

Request for Letters of Research Interest (LOI)

Title: Taking Account – Preserving Lewis Mountain, an important Civil Rights and African-American outdoor recreation site in Shenandoah National Park

The Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc. (VSLC), developed Shenandoah National Park's Lewis Mountain lodge, cabins, and campground as a segregated picnicking and camping area for African-American visitors in 1937-1939, while the National Park Service and VSLC simultaneously excluding them from most other developed areas in the park. The development of segregated concessions at Lewis Mountain serves as an important manifestation of the systematic racial segregation that characterized the mid-20th century southern United States, extended to outdoor recreation. These segregated facilities were developed during a critical period of the formation of Shenandoah National Park, and concurrently with the early phase of the Civil Rights Movement, both within the Department of the Interior and in the United States more broadly. The engagement and preservation planning effort described below is intended to use historical documents, and oral and family histories of those who visited the park and these segregated facilities prior to 1950, to develop preservation measures---both physical and social--that will maintain the physical and historical importance of Lewis Mountain. The effort will also develop interest within individuals and groups willing to help direct the future of Lewis Mountain. The identified partner will lead the development of landscape management actions that preserve and commemorate the unique character of Lewis Mountain.

Nature of Work Required

Park managers would like to accurately portray and interpret the Shenandoah National Park's role in establishing and maintaining racially-segregated outdoor recreation facilities and provide meaningful context and insights to visitors, prior to developing preservation measures for the Lewis Mountain. Shenandoah National Park seeks the assistance of knowledgeable and experienced researchers with the following questions:

- How can the existing information about Lewis Mountain collected through the Civil Rights Initiative be best converted into site management actions?
- Would contemporary groups or individuals focused on African-American outdoor recreation be interested in engaging in dialogue regarding the future of the park's Lewis Mountain visitor facilities?
- What is the most accurate and balanced way to convey the importance of Lewis Mountain to the Civil Rights Movement and African-American outdoor recreation through preservation measures? Through interpretive materials? Through outreach?

The work will include:

- Carefully reviewing publications and gray literature about Lewis Mountain, in order to revise and refine research questions
- Consulting knowledgeable scholars and authors about Lewis Mountain
- Synthesising research findings about African-American use of Lewis Mountain from 1937 to 1950 and identifying character-defining features and themes to highlight at the site
- Developing and vetting a set of concrete, actionable landscape treatment measures that will contribute to preserving the Lewis Mountain Picnic Area and Campground
- Thoroughly documenting institutions and individuals queried or approached, as well as their responses

- Requesting permission to use textual or graphic materials gathered in subsequent planning efforts for archiving
- Curating all personal accounts, family histories, copies of family photograph collections collected by the research project
- Seeking permission to use research findings in subsequent park planning.

The work products should include:

- A research plan (draft and final)
- Draft and final reports, including chapters on Lewis Mountain history, an inventory of historic resources, and recommendations for preserving and interpreting the historic resources in the future; this is a non-inclusive list. NPS staff strongly recommend adopting NPS-28 guidance on preparation of this cultural resource report, including adopting the format of the numerous cultural landscape reports that the NPS has published for similar historic sites.
- Research notes and supporting information (photographs, interview recordings and notes, oral histories and associated releases, copies of primary source documents, etc.)
- Any other supporting documents that the Principal Investigators feel is important to better understanding Lewis Mountain.

This project requires a principal investigator(s) with deep knowledge and experience conducting landscape-scale historic preservation and planning, knowledge, and experience, in African-American and Civil Rights history, and knowledge and experience with completing actionable planning documents at either the state or federal level.

Government-Furnished Research

The National Park Service has recently funded a number of research projects on African-American outdoor recreation during the Civil Rights era (i.e. 1940s-1980s). These projects have produced reports on African-American recreation in National Parks in Virginia, and on Lewis Mountain, in particular. Additionally, the NPS will provide cartographic assistance in the form of maps of Lewis Mountain that are compatible in content and formatting to recent landscape studies at Rapidan Camp and Big Meadows (<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2272097>). A Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) published for Lewis Mountain will provide important data on the physical layout and historic resources at the site. The park has oral histories of African-American staff who worked at Lewis Mountain during the period, as well as African-American visitors to the site. A National Register (NR) nomination that lists the historic resources at the campground and picnic area is available. Historic resources at Lewis Mountain contribute to the Skyline Drive National Historic Landmark (NHL).

Letters of Interest

Letters of Research Interest (LOIs) should be sent to the address located in the “contact” section. A panel will review the LOIs and select the top candidate(s) for full proposal development. The LOI should describe your research interest(s) in the project, similar past projects, and any relevant experience. Please include your name, affiliated institution, and contact information. Page limit is two (2) pages.

Project Timeframe

Deadline for responding to this letter of interest is April 1, 2021.

Funds Available

Project funds available are \$50,000 to \$60,000 in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021), including the CESU overhead rate of 17.5 percent. Approximately \$40,000 has been formulated for FY22, although this amount is not guaranteed per the Anti-Deficiency Act [ADA]. The project is funded by the National Park Service in FY21. Only universities and institutions with a CESU \$0 (Zero-dollar) Master Cooperative Agreement are eligible to apply.

Contact

Responses of interest should be directed before the closing date to Brinnen Carter (Brinnen_Carter@nps.gov). Additional questions can be answered by contacting Brinnen Carter, Cultural Resource Manager, Shenandoah National Park (540) 999-3500, x3435.