

Solicitation for CESU Cooperator to Conduct a Special History and Archeology Study on the Lives of Enslaved African Americans at Manassas National Battlefield Park

Background: Manassas National Battlefield in Prince William County, Virginia, is famous today as the site of the first major land battle of the Civil War on July 21, 1861, and a second battle in 1862 that paved the way for the first Confederate attempt to invade the North. The battlefield was designated a national park in 1940.

Preservation of the wartime landscape has also meant the preservation of agricultural lands that were sites of enslavement for African Americans in the years leading to the Civil War (see the park's [Foundation Document](#)). Research to date at Manassas has found that dozens of enslaved people were held in bondage from the mid- to late 18th century on large estates like Pittsylvania and Pohoke, and on numerous middling and smaller farms through the antebellum and Civil War years (see report "African American Experiences Before Emancipation" at <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2293486>).

The goals of this project are to expand our understanding of the lives of enslaved African Americans and the ways they shaped and experienced the historic landscape, to make tangible connections to places and resources that should be preserved, and to bring greater knowledge and humanity to telling their stories.

Objectives and activities: The primary objective of this project is to develop a focused study of enslaved African American experiences on the battlefield prior to 1865. Research activities will include:

- Reviewing existing historical and archeological documentation to identify research gaps
- Conducting additional primary source research, and revisiting known sources with new research questions, to expand understanding of the lives of enslaved people at Manassas
- Developing historically rooted hypotheses about how enslaved peoples' daily experiences of the agricultural and battlefield landscapes may be reflected in potential locations of associated archeological resources (e.g. sites of residence, labor, or burial)
- Creating an archeological research design to test these hypotheses, and working with the National Park Service to obtain all necessary reviews, permits, etc.
- Conducting historical and archeological survey to identify and evaluate cultural resources associated with enslavement and African American life (Phase I and, as needed, Phase II), employing qualified personnel, methods, and documentation standards meeting the applicable *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* (<https://www.nps.gov/articles/sec-standards-prof-quals.htm>, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/series.htm?id=62144687-B082-538A-A0174FFF26496394>), and *Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resources Survey in Virginia* (https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SurveyManual_2017.pdf)
- Creating GIS, site, and collection records meeting all NPS and Virginia state requirements
- Reporting on research results, and assisting the NPS and public audiences in interpreting findings to better understand the lives of enslaved African Americans

Final products: The final products to be created for this project are:

- A research design prior to fieldwork, and annual summaries of each year's field and historical investigations.
- A written final report documenting the results of historical and archeological research. The report may be completed in two or more parts: e.g. a historical narrative suitable for the public, a brief summary of archeological findings, and a technical report including site location data not appropriate for general distribution.

- Final artifact catalog, artifacts, and field notes/documentation associated with the project. Catalog will be in ICMS format and artifacts prepared to meet NPS curatorial standards.
- GIS data collected for the project. Data will be submitted using NPS NCR geodatabase templates, and meeting NPS CRGIS data transfer standards.
- Documentation of archeological sites for the Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS) via the DHR Archaeological Site Inventory Form, and for NPS CRIS documentation in coordination with NPS archeologists.
- One or more public-facing events to share research, to be defined in consultation with the park, such as a public archeology day during fieldwork, presentation to a local or descendant community group, and/or a school program at the park.

Suggested project timeline (may be adapted based on proposals):

- Agreement development, award, and kickoff: February - September 2023
- Historical research, development of archeological research design and community outreach strategies, workshop with NPS, and obtaining permits and reviews: Fall 2023 – spring 2024
- Field data collection, analysis, and continuing historical research: Summer-Fall 2024
- Year 1 report, NPS workshop, and recommendations for year 2 research: Spring 2025
- Field data collection, analysis, and continuing historical research: Summer 2025
- Completion of final reports, GIS, catalog, and site records, etc: Fall – Winter 2025
- NPS review of final products and partner revision: Spring – Summer 2026
- Completion of project and final report submission: Fall 2026

PI requirements

This project requires a principal investigator(s) meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Archeology. The project team may also include a co-PI meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for History, with expertise in 19th century African American history. Specialized research experience in African American historical archeology is necessary for this project.

Funds Available

The project is funded by the National Park Service in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23). Anticipated project funds are up to \$190,000 for the full scope of the project. This includes the CESU overhead rate of 17.5%.

Government-Furnished Equipment

Methods and equipment for archeological survey will be recommended by the partner and determined in collaboration with the NPS. Supplies and equipment required for historical and archeological research should be provided by the partner, unless the NPS has existing and available equipment that the partner does not and cannot supply given the total project budget.

Letters of Interest

Send Letters of Research Interest (LOIs) to the e-mail address in the “contact” section. The LOI should describe your research interest(s) in the project, similar past projects, your proposed approach for conducting the project, key personnel you would work with, and any additional relevant experience. Please include your name, affiliated institution, and contact information. Curriculum vitae for key personnel can be submitted as attachments.

The deadline for responding to this letter of interest is **March 15, 2023**. LOIs will be reviewed according to the criteria below, and top candidate(s) will be contacted for full proposal development.

Evaluation for Letters of Interest

Based on a review of the Letters of Interest received, an investigator will be invited to prepare a full study proposal, schedule, and detailed budget. Letters will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Soundness and feasibility of the proposed approach for meeting project objectives within schedule and budget (10 points maximum)
2. Relevant knowledge and experience of PIs and project team, specifically in historical archeology, sites of enslavement, and African American history (10 points maximum)
3. Demonstrated record of professional reports and publications (10 points maximum)
4. Quality and magnitude of public benefit of the proposed approach (e.g. through education and training for diverse students and/or inviting community engagement) (10 points maximum)

Contact

Responses to this request for LOIs should be directed before the closing date to Emily_Kambic@nps.gov. Additional questions can be answered by contacting Emily Button Kambic, PhD., Historian, National Capital Regional Office, at (202) 794-0192 or by email.