



**Catawba Indian Nation
Rock Hill, South Carolina
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Rivercane Basketry Cultural Education Workshop**

1. Introduction

The Catawba Indian Nation (“Catawba Nation” or the “Tribe”) is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals to lead a Rivercane Basketry Cultural Workshop for Tribal citizens. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is to engage knowledgeable and experienced persons who connect Tribal citizens with the traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices associated with rivercane use.

2. Background

The Catawba Indian Nation is the only federally recognized Indian tribe in the state of South Carolina. The Catawba Indians have lived on their ancestral lands along the banks of the Catawba River dating back at least 6,000 years. Before contact with the Europeans, it is believed that the tribe inhabited most of the Piedmont area of South Carolina, North Carolina and the southern parts of Virginia. Our 1,000-acre reservation is located on two non-contiguous parcels of land approximately eight miles east of Rock Hill, South Carolina, in the center of an area that once comprised Catawba territory.

In 1993, the Catawba won the fight for federal recognition with the passage of the Catawba Land Claims Settlement Act. The Act not only restored the Federal Trust relationship between the Catawba Nation and the Federal Government but also marked the path for self-governance. The Tribe recently opened a gaming operation on trust land in Kings Mountain, North Carolina with a \$700 million facility set to open in 2026.

We provide services for approximately 3,000 plus enrolled tribal members in the areas of housing, social services, public works, medical and dental care, economic development, childcare, senior programs, cultural preservation, and transit.

3. Tribe Vision, Mission, and Long-Term Goal

The Catawba Indian Nation has embraced change with our vision and mission which states that the Tribe will become an economically thriving community whose citizens embrace their cultural heritage, enjoy strong self-esteem, lead successful lives and are fully prepared for a future of continuing opportunities and challenges. Tribal leadership promotes the Catawba Nation’s rich culture; works to ensure collective and individual self-sufficiency; promotes excellence in education; provides quality opportunities for health, social, and economic well-being of its citizens; and conducts its affairs with great integrity and commitment.

We show that we are proud of our past by embracing our culture and sharing it with others. We presently have a wide variety of programs and services available to enhance the lives of our citizens. Our long-term goal is to provide financial security for future generations through strategic investment and sustainable growth.

Giant Rivercane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) is a native bamboo species found throughout the southeast United States and holds deep cultural significance for many Tribal Nations, including the Catawba Indian Nation (the “**CIN**” or the “**Nation**”). Rivercane has traditionally been used for a variety of cultural and ecological purposes, most notably basketry and tool making.

Historically, large rivercane stands, often called canebrakes, were widespread across the region. Over time, the demand for land conversion, fire suppression, and habitat degradation have greatly reduced these ecosystems. Today, 98% of rivercane’s historic range has been lost; and because of this, restoration of rivercane stands is recognized as both an ecological priority and a cultural opportunity for the CIN.

The Catawba Nation Department of Natural Resources (the “**DNR**”) has partnered with the United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty (the “**USET**”) to participate in regional rivercane restoration efforts. Through this partnership, rivercane has been propagated and grown in the Nation’s greenhouse for future transplanting and restoration projects.

Rivercane restoration supports multiple objectives including:

- Streambank stabilization and erosion control;
- Habitat restoration for native wildlife species; and
- Reestablishment of culturally important plant resources.

As restoration efforts continue, the DNR also seeks to connect Tribal citizens with the traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices associated with rivercane use.

4. Project Goals and Scope of Services

DNR seeks a qualified instructor to lead a Rivercane Basketry Cultural Workshop for Tribal citizens.

The selected instructor will facilitate regularly scheduled workshop sessions during the Summer 2026 program period, focusing on teaching participants traditional basketry techniques using rivercane materials (the “**Instructor**”).

Primary Goals

- Teach rivercane basketry techniques to Tribal citizens.
- Share traditional knowledge related to rivercane harvesting, preparation, and weaving.
- Educate participants about the ecological and cultural importance of rivercane.
- Highlight the CIN’s current rivercane restoration efforts through the greenhouse propagation, direct transplants, and partnership with the USET.
- Strengthening the connection between ecological restoration and traditional cultural practices.
- Provide hands-on learning opportunities that support cultural revitalization and community engagement.

Scope of Services

The Instructor will be responsible for:

- Developing and leading instructional sessions in a format and duration determined by the Instructor.
- Providing instruction on traditional rivercane basketry techniques, including:
 - Material preparation;
 - Splitting and processing cane; and
 - Basic weaving methods.
- Incorporating discussions of cultural history and traditional ecological knowledge related to rivercane use.
- Coordinating with the DNR regarding workshop scheduling, location, and required materials; including without limitation providing a list of materials needed for instruction (rivercane, tools, supplies).
- Assisting participants in completing at least one basket or woven item during the workshop series.

Workshops will be conducted in person at a location determined by the Instructor and the DNR.

This project will be coordinated by the DNR. Staff will assist with participant coordination, scheduling, and logistical support for workshop implementation.

The Instructor will work closely with the DNR staff to ensure workshops align with the Nation's rivercane-restoration and cultural education goals.

5. Contents of Proposal

If interested, please submit a proposal in response to this RFP. The proposal should include the following information:

- a. Cover Letter:
 - i. Brief introduction of the Submitter and qualifications.
 - ii. Statement of interest in the project.
 - iii. Primary point of contact (name, phone, email).
- b. Proposed Project:
 - i. Instructional approach to teaching rivercane basketry
 - ii. Outline of weekly lesson topics
 - iii. Estimated duration of each session
 - iv. Materials required for workshop
 - v. Proposed timeline for completion
- c. Qualifications and Experience:
 - i. Experience teaching basketry or traditional craft workshops
 - ii. Experience working with rivercane or other traditional basketry materials
 - iii. Knowledge of Indigenous cultural practices and traditional ecological knowledge
 - iv. Experience working for Tribal communities (preferred)
- d. Budget Proposal:
 - i. Itemized budget including:
 - Instructor compensation

- Recommended apprenticeship compensation
- Materials and supplies
- Any additional costs

6. Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically or in hard copy and received by April 1, 2026 at 5pm.

Submission Contact:

Courtney Skeldon,
Wildlife & Habitat Stewardship Program Manager
Catawba Nation Department of Natural Resources
996 Avenue of the Nations Rock Hill, SC 29730
(803) 230-8592
courtney.skeldon@catawba.com

Late submissions will not be considered.

7. Evaluation

The Catawba Indian Nation will review all submitted proposals. The criteria by which an individual will be chosen includes the following criteria:

Experience and Qualifications (45%)

- Demonstrated experience in basketry instruction
- Knowledge of rivercane materials and weaving techniques
- Experience working with Tribal communities or cultural programs

Workshop Approach (35%)

- Quality and clarity of workshop structure
- Ability to effectively teach hands-on skills
- Integration of cultural and ecological knowledge

Cost Proposal (20%)

- Overall cost competitiveness
- Clarity of budget

Depending on the proposals received, the Catawba Indian Nation may determine that interviews with the top ranked Submitter are necessary. In the event interviews are not necessary, Submitters will be ranked, and the Catawba Indian Nation will initiate contract negotiations with the highest ranked Submitter. The Tribe's decision is final, and the Tribe expressly reserves the discretion to interpret and apply the criteria in a manner it deems appropriate.

8. Schedule

The workshop series is anticipated to occur during the Summer 2026 season.

- Program duration: Summer 2026 (up to 8 weeks)

- Frequency: At least 1 session a week

Exact dates/times will be coordinated between the Instructor and the DNR.

9. Additional Provisions

The Catawba Indian Nation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive technicalities and be the sole judge of the suitability of the proposed services for its intended use and further reserves the right to make the contract award in the best interest of the organization. The Catawba Indian Nation also reserves the right to modify the scope of work, add or delete tasks, and modify the proposed project budget in contract negotiations with the firm.

10. Sovereignty

The Catawba Indian Nation is a sovereign nation, and the selected firm or individual shall adhere to and comply with all laws of the Nation, including the Preferential Hiring Ordinance.

11. Additional Information

Additional information about the Catawba Indian Nation can be found on our website, www.catawba.com. Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Courtney Skeldon (courtney.skeldon@catawba.com) later than April 1, 2026.

Questions and respective responses will be shared with all RFP holders.