlight priority assets, experiences, and emerging opportunities identified through the planning process, while reinforcing each county's role within the broader regional outdoor recreation system. They should be designed for immediate use in marketing, partner engagement,

and funding efforts, helping to build awareness, attract visitors, and support investment conversations, while also aligning with Friends of Southwest Virginia and Visit SWVA branding.

4) Who is your intended audience for the videos?

The intended audience for the county videos is potential visitors. The focus is on outdoor recreation travelers such as adventure seekers, nature enthusiasts, and regional drive-market visitors who are likely to be attracted to Southwest Virginia’s trails, waterways, and outdoor experiences.

The goal of the videos is to inspire travel and encourage people to visit Buchanan and Dickenson Counties by showcasing the experiences, landscapes, and opportunities available in each location.

5) At what point in the project would you like these videos to be completed?

The county videos should be developed alongside the planning process and completed toward the later stages of the project, once priority assets, key experiences, and messaging have been clearly defined. This ensures the videos accurately reflect the strategic direction and highlight the most compelling opportunities identified through the work. Final videos should be delivered prior to project completion so they can be used immediately for promotion and outreach.

6) Do you want a statistically valid survey for each county?

“Statistically valid” is designed so the results reliably represent the broader population, using a sufficient and representative sample, structured methods, and reporting like margin of error and confidence levels.

For this project, it is okay that the survey is not statistically valid because the purpose is to gather directional insight, not produce formal research. The goal is to understand perspectives from stakeholders, partners, and potential users to help inform planning, prioritize opportunities, and shape marketing approaches. This type of input is meant to guide decision-making and strengthen the plans, rather than serve as a scientific dataset. Requiring statistical validity would add unnecessary cost and time without significantly improving the usefulness of the information for this type of project.

7) Deliverable Expectations: Is the “Regional Initiative and Plan” intended to be a stand-alone, public-facing document, an internal guidance document, or integrated sections within each county plan?

The Regional Initiative and Plan is intended to be a stand-alone document that can be used both publicly and internally. It should clearly communicate the broader strategy for how Buchanan and Dickenson Counties function within the regional outdoor recreation system, while also serving as a practical guide for partners, funders, and decision-makers.

At the same time, key elements of the regional plan should inform and align with the county-level plans to ensure consistency across all deliverables. The regional document should not be embedded within each county plan, but rather complement them and provide the larger framework that ties the two counties together.

8) Economic and Business Opportunity Scope: The same series of bullets appear under the Dickenson County Outdoor Recreation Development Master Plan heading and the Economic and Business Opportunity Analysis. Please provide details on the desired scope of the Economic and Business Opportunity Analysis.

The Economic and Business Opportunity Analysis is intended to be a distinct deliverable and should include both an Economic Impact Assessment and a Business/Strategic Plan component. The Economic Impact Assessment should evaluate how outdoor recreation investments, including trails, mountain biking systems, and blueways, contribute to local and regional economic growth. This includes analyzing indicators such as job creation, tourism spending, and revenue generation. It should also incorporate a needs assessment for recreation amenities through surveys and interviews with local businesses, trail users, and community members to understand current conditions and perceptions of future opportunities. In addition, the analysis should identify key stakeholders and partnerships that support outdoor recreation development and highlight specific projects that enhance economic development while preserving local heritage and natural assets.

The Business/Strategic Plan component should translate these findings into clear, actionable recommendations. This includes strategies for expanding and activating outdoor assets, diversifying revenue streams such as events and sponsorships, and increasing community engagement. It should outline opportunities for collaboration across communities and state lines, incorporate sustainability and conservation practices, and identify ways to stimulate business growth within the outdoor recreation economy. The plan should also address how to better connect natural assets to downtown areas and define programming opportunities for gateway communities. The overall goal is to directly link outdoor recreation development with economic growth, business opportunity, and long-term sustainability.

9) Engagement: The scope highlights the need for several digital engagement approaches. Please specify the desired extent of in-person engagement with communities or stakeholders.

In-person engagement is an important component of this project and should complement the digital engagement tools outlined in the scope. The selected consultant is expected to conduct on-the-ground engagement in both Buchanan and Dickenson Counties to ensure local input meaningfully informs the plans.

At a minimum, this should include stakeholder meetings, small group discussions, and coordination with local leaders, partners, and key organizations. Community-level engagement opportunities, such as public meetings or workshops, should also be incorporated at appropriate points in the process. Site visits and direct interaction with assets and communities are expected to help ground the work in real conditions.

The consultant is expected to be present in the region multiple times throughout the duration of the project. This should include several days at a time during key phases, not just one or two visits or a single week of engagement. If the consultant is not based in the region, they should plan to be in and out of the area consistently to ensure strong local understanding, relationship building, and meaningful engagement.

The intent is to balance in-person engagement with digital tools to reach a broader audience, while ensuring that local voices, perspectives, and priorities are well represented in the final deliverables.

10) Mapping File Formats: What are preferred formats for mapping files, and will baseline GIS layers be provided?

Mapping files should be delivered in standard, widely used GIS-compatible formats such as shapefiles and geodatabases, along with accompanying metadata and any supporting datasets. In addition to GIS files, high-quality static map exports (PDF and image formats) should be included for use in presentations, planning documents, and marketing materials.

Baseline GIS data may be provided where available; however, the consultant should be prepared to supplement, refine, and validate data as needed to ensure accuracy and usability across planning, funding, and marketing applications.

11) Can you confirm the final proposal due date and time?

April 27, 2026

12) Would Friends prefer the regional initiative, Buchanan/Southern Gap plan, Dickenson plan, and marketing deliverables to be prepared as separate standalone documents, or may some of these be organized as companion volumes within one coordinated package? The RFP clearly calls for standalone county plans, but confirming the full deliverable structure would be helpful.

The Buchanan County/Southern Gap Plan and the Dickenson County Plan should be prepared as standalone documents, as outlined in the RFP. These plans need to function independently as implementation-ready tools for each county.

The Regional Initiative and Plan should also be developed as a standalone document that provides the broader framework and strategy connecting both counties within the regional outdoor recreation system.

Marketing deliverables may be organized as companion pieces, but they should be clearly structured so that each county has its own distinct and usable marketing plan, along with any supporting materials.

Overall, while the documents should be coordinated in design, structure, and messaging, they should remain separate and clearly defined so they can be used independently by different audiences and for different purposes.

13) Can Friends confirm whether the regional initiative, the Buchanan County master plan, the Dickenson County master plan, and the marketing plan should be submitted as one integrated scope or as separate work products with separate budget allocations?

The project should be proposed as one integrated scope of work, with all components clearly connected and aligned under a unified approach. However, respondents should break out the scope, deliverables, and budget by major component, including the Regional Initiative and Plan, Buchanan County/Southern Gap Plan, Dickenson County Plan, and the marketing deliverables.

This structure allows Friends of Southwest Virginia to evaluate the full project cohesively while also maintaining clarity on costs, level of effort, and deliverables for each component.

14) Please clarify the expected level of effort and format for the “project website or digital engagement platform” for each county. Should this be a temporary project microsite, a permanent public-facing site, integrated app support, or a document repository with survey functionality?

The “project website or digital engagement platform” is intended to be a **simple, public-facing digital hub** for each county that supports engagement during the project and remains as a resource after completion. It does not need to be a complex or custom-built website, mobile app, or large-scale technology platform.

At a minimum, the platform should:

- Provide clear information about the project and its purpose
- Host surveys and engagement tools
- Share updates, materials, and draft/final deliverables
- Serve as a repository for plans, maps, and related content

The level of effort should be appropriate to the overall project scope and budget, prioritizing usability, clarity, and ease of maintenance over custom development. Integration into existing platforms or lightweight microsities is acceptable and encouraged.

15) Friends expecting the consultant to provide full website development and hosting, or only content, structure, and platform recommendations?

Friends of Southwest Virginia is not expecting full custom website development or long-term hosting as part of this scope. The consultant should provide the content, structure, and overall setup of a simple, public-facing digital platform for each county that can be used during the project and remain as a resource afterward.

This may include configuring a lightweight microsite or using an existing platform to host project information, surveys, updates, and final deliverables. The focus should be on functionality, ease of use, and alignment with project goals, rather than building a complex or fully custom website. Long-term hosting and maintenance beyond the project period are not the primary expectation.

16) What are the required specifications for the county video deliverables, including target length, format, scripting, filming, editing, captions, and ownership of raw footage?

County video deliverables should be professional, high-quality promotional videos designed to inspire visitation and highlight each county’s outdoor recreation assets and experiences. Videos should generally be in the range of approximately 60 to 90 seconds, formatted for digital use across websites, social media, and presentations (standard HD formats such as 1080p are sufficient unless otherwise proposed).

The consultant is expected to lead scripting, story development, filming, and editing, working in coordination with Friends of Southwest Virginia to ensure alignment with messaging and branding. Existing Friends photography and videography assets may be utilized where

appropriate, but additional filming should be included as needed to capture key experiences and locations. Final videos should include basic editing elements such as music, graphics if appropriate, and captions for accessibility.

All final videos, along with working files and raw footage, should be provided to Friends of Southwest Virginia for ongoing use. Ownership of the final deliverables and raw footage will reside with Friends, allowing for future edits, adaptations, and continued use across marketing and partner efforts.

16) Does Friends have existing branding, messaging, and design standards that must be followed, or should the consultant develop a fresh Cumberland Plateau identity and message hierarchy from scratch?

Friends of Southwest Virginia has established regional branding, messaging, and design standards that should be followed, particularly alignment with the Southwest Virginia brand and Visit SWVA. These should serve as the foundation for all deliverables to ensure consistency across the region.

At the same time, the consultant is expected to develop a Cumberland Plateau-specific identity and messaging hierarchy that builds from this foundation. This should not be a full brand redesign, but rather a complementary framework that reflects the unique character of Buchanan and Dickenson Counties while remaining aligned with existing regional branding.

17) Please confirm whether GIS mapping, site plans, renderings, or visualizations are expected in the final deliverables, and if so, what level of detail is required?

GIS mapping is expected as part of the final deliverables. The consultant should provide GIS-compatible files and supporting datasets, along with high-quality static maps that clearly illustrate existing and proposed assets, connections, and priority development areas. These should be suitable for planning, funding applications, and marketing use.

Conceptual site plans and visualizations may be included where they add value, particularly to help communicate priority projects or key opportunity areas. However, detailed engineering drawings or construction-level plans are not required. The expected level of detail is planning-level, focused on clearly illustrating concepts, relationships, and opportunities rather than technical specifications.

18) What is the anticipated review timeline for draft deliverables, and how many review rounds should the consultant include in its schedule and fee proposal?

The anticipated review timeline for draft deliverables should allow adequate time for Friends of Southwest Virginia and project partners to provide thoughtful feedback. Consultants should plan for approximately 2 to 3 weeks for review of major draft deliverables, depending on the complexity and stage of the project.

At a minimum, consultants should include at least two rounds of review in their schedule and fee proposal—one for draft deliverables and one for final revisions. Proposals may include an additional round if needed, but the expectation is that the process is efficient and focused, with

clear communication and consolidated feedback to move deliverables forward in a timely manner.

19) Are there required stakeholder groups, agencies, or partner organizations that must be engaged beyond the listed counties, PDC, Friends, and Visit SWVA?

In addition to Buchanan County, Dickenson County, Cumberland Plateau PDC, Friends of Southwest Virginia, and Visit SWVA, the consultant should anticipate engaging a broader set of regional and local stakeholders as part of the planning process.

This includes, but is not limited to, local governments, economic development organizations, tourism offices, outdoor recreation groups, trail and blueway organizations, local businesses, chambers of commerce, and community organizations. Engagement with adjacent counties and cross-state partners in Kentucky and West Virginia is also encouraged where relevant to connectivity and regional alignment.

While there is not a fixed list of required partners beyond those identified, the consultant is expected to work with Friends of Southwest Virginia and project partners to identify and engage the appropriate stakeholders to ensure the plans are well-informed, collaborative, and implementation-ready.

20) For planning-level cost estimates and funding pathways, does Friends expect a general order-of-magnitude estimate, or a more detailed capital and implementation framework by project?

Friends of Southwest Virginia expects planning-level cost estimates that go beyond general order-of-magnitude ranges. Each priority project should include reasonable cost ranges supported by clear assumptions, along with a defined implementation framework.

This should include identification of potential funding sources, sequencing or phasing of projects, and guidance on how projects can move toward funding and implementation. The level of detail should be sufficient to support grant applications, partner discussions, and capital planning, but does not need to reach engineering-level or construction-ready estimates.

21) Can you confirm that the entire budget is \$300,000 or if there are other funding sources involved?

The project is funded through the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Thompson Charitable Foundation. The RFP does not specify a total project budget. Respondents should develop a scope of work and corresponding cost proposal that aligns with the project requirements, deliverables, and level of effort outlined in the RFP.

22) Please clarify whether the Southern Gap work should address only the Breaks Interstate Park gateway area, or also adjacent Coalfield Expressway corridor assets and supporting destinations.

The Southern Gap work should include both the Breaks Interstate Park gateway area and the broader surrounding context, including assets along the Coalfield Expressway corridor and other supporting destinations. The intent is to evaluate how these assets function together as a

connected system, strengthening Southern Gap as a primary gateway while enhancing connectivity to nearby recreation opportunities, communities, and cross-border destinations.

23) Are there page limits, formatting requirements, or submission form requirements beyond the RFP text provided in the PDF?

Yes. The RFP includes a page limit and proposal structure requirements. Proposals shall not exceed 20 pages per project component, and resumes, certifications, and other required attachments are not included in that page limit. Respondents should follow the format and submission requirements outlined in the RFP document, and there are no additional requirements beyond what is provided.

24) Can you confirm that submission of a bid would just entail emailing it to you and does not require a paper submission?

Proposals should be submitted in accordance with the instructions outlined in the RFP. As stated, submissions are to be sent to the designated contact via email. There is no requirement for a paper submission unless otherwise specified.

25) Is the ‘Economic and Business Opportunity Analysis’ section (page 5 of the RFP) referring to the region as a whole or specifically Dickenson County as it seems to duplicate earlier text?

The duplication in that section is a typographical error. The Economic and Business Opportunity Analysis is intended to apply to the region as a whole, encompassing both Buchanan and Dickenson Counties. It should evaluate economic impacts, business opportunities, and strategic recommendations at a regional level, while still informing and supporting the county-level plans.

26) What is the expectation for the cost range estimates for identified priority projects? Can you provide more information on what level of cost estimating detail is required?

Cost range estimates should be developed at a planning level but with enough detail to support decision-making and funding pursuits. Each priority project should include a reasonable cost range based on clearly stated assumptions, comparable projects, or industry standards. Estimates should go beyond broad order-of-magnitude figures by providing context for how costs were derived and, where appropriate, identifying key components or cost drivers. The level of detail should be sufficient to inform project prioritization, phasing, and alignment with potential funding sources, including grant applications.

Detailed engineering, design, or construction-level estimates are not required.

27) The RFP references “promotional materials that translate planning outcomes into market-ready communication tools.” Are these intended as promotional materials for specific priority projects (e.g. a trail development, etc.) for local audiences, grant makers, etc. or as marketing materials to attract visitors to the region?

The promotional materials are intended to serve both purposes. They should translate planning outcomes into clear, compelling communication tools that can support project advancement and also promote visitation.

This includes materials that highlight priority projects and opportunities in a way that is useful for local audiences, partners, and funders, such as grant applications and investment discussions. At the same time, materials should be designed to support marketing efforts that attract visitors by showcasing the outdoor recreation experiences and assets within each county. The intent is to create versatile, market-ready materials that can be used across multiple audiences, while maintaining consistency with the overall marketing strategy and regional branding.

28) The RFP references an overarching Cumberland Plateau outdoor recreation “identity.” Is this intended to be a light-touch visual and messaging framework that creates cohesion across Buchanan and Dickenson Counties and aligns with existing Friends/Visit SWVA branding? I.e. not a new brand?

Yes, that is correct. The intent is to develop a light-touch visual and messaging framework that creates cohesion across Buchanan and Dickenson Counties while aligning with existing Friends of Southwest Virginia and Visit SWVA branding. It is not intended to be a new or standalone brand, but rather a complementary identity that supports consistency, clarity, and regional alignment.

29) Do you have a budget range that proposals should be within for this initiative?

The RFP does not specify a budget range for this initiative. Respondents should develop a scope of work and corresponding cost proposal that aligns with the project requirements, deliverables, and level of effort outlined in the RFP.