

**REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST FOR  
A POTENTIAL PROJECT THROUGH  
THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS (CESU) NETWORK**

**Prospective Project Title: Buffalo Soldiers and Native neophyte experiences connected to National Historic Trails – Research and Development of StoryMaps**

The National Park Service' National Trails Office, Regions 6, 7 & 8 (NTIR) is seeking the assistance of principal investigator(s) and students for a project to research and create two ArcGIS Online StoryMaps; one focusing on the "Buffalo Soldier" experience at forts in the west associated with Santa Fe NHT and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT, and another covering the Native neophyte experience at historic Texas missions associated with El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT.

**BACKGROUND:** The National Park Service' National Trails Office, Regions 6, 7 & 8 (NTIR) is based in Santa Fe, New Mexico and administers ten national historic trails (NHTs) crossing over 29,000 miles and 24 states. NTIR does not own or manage any lands; NTIR's interdisciplinary staff works with community groups, educational institutions, private landowners, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and public agencies and others to promote, protect, and develop the NHTs. National historic trails are comprised of historic sites, buildings, roads, and trail segments that collectively tell the story of the trail and its impact on our nation. NTIR is anticipating funding to support collaborative development of two ArcGIS StoryMaps.

**DESCRIPTION OF ANTICIPATED WORK:**

This Request for Letters of Interest is intended to seek assistance of CESU members who will work collaboratively with NTIR staff, internal and external partners to conduct research, communicate with sites along the trails identified by NTIR, and create two StoryMaps. The recipient will engage enrolled students to accomplish the work. Those students will receive a wage and potentially other financial assistance from the recipient, with support from the NPS funds.

One StoryMap will be developed covering the "Buffalo Soldier" history and experience at the publicly accessible Fort Larned National Historic Site, Fort Union National Monument, Fort Craig (BLM Historic Site), and Fort Selden (State of New Mexico Historic Site) associated with the Santa Fe (SAFE) and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (ELCA) NHTs.

The other StoryMap will cover the experience of Native neophytes and their strategic use of the San Antonio Missions (San Antonio Missions National Historical Park), Mission Dolores (Texas Historical Commission) and other sites in Texas along El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT (ELTE). Using existing research and studies the project will determine whether any of the tribes involved in this experience still exist, and if so, will attempt to engage with them for their perspective on this story.

All work completed under this agreement must meet Section 508 Accessibility Requirements.

### **DELIVERABLES:**

NTIR will provide technical assistance to the Recipient in the form of sharing known historical data, GIS trail data, introducing Recipient to trail sites, create ArcGIS Online content for recipient editing/updating as needed, and reviewing the product at various stages of development. NTIR will also publish the final StoryMaps to the public and NHT websites.

The Recipient will:

- Prepare a schedule that conveys to NPS the timing of the overall work and dates of deliverables and reviews;
- conduct historical research using a variety of sources
- engage with sites identified by NTIR to learn more about the intersection of the stories, the NHTs and either Native neophytes or Buffalo Soldiers
- correspond routinely with NTIR, keeping NTIR informed of project status, schedule, and any issues
- shared drafts with NTIR and allow for a predetermined period for NTIR review of products
- incorporate identified sites into the project including by allowing them time to review the draft products and incorporating any feedback
- identify additional locations/interpretive content that could be added to the storymaps
- develop and finalize two Story Maps (data management, web map development, feature service creation, various media editing/metadata, interpretive content, etc.)
- insure all content meets NPS ArcGIS Online Acceptable Use Policy requirements and 508 compliance
- development of a document summarizing the established workflow for development of the information, data, maps, and plan for storymap maintenance/map updates
- provide suggestions to NTIR for potential additional stories that could be treated in a similar manner

The Recipient and the NTIR will:

- present the project to the National Trails System GIS Network.

**PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** The period of performance for this CESU agreement will be determined when the partners is selected and the Agreement awarded. The period of performance will be no longer than three years.

Tentative Start Date: September, 2025

Tentative End Date: September, 2028

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

A detailed study proposal and cost estimate is not requested at this time. Your Letter of Interest 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 [please provide specific information concerning expertise with historical research, ArcGIS Online, and ArcGIS Online StoryMaps. (Maximum length 2 pages, single-space 12 pt. font).
3. A summary of your vision for implementing this project that includes 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:** Anticipated funding for this project is \$45,000. This project will be administered by the National Park Service through a Task Agreement at the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%). Applicants must have a Master Cooperative Agreement with NPS in place at the time of award.

**DEADLINE:** The deadline for responding to this letter of interest is March 3, 2025 5:00 PM Mountain.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

This opportunity is open to non-federal members of the following CESU regional networks: Desert Southwest, Great Plains, Great Rivers, and Gulf Coast.

**REVIEW:** Letters of Interest will be evaluated based on qualifications and experience of principal investigator, and project team and proposed approach. Based on review of the Letters of Interest, a principal investigator will be invited to discuss the project more fully and develop a budget.

**CONTACTS:** Letters of Interest should be directed to Brian Deaton (brian\_deaton@nps.gov) by the closing date. Questions regarding the proposed scope of the project can be addressed to Brian Deaton (brian\_deaton@nps.gov, 505-819-9040).