

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST  
FOR  
PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2024  
THROUGH THE  
COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS (CESU) NETWORK**

**Project Title:** Conduct Archeological (Geophysical) Survey of 1868 Treaty Encampment Area at Fort Laramie National Historic Site, Fort Laramie, Wyoming

**Objectives:** Fort Laramie NHS (FOLA) proposes a comprehensive archeological survey to investigate the 1868 Treaty encampment site. Identifying the location of this site and the historical context of land use was discussed as a project of high importance during the park's May 2021 Tribal Consultation meeting. This research should employ complementary sets of low-impact geospatial and geophysical techniques to investigate possible encampment locations and historical land use. This survey will identify and locate near surface and sub-surface cultural resources. Features identified by geophysical methods, as well as isolates on the surface will be documented to NPS and SOI standards and will be recorded via GPS for creating GIS layers. FOLA will use this data to develop a map of sub-surface anomalies which will inform researchers of areas in need of additional protection and future research such as limited sub-surface testing.

**Background and Overview:** FOLA served as a commercial and social hub of the Northern Plains for much of the 19th century. It was the location of one of the first fur trading posts in the central Rocky Mountains and was instrumental in the establishment of trade relationships with many of the Northern Plains tribes. Continuously operating between 1834 and 1890, FOLA influenced the exploration and settlement of the West. Here, the Laramie and North Platte River Valleys created a natural migration corridor that influenced the location of historic trails and contributes to the historic scene and sense of place. Among the most significant of the park's cultural resources, its archeology illustrates a vast period of human history. Thousands of Euro-Americans and Native Americans camped on these grounds over the years. Nothing is known about the archeology associated with the tribes who signed the treaties of 1851 and 1866-68 and camped at the fort during the negotiations. Likewise, there have never been any archeological investigations on the various overland trail campgrounds known to have existed around Fort Laramie during the 1840s-1850s, nor, using modern techniques, the actual physical remains of the various trails and roads which passed through Fort Laramie

Fort Laramie continues to be regarded by Northern Plains tribes as the gathering site for negotiations. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) have recognized that careful stewardship of federally protected cultural resources has become a critical component in preservation of Wyoming state history and heritage. Consultation with the SHPO and the THPOs of the park's 25 traditionally associated tribes indicates both entities have expressed strong support for a plan that preserves FOLA's resources. Furthermore, Laramie and North Platte River dynamics have changed considerably with severe flood events and unpredictable erosion and sediment deposition within the river

channel and floodplain. Development of a river corridor management plan would be an ideal opportunity to include members of the tribes in the assessment of resource impacts and alternative identification from the cultural perspective of the site's descendants.

**Deliverables:** This activity will survey approximately 300-350 acres of land not previously investigated and utilize geophysical techniques for the investigation. The results of this work will have major implications for the interpretation and management of cultural resources at FOLA, as well as significant impact on our understanding of land use and Treaty encampment location(s).

Formal results include:

-NHPA Section 110 inventory of encampment site to current reporting standards. Sites identified will be geospatially located, site form and number assigned, condition assessment (if applicable) updated in CRIS-AR and included in a final report. Information obtained is baseline information about potential prehistoric and historic settlements that will help management respond to environmental concerns and site maintenance.

-Documentation created through this project will be added to the Park archives and cataloged into Interior Collections Management System (ICMS), Integrated Resource Management Application (IRMA) and library holdings as appropriate to make accessible for the public. Additionally, the cultural resources information system, integrated resource management system, and geographic information system database will be updated for effective planning and management. All GIS spatial data will be created in accordance with NPS GIS standards and be added to the park's CRIS-AR database GIS data will be shared with the IMR GIS program for updating the web-atlas, and park staff will work with the GIS program to ensure that new data is collected and stored meeting NPS GIS standards. GIS data include locational information and condition.

-The information generated will continue dialogue with the park's 25 associated Tribes, WYO SHPO, and to provide data for park planning, interpretation, and resource management.

**Funding:** The NPS will provide up to \$103,810.00 in financial assistance to the investigators

**Anticipated Start Date:** May 2024

**End Date:** September 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025(or as appropriate for the academic year). NOTE: all applicable field work must be completed in CY 2024. Analysis and reporting/cataloging deliverables may be submitted at a later determined date.

### **Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications**

Please prepare a 2-3 page summary of how you would envision implementing this project. Include your name, department, university or organization, and contact information, as well as information about any relevant experience, past projects, and staff, faculty, or students who would be available to work on the project. For additional information or questions, please reach out to the park contact listed below.

Statements of Interest should be submitted to Chris Mather no later than **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**. **Note: a proposed budget is not requested with the summary.**

**Contact Information**

Chris Mather  
Cultural Resources Program Manager  
Fort Laramie National Historic Site  
965 Gray Rocks Road  
Fort Laramie, WY 82212

Office: 370-837-2221 ext. 3018  
[chris\\_mather@nps.gov](mailto:chris_mather@nps.gov)