



## **Request for Proposals**

# **Feasibility Study for Economic Development on Laurel Cliff Farm, Monroe VA 24572**

### **Executive Summary**

The Monacan Indian Nation is requesting proposals to undertake a feasibility study on Laurel Cliff Farm. Laurel Cliff Farm is a 1,300-acre property located in the rural area of Amherst County, Virginia. The farm is currently owned by the Monacan Indian Nation (“Nation”, “Tribe”), but it is currently underutilized and in need of economic development. The farm has potential to become an economic asset for the tribe, as it offers scenic views, natural resources, historical value, and recreational opportunities. However, developing the farm also involves significant costs, risks, and challenges, such as environmental impact, zoning regulations, market demand, and financial viability. This feasibility study aims to evaluate the pros and cons of different development options for the farm, and to provide recommendations for the best course of action.

### **Background and Context**

Laurel Cliff Farm is part of the ancestral land occupied by the Monacan Indian Nation prior to European occupation. The farm originally produced crops such as corn, wheat, and tobacco, and raised livestock such as cattle, and was also a dairy farm. The farm has a creek flowing through it and a 5.5-acre lake. However, due to the decline of the agricultural sector, and urbanization in the region the farm gradually lost its productivity and profitability. The farm currently employs a farm manager who takes care of the basic maintenance and security of the property, but it does not generate any meaningful income or provide any major services to the community.

### **Problem Statement and Objectives**

The main problem facing Laurel Cliff Farm is that it is underutilized and deteriorating, which poses a threat to its historical and cultural value, as well as its environmental and aesthetic quality. The farm also represents a missed opportunity for economic development and social benefit for the community, as it could potentially attract visitors, create jobs, generate revenue, and enhance the quality of life in the area. The objectives of this feasibility study are to:

1. Identify and analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of Laurel Cliff Farm as a potential economic asset.
2. Explore and evaluate the different development options for the farm, such as agritourism, conservation, education, recreation, housing development or mixed-use.
3. Estimate the costs, benefits, risks, and impacts of each development option, considering the financial, social, environmental, and regulatory aspects.
4. Provide recommendations for the best development option for the farm, based on the criteria of feasibility, sustainability, and desirability.
5. Determine availability of existing/new sources of funding for development.

## Methodology and Data Sources

The methodology of this feasibility study consists of the following steps:

- Conduct a site visit and inspection of Laurel Cliff Farm, to assess its current condition, features, and resources.
- Conduct a market analysis and a stakeholder analysis, to understand the demand, supply, and preferences for the development of the farm.
- Conduct a SWOT analysis, to identify the internal and external factors that affect the development potential of the farm.
- Identify and compare the different development options for the farm, based on the literature review, best practices, and case studies of similar projects.
- Estimate the costs, benefits, risks, and impacts of each development option, using quantitative and qualitative methods, such as cost-benefit analysis, risk analysis, and impact assessment.
- Rank and recommend the best development option for the farm, using a multi-criteria decision analysis, based on the weights and scores of each option.

The data sources used for this feasibility study include the following:

- Primary data, such as site visit observations, interviews, surveys, and focus groups with the farm owner, workers, neighbors, customers, and other stakeholders.
- Secondary data, such as census data, economic data, tourism data, environmental data, zoning maps, land use plans, and historical records.
- Tertiary data, such as academic articles, reports, books, websites, and media sources that provide information and insights on the development of rural farms.

## Conclusion

Requests for proposals are required by July 31,2024 and are to be submitted to:

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