Request for Proposals
Carleton College Cowling Arboretum

Project title: 100 Years of Minnesota’s First Arboretum at Carleton College, background research.

Request issue date: June 15, 2023

Proposal due date: June 30, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Submit proposals to: Nancy Braker, Arboretum Director, Carleton College Arboretum, nbraker@carleton.edu

Proposal Requirements: Proposals should include a short narrative describing the contractor’s qualifications (no more than one page), describe a general approach to conducting the work, provide three references, list similar projects completed by the contractor, and provide a total cost for completing the work.

Criteria to be used to select the successful proposal: The successful contractor will be chosen based on best value, the relevance of past work, the compatibility of the approach with working in the educational environment, and a history of projects being completed on time.

Project Details:

A contractor is sought to conduct primary and secondary research on the history of the Carleton College Cowling Arboretum in preparation for the eventual development of a publication on the history of the Arboretum, which would coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Arboretum founding, to be celebrated in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Relevant historical sources are held in the Carleton College Archives, the Northfield Historical Society, the Rice County Historical Society, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Northfield Public Library. In this work, the contractor will collaborate with archivists and librarians to efficiently identify, locate, and review the most relevant materials. In addition to these historical materials, the contractor will survey some contemporary materials from the Arboretum website and in the Arboretum files.

As necessary and possible, the contractor will request additional relevant materials from other organizations, such as other colleges and universities with facilities like the Cowling Arboretum. The contractor may have to work with staff at more distant institutions to obtain relevant materials. These institutions could include two institutions where Harvey Stork – the founder of the Arboretum – worked after his time at Carleton: Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi, a historically black college; and Northern Iowa University in Cedar Falls. If time allows, the contractor may also conduct a review of the academic and popular literature on arboretums and similar institutions. Students will be available to conduct some work on this project but will not be supervised by the contractor.

The research will address these topics, issues and questions:

1. The rationale for the Arboretum’s establishment in 1926, an effort led by President Donald J. Cowling and Professor Harvey E. Stork.
2. The evolution of the Arboretum’s mission since 1926.
3. Change and continuity in the Arboretum’s value to its users, such as faculty, students, and staff at Carleton; residents of Northfield and Rice, Dakota, and Goodhue counties; faculty and students at other colleges and universities in Minnesota; and individuals and organizations interested in the restoration of prairies and oak savannas.

Product:
The successful contractor will produce the following:

1. A basic outline of the history of the Arboretum, including use of the area prior to European colonization.
2. An annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources and other resources.
3. A prioritized list of possible uses for the resources and findings, including publications as well as updates to the website, new signage, or public outreach activities.
4. A plan to develop a publication on the Arboretum’s history.
5. Any new resources discovered during the research on the Arboretum’s history.

**Project Schedule:**
Research will begin as soon as possible with a final product being submitted to Nancy Braker by June 30, 2024.