

# Request for Proposals

## Engage Native Americans in Telling America's Reconstruction Story

Deadline: April 19, 2024

### Project Description

The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking a research team to conduct an ethnographic study that will create a better public understanding of what the timeframe commonly referred to as “The Reconstruction Era” was like for Native Americans and how Tribal Sovereignty shifted during that time. Popular scholarship on the Reconstruction Era has often focused on the experiences of formerly enslaved African Americans, white southerners, carpet baggers, and the rise of white supremacy. But very little has been done to understand the Reconstruction Era from the perspective of Native Americans. This project will shed light on this massively misunderstood and underrepresented aspect of Reconstruction History by inviting Native American scholars and leaders from around the country to document their history using multiple interdisciplinary methods of ethnographic and anthropological research. The resulting study will be shared broadly with Native American partners, will be used to train National Park Staff, and will create interpretive content that can be hosted online and at heritage institutions including, but not limited to, National Park sites and Tribally Owned Museums and Heritage Centers.

### Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this project is to respect Tribal Sovereignty by inviting Indigenous People to share American history from their perspective through academic study, consultation, and the creation of interpretive media. The focus of this project is the history of Native American Tribes and Nations from the Southeast Region of the United States from approximately 1830-1890. This should include brief contextual discussion of Native American experiences of events leading up to the Reconstruction Era from approximately 1830-1863 (removal, Westward expansion, early Civil War etc.), and more in-depth discussion of Native American experiences during the Reconstruction Era from approximately 1863-1890 (second half of Civil War, post-Civil War treaties and agreements, allotment, assimilation, resistance, resilience etc.).

This project will result in an ethnographic study featuring at least 12 of the 31 Tribes who have an interest in the Southeast Region of the United States (defined for this project as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee). The project will use a multi-disciplinary approach to compile information on cultural and natural resources traditionally valued by these Tribes and will identify historical accounts, individual stories, cultural truths, and traditional knowledge that the included Tribes wish to be shared with the public by the NPS. The information will come mostly from archives and publications, as well as interviews with community members, Elders, leaders, and other constituents (often on trips to specific sites) to supply missing data. This study will also identify and recommend future research needs at the end of the project.

The primary objectives of this project are to: 1) respect Tribal Sovereignty by designing a study in partnership with Native American scholars, cultural experts, and Elders that advances Native American perspectives on history and culture; 2) create better understanding of the key events in Native American communities leading up to and occurring during Reconstruction; and 3) fill in knowledge gaps that exist within the NPS about cultural sensitivities, traditional land use, importance of resources, and Indigenous history related to National Park sites in the Southeast Region.

The resulting study will be used to develop an interpretation guidebook that increases the cultural awareness of NPS staff and helps them understand which aspects of Tribal history they should discuss in parks, how to do that appropriately, and which topics *should not* be presented by the NPS. The guidebook will also include topics such as appropriate language and terminology when speaking about Native Americans and their history, and cultural sensitivities that NPS employees and the general public should be aware of. The study will further be used to create publicly available multi-media such as a short film, original artworks, mixed reality experiences, and/or web content. All multi-media created for this project must be approved through consultation prior to exhibiting it to the public. Rights to use the study and multi-media content will be granted freely to cultural institutions owned and operated by Native American Tribes.

### **Deliverables**

The project deliverables include the following:

1. An ethnohistory of at least 12 Federally Recognized Tribes whose homeland is in the Southeast, Interior Region 2. The assessment will be published in its entirety for archives and research which will be stored in the IR2 regional office of cultural affairs where it will be subject to sensitive document controls. A second version will eliminate sensitive information and will be made available to NPS staff and the public.
2. An interpretive guide that helps staff interpret Native American history in the south in a way that is respectful, relevant, and meaningful to Native Americans.
3. Interpretive media including public facing web content, mixed reality experiences, and a short film.

### **Qualifications of the Principal Investigators and Research Team**

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be applied cultural anthropologists with a Ph.D. or comparable research experience and a record of applied experience and high professional standing in the anthropological community. Expertise in analyzing data for practical implications and planning, conducting, and providing written reports on, and evaluating field research is highly recommended. The qualifications of additional team members should complement the goals and objectives of this study. Include all qualifications and experience in your proposal. Special cultural expertise will be considered.

### **Period of Performance**

The project should begin no later than May 2024. The anticipated duration of the project is two years.

### **Budget**

This project is eligible for **\$315,117.38** from which salaries, travel, consultation fees, transcriptions, materials, and overhead **must not exceed**. A detailed budget should be included in your proposal.

### **Materials Requested for Proposal**

Please prepare a formal proposal of no more than five (5) pages of how you would envision and successfully execute this project. Include your name, credentials, and contact information, as well as information about any relevant experience, special expertise, past projects, and staff, faculty, or students/interns who would be available to work on the project. Include a budget. See the four proposal evaluation elements below.

## Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated for selection according to:

1. Experience/Qualifications of Research Team – outline your qualifications and experience as Principal Investigator to accomplish this project. Include a description of qualifications and experience of those who will assist in the project as part of the research team.
2. Methodology – describe the methodologies you will use to execute this study as well as the timelines to achieve the desired outcomes.
3. Budget – provide a reasonable budget of costs for this project. It is understood that part of the budget may go toward travel costs, both for investigators and participants. Compensation for collaborators, Native American scholars, cultural experts, and Elders should also be considered and included. Please acknowledge that you will be able to perform the project within the stated financial ceiling.
4. Relationships – this project relies heavily on the ability of the research team to leverage existing relationships and create new ones. Please describe your network of connectedness and how you will cultivate and maintain relationships throughout this project.
5. Multi-media Project Management – this project requires the creation of multi-media for use in public interpretation which is an unusual deliverable for an ethnographic study. This work can be completed by the primary research team, or another party that specializes in multi-media creation (through sub-contract). Interpretive media generated by this project should help the public better understand the people and events deemed in the study as desirable for public interpretation. Common examples of media that meet the needs of the project might include original artworks (line art, drawings, paintings etc.), short film(s), virtual tours, 3D figures for augmented reality or hologram displays, audio productions of spoken word or music, etc. Please describe how you propose to complete this portion of the project in your proposal.

Please direct inquiries to Melissa Madrigal (contact below)

Please submit your proposal to Melissa Madrigal no later than **midnight April 19, 2024**. Please use the subject line “Proposal for NPS Native American Reconstruction Story,” to ensure that the email is properly received and reviewed.

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