

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

PROJECT TITLE: Special History Study- Fort Rosalie (Natchez, MS)

The National Park Service (NPS), Interior Region 2 (IR-2)- South Atlantic-Gulf, is seeking the services of a principal investigator(s)/editor(s) for a project to be funded by the National Park Service (NPS) and coordinated by Natchez National Historical Park (NATC). The project involves the development and production of a multi-authored and multi-chaptered Special History Study detailing the history and significance of the Fort Rosalie Site, with a special focus on the experiences and interactions between people of Native American, European, and African descent.

This Special History Study will aid the park in managing the Fort Rosalie resources as well as developing associated interpretive media.

This project requires a principal investigator(s) with the following:

- a) A scholarly research focus in one or more of the following fields: US History, Colonial History/Archaeology, American Studies, Native American Studies, African American Studies.
- b) Demonstrated experience researching, writing, and producing government reports, especially as related to NPS interpretive histories, historic contexts, or theme studies.
- c) Demonstrated experience in editing and collaborating with multiple authors and scholars to produce an edited publication.

ELIGIBILITY:

This opportunity is open to non-federal members of the CESU National Network. Information on the CESU National Network can be accessed at <https://www.cesu.org>.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of a special history study is the collection, presentation, and evaluation of historical research pertaining to a specific event or theme that is related to the history that has occurred within the boundaries of a national park unit and/or its surrounding area(s).

Understanding the history of Fort Rosalie Site, a unit of Natchez National Historic Park, is essential to the park's purpose, "to preserve and interpret the complex history and material culture of all the peoples of Natchez, Mississippi, emphasizing European settlement, African enslavement, the American cotton economy, and the Civil Rights struggle on the lower Mississippi River."

The fort, which dates back to 1716, and variously known as Fort Rosalie, Fort Panmure, Fort Natchez, and Fort Sargent, played a pivotal role in Natchez's development over the course of various colonial regimes (French, Spanish and British) and as part of the United States. When Fort Rosalie was established by the French, it was considered as the frontier, strategically placed for defense, for trade, and for diplomacy. In 1729, the fort was the focus of the Natchez uprising that brought an end to the French agricultural colony at Natchez, and eventually to the annihilation of

the Natchez themselves as a people as they were either killed, sold into slavery, or absorbed into other tribes.

During the British occupation, it was used not just as a military garrison but also a trading post, and was also the scene of fighting with the Choctaw. During the American Revolution, control of the fort was important to controlling the Mississippi Valley. Consequently, numerous struggles centered on the fort. In 1797 and 1798, the standoff between the Spanish and the Americans that took place in and around the fort led to the Spanish evacuation of the Natchez District and the creation of the Mississippi Territory. From April through August 1798, and preceding the arrival of the first territorial governor, Winthrop Sargent, the fort was the center of operations of the temporary military government.

Over the years, the fort was built, destroyed, rebuilt, and altered, but essentially had two basic forms. During the first 13 years of French colonial occupation of the Natchez area (1716-1729), the fort was a simple rectangular palisade with four bastions. Following its attack and burning by the Natchez Indians in 1729, the fort was rebuilt on the same spot in 1730, this time as a pentagonal earthwork. In 1763, following the Treaty of Paris at the end of the French and Indian War (Seven Years' War), Natchez was transferred to British rule, and Fort Rosalie came to be known as Fort Panmure. During the early years of the Mississippi Territory (1798-1817) it was renamed "Fort Sargent" after Winthrop Sargent, the first territorial governor. Despite all these names, the fort continued to be unofficially referred to as "Fort Natchez" by both the Spanish and early American settlers.

Fort Rosalie provides a rare opportunity for the NPS to tell the interconnected stories of colonialism, dispossession, and enslavement in North America with effects that rippled up through the antebellum period.

The site is a contributing element in the Natchez Under-the-Hill National Register district, and it is a site that is rich in archaeological resources - those that remain in situ, and thousands of artifacts that have entered the park's museum collection and are housed at the Southeast Archeological Center.

Despite the importance of Fort Rosalie to the development Natchez, there has not been a comprehensive synthesis of the fort's history. The proposed special history study should provide an inclusive and multi-perspective examination of the history (in terms of both race and gender). This study is being funded in large part through the NPS's African American Civil Rights Funding Initiative so while not the sole focus this history and experience should be a strong component and well-integrated into the study. It should also employ a multi-disciplinary approach examining the fort's significance through the social sciences (i.e. history including environmental history, anthropology, archeology, geography, economics, and political science).

It should also include the following:

1. An examination of the long history of Native American presence at the site prior to and through the stages of European contact, including but not limited to the scattered agricultural settlements of the Natchez, with specific attention to the Grand Village whose mounds abutted St. Catherine

Creek; their interactions with other local tribes such as the Choctaw; native traditions around slavery and the impact on them of European settlement; and the 1729 uprising and the enslavement and selling of surviving members of the Natchez to Saint-Domingue.

2. A chronicle of the history of the site after the rebuilding of the replacement fort in 1730 (of which one wall of earthworks still stands) - through subsequent European conflicts, the 1790s layout of the downtown grid of streets by the Spanish, transfer of the Natchez District to the US in 1798 and organization of the Mississippi Territory with Natchez as its capital, and - finally - the abandonment of the use of the fort for protection in the early nineteenth century (with deceased enslaved persons subsequently buried in the dry moat), just as the introduction of the cotton gin and the steamboat caused an explosion in the importation of enslaved people into this area. The fort site continued to be used for the town gallows and a paupers' burial ground through the nineteenth century (with evidence of burials for people of European and African descent).

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

The special history study will be a multi-authored and multi-chapter written report, including all research, analysis, writing, photograph selection, and layout and design. The final study shall be prepared as print-quality PDF and must be Section 508 compliant ([Section 508 | U.S. Department of the Interior \(doi.gov\)](#)) in a manner suitable for publication and which is understandable to members of the public, NPS professional and management staff, as well as to a scholarly audience. This study will document the concepts, research procedures, and the logic behind findings that lead to the conclusions and recommendations. The study will cover all elements identified in the Scope of Work and any revisions made and approved through the outline, draft(s), and final report submissions. The Principal Investigator/Editor will be responsible for the project design, project schedule, and should expect to do some of the writing on study components (i.e. executive summary, preface, introduction, epilogue/conclusions, and recommendations).

Task/Deliverables shall also include:

1. Tribal engagement and consultation throughout the project including but not limited to kick-off, topic and contributor selection, and review of deliverables.
2. Initial project kick-off meeting.
3. Submission of proposed detailed outline of study that describes organization and content of study. This should be electronically submitted prior to the initiation of substantial writing efforts. Sufficient detail must be presented to enable reviewers to understand the intent and thrust of the study. If necessary, following NPS review, a meeting or conference call may be scheduled to develop further the final content of the study, including in the selection of essay subjects. An approved outline will result from this review.
4. Identification and engagement of the services of scholars/authors to contribute chapters to the special history study in consultation and coordination with NPS. Contributors can be selected directly and/or an open call for papers. Selected scholars/authors are expected to possess knowledge and experience in specific topics of history relevant to the special history study.

5. Preparation and submission of complete first draft of special history study. The first draft will consist of a substantially completed report, including front matter, footnotes, and bibliography. Text will include page numbers and line numbers, to facilitate comments. Submittal shall include photocopies of illustrations and maps.
6. Submission of complete second draft of special history study following the same submittal requirements as first draft. The second draft will be submitted for peer review in addition to NPS review.
7. Submission of a digital version of final special history study, 508-compliant (PDF). Including:
 - obtaining copyright permission and providing appropriate credit line for government printing of all images
 - providing images as digital images in high resolution jpg or tif format suitable for printing
 - identifying images by subject, publication information, and location of original.
8. Transfer of Knowledge Session: Virtual presentation summarizing findings for associated communities, park staff, and for management use.

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 2024 (tentative)

END DATE: June 2027 (tentative)

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Sought:

- Ph.D. in one of the following or a related field: AU.S. History specializing in colonial history (preferably French colonial 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

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. (Maximum length 2 pages, single-space 12 pt. font)
3. Project pre-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. (Maximum length: 4 pages, single-space 12 pt. Font)

Funding: The project will be funded up to \$120,000. 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, however the applicant should acknowledge that they will be able to perform the project within the financial ceiling stated for the project.

Budget items to include in consideration:

1. Personnel services

Principal Investigator/Editor

Chapter Contributors

Peer Reviewers (4)

2. Supplies and equipment

3. Travel (travel costs must be factored into the budget; there is not a separate fund source for site visits and research trips)

4. Cost of analysis and report preparation, including editing and 508 compliance.

5. Overhead, Indirect, and In-kind costs as applicable

6. Other expenses

Project award will be subject to the availability of funds.

Review: Pre-proposals will be evaluated based on the factors listed below and include the credentials of personnel, approach, and reasonableness of cost. Based on review of the Letters of Interest received, a principal investigator will be invited to prepare a full application including the required federal forms (SF424 series).

Deadline: The deadline for responding to this letter of interest is **April 15, 2024 by 5:00pm ET.**

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

EVALUATION FACTORS:

FACTOR 1 – QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND PROJECT TEAM (40 points)

Assessment of qualifications and experience as it relates to the requirements within the RLOI, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items. Principal Investigator (PI) or Project Manager (PM) must have experience that supports successful implementation of the effort. The applicant shall include a brief Statement of Qualifications (including):

- a. Biographical Sketch,
- b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
- c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
- d. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add.

FACTOR 2 – STRATEGIC THINKING/PLANNING APPROACH (35 points)

Overall approach and strategy described/outlined in the pre-proposal is responsive and aligns with the project's purpose and goals of the special history study as outlined in the RLOI. Discusses the proposed approach and techniques to accomplish the objectives. Methodology and soundness of the overall approach convey the applicant's understanding of the requirements of the solicitation and are sufficient for successful and timely completion of the special history study.

FACTOR 3 – REASONABLENESS OF COST (25 points)

Pre-proposal cost demonstrates the ability to deliver efficient and quality services. The cost is balanced with respect to cost and fair and reasonable pricing in accordance with factors 1 and 2.

CONTACTS:

Letters of Interest should be directed to Carol Daniels, Senior Science Advisor, National Park Service, South Florida Caribbean-CESU, (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, 470-817-8466.