



Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship Program

Background

Many complex issues threaten the integrity of natural ecosystems, cultural resources, and visitor experiences at national parks including Gateway National Recreation Area. The Research Learning Center in partnership with City University of New York-Queens College completed a research catalog (available at: <http://www.nps.gov/gate/naturescience/jamaica-bay-institute-research.htm>) to identify gaps in resource knowledge and areas in which indicators need to be developed to protect and maintain unimpaired the quality of park resources and visitor experiences. Research in these areas will help park managers understand these challenges and make decisions based on scientifically credible information. Research is one important tool used by the National Park Service to meet its stewardship responsibilities. To encourage scientific and scholarly research that addresses management issues, the National Park Service and the Gateway Research Learning Center established the Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship Program.

The Gateway Research Learning Center (GRLC) seeks to connect people to Gateway through research, education, and communication. The GRLC was established in the spirit of the Natural Resource Challenge, a National Park Service initiative aimed at increasing research and education efforts in our national parks. Research fellows will provide research or scholarship to address issues of importance to park managers, and will also share their research with others through a public lecture and another form of outreach activity/product.

A typical fellowship grant is expected to be \$4,000; however, grant requests of up to \$7,500 will be considered. The fellowship program supports field research in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences. Project requests are more likely to be successful if they address topics identified in our research catalog.

Eligibility

The Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship Program supports field research in any area of Gateway National Recreation Area. The fellowship program is open to academic institutions. Research fellows must be self-directed individuals whose work will contribute to the scientific knowledge of the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Funds may be used for a variety of purposes including salary support; room, board, and travel directly associated with fieldwork; supplies; and analytical costs. Requests for permanent equipment are not encouraged but will be considered; any permanent equipment purchased with fellowship funds remains the property of the National Park Service and will be returned to the park at the end of the yearly funding cycle. Fellowship funds cannot be used for tuition, fringe benefits, institutional overhead, thesis preparation, publication of results, or costs associated with attendance at professional meetings.

Recipients may apply for a Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship in subsequent years, but project proposals will be evaluated independently of the previous year's work. Projects need not have matching funds, but collaborative projects are encouraged.

Opportunities for Research

Ecosystems in Gateway National Recreation Area range from complex dune systems and beach areas to grassland expanses, shoreline habitat, upland fields, woods, salt marshes and estuarine systems. Jamaica Bay and Sandy Hook are home to a myriad of species and an important stop over for many migrating birds. Gateway offers unique opportunities to study such topics as air and water quality, visitor experiences, the effects of climate change on physical and biological resources and on all aspects of an urban ecological landscape.

A list of research desired or needed by Gateway managers, including topics with existing data to utilize, is posted at <http://www.nps.gov/gate/naturescience/jamaica-bay-institute-research.htm>. Discussions with park staff about your project are encouraged to maximize its value to managers.

Contact Jessica_Browning@nps.gov to learn about appropriate staff to contact.

Special Research Considerations

Gateway National Recreation Area is located within a highly populated urban environment set amongst the backdrop of a rich military history. Its 13,000+ acres of land and water provide outstanding research opportunities in diverse urban settings.

Researchers have responsibilities to adhere to laws protecting wilderness, follow Leave-No-Trace guidelines, and consider cultural and wildlife values in making minimal impacts in all aspects of research.

Many areas of the park can be reached by public transportation. Please visit the Metropolitan Transportation Authority website (<http://www.mta.info/nyct/index.html>) for maps and schedules.

By request, research fellows will be able to use Gateway Research Learning Center facilities for guest researchers (e.g., work space, computer access, lecture space, and laboratory space). Lodging at reduced rates may also be available. These needs should be incorporated into the research proposal.

To facilitate boat use, project administration and coordination, a park staff member will be assigned as a research liaison to each research fellow.

Provisional Acceptance Pending Research Permit

For those Gateway Research Learning Center Research Fellows who propose to conduct fieldwork acceptance in the Fellowship Program is provisional until a Research and Collecting Permit is issued to the recipient. Initial acceptance as a Fellow is NOT A GUARANTEE that a research and collecting permit will be issued for work in Gateway. Modification of methods or sites may be necessary. Information on applying to conduct research in Gateway or any national park may be found at the NPS website <http://science.nature.nps.gov/research> and can be viewed at anytime. Gateway Research Learning Center fellows must submit an application for a research and collecting permit concurrently with Fellowship materials. Please add the words, "Fellowship Applicant" following the project title when applying for Research and Collecting Permit. Prior to issuing a permit, park staff reviews the project for compliance with park policies and administrative concerns.

Requirements of Award Winners

Each fellow is required to provide the following products and engage in the outreach efforts as mentioned during their time at Gateway and within six months of completion (except where noted or arranged):

- A presentation at the Gateway Research Learning Center (or other venue as agreed to) during the “summer” season in conjunction with the field project (can include: plans for study, observations so far, and similar projects already completed)
- Educational outreach such as a public involvement in research, poster, fact sheet, hi-tech or classroom activity to share the research process and the results (see flier with ideas at www.nps.gov/gate/natureandscience/jamaica_bay_institute_share_your_research.htm)
- Provide electronic final report (summary or abstract, intro, methods, results, discussion, literature cited)
- Send digital jpgs or tif photos of researcher/field work in progress (with captions)
- Provide a brief summary of research results using the “Sharing Research” format (format will be provided) Sharing Research and photos may be used in brochures or fact sheets.

Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship recipients must fulfill all conditions of the park research permit (e.g., submit an Investigator’s Annual Report and a final report or thesis, and comply with curatorial guidelines for collections).

Important Dates

The deadline for fellowship applications is March 11th. Awards will be announced approximately one month after the closing date. Field work must begin within a reasonable time after receipt of the fellowship. However, exceptions may be appropriate and should be discussed with the Gateway Research Learning Center Director (see contact information below). Educational outreach, final report, photos, and brief summaries are due within six months after the completion of field work. Awards will be disbursed in at the outset of the field work (on approval of research and collecting permit).

Application Process

Individuals wishing to apply for the Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship must submit (electronically) to the program research administrator listed at the bottom of this page the following documents in MS Word (.doc) format:

- A completed application cover sheet that can be downloaded from the following website [www.nps.gov/gate/natureandscience/Jamaica Bay Institute Fellowship Program.htm](http://www.nps.gov/gate/natureandscience/Jamaica_Bay_Institute_Fellowship_Program.htm)
- A research proposal of no more than 1500 words that contains the following sections (for additional guidance please refer to the Research Proposal Guidance document available at [www.nps.gov/gate/natureandscienc/Jamaica Bay Institute Fellowship Program.htm](http://www.nps.gov/gate/natureandscienc/Jamaica_Bay_Institute_Fellowship_Program.htm)):

(1) Project title:

(2) Research objectives or questions

(3) Methods including data analysis

(4) Requests for logistical help or park equipment (e.g. temporary work or storage space, road access by private vehicle, use of the Gateway Research Learning Center Research Vessel)

(5) Project budget for funds received (including any matching funds received or anticipated)

(6) Project timeline, including tentative schedule for fieldwork in Gateway

(7) Annotated list of project deliverables (see Requirements above)

- A basic curriculum vitae or resume that lists research experience, published papers, presentations, etc.
- A letter of support from an academic advisor or principal investigator

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria. Criteria are listed in order of their value to the selection.

Significance of the project to park management issues or resources

(1) (high priority) Does it help managers make decisions about critical resource issues?

(medium) Does it provide missing resource information or help set targets for indicators of desired resource condition?

(low) Does it provide other information about Gateway resources?

(2) Scientific or scholarly merit of the proposal (Are the study questions and methods clear?)

(3) Feasibility and scope of work (Can it be done in the timeframe suggested?)

(4) Novelty of project—

(most preferred) Is the research a new project?

(preferred) Is it a new angle on an old project?

(least preferred) Is it a continuation of an existing project?

(5) Demonstrated ability of the investigator to carry out the proposed research

(6) What experience or credentials prepare the applicant to do this research?

Contact information

Ask questions and submit proposals for the Gateway Research Learning Center Fellowship Program to

Jessica_Browning@nps.gov (718) 338-3338 ext. 246