

## **REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST FOR A PROJECT TO BE INITIATED THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS (CESU) NETWORK**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Special History Study-African American Experience at Mammoth Cave National Park.

Responses to this Request for Letters of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the National Park Service (NPS) and coordinated by Mammoth Cave National Park (MACA). The project involves the development of a special history study that uses research and analysis to document the experience of people of African descent at Mammoth Cave from 1860-1941. The special history study will include limited oral histories with descendants of traditionally associated African American communities. It will also identify areas for further research. These resources will enable MACA to develop interpretive and educational programs that connect visitors with the African American history and culture that helped shape the cave and the surrounding area. It is also anticipated that the special history study will result in sufficient information to support a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom nomination ([www.nps.gov/ntf](http://www.nps.gov/ntf)).

This project requires a principal investigator(s) with a deep knowledge of the African American experience and Civil Rights history is required as well as experience completing actionable planning documents at either the state or federal level. HBCUs affiliated with one of the Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Units (CESU), listed below are encouraged to apply.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligible Applicants – This opportunity is restricted to non-federal members of the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU), Gulf Coast CESU, Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast CESU, South Florida – Caribbean CESU and the Southern Appalachian CESU.

### **BACKGROUND**

Mammoth Cave National Park was established in 1941 however, it has a long history that intersects with the African American experience dating back to the 18th century. The cave was mined for Saltpeter, an ingredient central to the production of black gunpowder. Mammoth Cave was a major supplier of gunpowder for the War of 1812. During this period, enslaved African Americans worked these mines. Subsequently, some of these miners became explorers and guides in the caves. These explorers, played a vital role in the development of cave tour routes and the visitor experience at Mammoth Cave, helping establish Mammoth Cave as an international tourist destination.

People of African descent, both enslaved and free, also made other important contributions to Mammoth Cave, working in the various establishments around the cave. Over the years they built communities and lived and worked side by side with their White neighbors.

When Mammoth Cave became a National Park, over 600 families were removed from their homes. The African American guides were not asked to stay on as guides, however some stayed

in the area to work in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps and the service industries. Some owned hotels and other service industry businesses themselves. The Park does not have a comprehensive knowledge of families and life during this period. The families had to relocate, some to the nearby towns and others to far-away places.

The Park has extensive knowledge of many of early African American explorers including the routes they discovered and some of their exploits in the cave. Staff research projects have resulted in some knowledge of the communities where they lived and where they worked. However, the Park does not have extensive knowledge of life in these communities and the relationships between Blacks and Whites. Leading up to the Civil War there may have been connections with the Underground Railroad and the enslaved joining the Union Army near Munfordville, Kentucky

**Brief Description of Anticipated Work:**

The special history study will be a multi-chapter monograph, including all research, analysis, writing, photograph selection, and layout and design. The study will include an introductory chapter and appendices as appropriate.

Deliverables shall also include:

- 1) Survey and inventory of previous research related to African American History within the Park's library.
- 2) Research of family and community lives of African Americans from the 1860-1941.
- 3) Research of African American resistance to enslavement, particularly through escape and flight.
- 4) Research of African Americans during the Civil War, including involvement in Union Army.
- 5) Research of the impacts of the removal of African Americans and where migrated.
- 6) Limited oral history collection from any known descendants.

**Request for Letters of Interest:**

The candidate selected will be required to prepare a Statement of Work regarding the approach and research to be conducted. Status updates will be required each year of the agreement to demonstrate progress toward meeting project goals and objectives.

**Period of Performance.**

The period of performance for this Cooperative Agreement will be determined when the final proposal is selected, and an Agreement awarded. It is expected to extend 36 months.

START DATE: June 1, 2023 (Tentative)

END DATE: June 30, 2026 (Tentative, an extension of timeline may be possible)

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Sought:**

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- Ph.D. in one of the following or a related field: African American Studies; U.S. History; American Studies; Public History
  - Knowledge of U.S. history, particularly African American history
  - Strong oral and written communications skills.

## **MATERIALS REQUESTED FOR LETTER OF INTEREST/QUALIFICATIONS**

Please prepare a summary of your vision for implementing this project

(Maximum length: 6 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font). Should include:

1. Name; department, university or organization; CESU affiliation; and contact information
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications including: a) Biographical Sketch; b) Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects - demonstrated results including published works; c) Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise.
3. Project proposal that summarizes strategy, approach, and special capabilities, timelines, roles and responsibilities of personnel, specific tasks to be conducted, and deliverables. Please be as specific as possible.

## **FUNDING**

The project will be funded up to \$74,000. This project will be administered by the National Park Service through a Cooperative Agreement or Task Agreement upon mutual agreement on the application of the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%).

A detailed study proposal and cost estimate is not requested at this time, but please acknowledge that you would be able to perform the project within the financial ceiling stated for the project.

Project award will be subject to the availability of funds.

## **DEADLINE**

The deadline for responding to this letter of interest is **Friday, February 17, 2023, 5:00pm ET.**

## **REVIEW OF LETTERS RECEIVED**

All Letters of Interest received will be evaluated by a panel comprising one or more people with expertise related to the park unit or subject matter. Based on a review of Letters of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to prepare a full study proposal. Letters of Interest will be evaluated based on demonstrated experience and capabilities related to the project requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: A budget is not requested at this time.

## **CONTACTS**

Letters of Interest should be directed to Carol Daniels, Senior Science Advisor, SFC-CESU, ([Carol\\_Daniels@nps.gov](mailto:Carol_Daniels@nps.gov)) by the closing date. Questions regarding the proposed scope of the project can be addressed to Déanda Johnson, Civil Rights Historian, National Park Service, Interior Region 2 (Legacy Southeast Region), [Deanda\\_Johnson@nps.gov](mailto:Deanda_Johnson@nps.gov), 470-817-8466.