OCEAN ALASKA SCIENCE AND LEARNING CENTER

FY17-18 Request for Proposals

Pre-Proposals Due on 17 June 2016

Full Proposals Due on 16 September 2016

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Important Changes from FY16 Funding Call

1) Two-year projects. As in previous years, the OASLC still seeks proposals to fund outreach, education, and research projects focused on marine-influenced[1] cultural or natural resources in Alaska's eleven coastal national park units. In an effort to allow proposal authors to "think bigger," we are striving to fund two to four larger projects that span FY17 and FY18. One-year projects are still welcome to apply. We anticipate that a total of $200,000-$300,000 may be available for both years combined.

2) More Outreach and Education encouraged. To date, OASLC has received very few proposals led by the Interpretation and Education Division. We encourage outreach and education-focused projects and innovative outreach ideas in research proposals. Please contact OASLC staff if you would like to discuss potential ideas.

3) Pre-proposals. In order to promote strong proposals with a higher chance of success, OASLC will be asking for short pre-proposals that will receive feedback before authors draft complete proposals. Please see the Review Process section below for more details.

[1] Marine-influenced resources should include any terrestrial or marine resource with a direct connection to the ocean. For terrestrial based resources the marine connection should be the focus of the project (e.g. brown bears feeding on intertidal invertebrates) Contact us if you have questions.

Ocean Alaska Science and Learning Center Mission and Goals

The Ocean Alaska Science and Learning Center is one of 18 National Park Service Research Learning Centers located around the country to increase the communication, use, and effectiveness of scientific research being conducted in the national parks. The mission of the OASLC is to promote stewardship of the marine influenced ecosystems of Alaska's coastal national parks through education and research. As part of the OASLC five-year strategic plan, we are announcing the FY17-18 funding call.

The pertinent strategic goals of the OASLC are:

- Increase marine science literacy of NPS personnel and partners in order to communicate marine science to the public.
- Support and increase the use of marine science in park management decisions.
- Promote and facilitate marine scientific research in Alaska's coastal parks.

Following the OASLC Strategic Plan's guiding principles, proposals that benefit multiple parks, leverage other resources (e.g. existing projects, park facilities, etc.), and include well-developed education or outreach components will be favored in the rating process. For this funding call, proposals **must also focus on climate change**, one of the eight OASLC cross-cutting issues. This priority was determined during a March 2016 survey of Alaska coastal parks intended to prioritize OASLC themes for funding. Examples of climate change research and science communication projects are very broad and include, but are not limited to, ocean acidification, sea level rise, coastal erosion, tidewater glacier change, other changes to the marine environment, and other natural, cultural, and subsistence resource impacts.

Eligibility

Any national park unit or National Park Service program (e.g. Inventory and Monitoring[2]) may submit a proposal as long as it pertains to one or more of the eleven coastal park units in Alaska, and is focused on climate change. Projects focusing on natural resources, cultural resources, and/or education and outreach are all encouraged to apply. NPS staff with active partnerships already identified or involved in a proposed project should submit proposals on behalf of their partners.

[2] It is highly unlikely the OASLC will fund a long-term monitoring project beyond two years. Pilot studies, literature reviews or analyzing existing data for publication or other evaluation are more appropriate.

Funding must be obligated beginning in FY17 and can be extended through FY18. FY18 funding cannot be obligated until FY18 and after an annual report is submitted to OASLC (due 30 October each year, see Deliverables and Reporting Requirements section below). Full proposals must identify how funds will be obligated if external partners are involved (e.g. contract, CESU Task Agreement, etc.). A letter of support from identified project partners is required as part of the final proposal submission, to indicate their willingness and ability to participate. A brief letter of support from the relevant park superintendent(s) will also be required for a proposal to be eligible.

Education/Outreach Component for Research Proposals

As stated on the first page of this funding call, we encourage proposals focused on Outreach and Education objectives. But, research-focused proposals should include a meaningful educational or outreach component. We strongly urge principle investigators to include park interpretive staff when composing this aspect of the proposal. Funding, including salary, may be included in the budget to complete these components. This aspect of the proposal will be rated.

Meaningful education or outreach components could include (but are not limited to) school programs, public seminars, or other community outreach activities. While resource briefs and web articles are useful products, we are looking for proposal authors to think creatively. Be sure to identify the audience[3] and who will be developing the education/outreach products. Internal audiences (i.e. "inreach" or NPS staff) are perfectly acceptable target audiences for well-developed education and "outreach" components. OASLC staff may be involved in developing and/or executing the education/outreach products upon request, but please contact us before you include us in the proposal. Proposals that include OASLC time or effort without contacting us first will be rated lower.

Review Process

Project partners will first develop a one-page pre-proposal based on the template on the second-to-last page of this RFP. Within one month of submitting to OASLC, pre-proposals will be reviewed by OASLC staff and returned with comments identifying areas of improvement and potential efficiencies with other proposals. If necessary at this stage, OASLC may seek comments from NPS staff or technical experts from other organizations. Even though poorly

[3] Please think carefully about who the audience really is. Rarely is "the general public" the target audience. Rather a subset of the public is usually the true audience, such as Visitor Center visitors, Facebook users, high school teachers, or village elders.

thought out or hasty proposals may be rejected at this time, it is not the intent of OASLC to reject pre-proposals, but to provide sufficient feedback for project partners to create competitive final proposals.

Full proposals will undergo three stages of review. First, OASLC will identify technical experts from NPS or other organizations to rate proposals based on the four proposal criteria: leveraging, multiple parks, feasibility and technical soundness, and education and/or outreach. Each criterion is ranked on a scale of 1-5. After the technical rating is submitted, OASLC will convene a multi-divisional review panel consisting of individuals from NPS Alaska Region to examine ratings and reviews, ensure reviews were thorough, consider which proposals best meet pertinent OASLC strategic goals and guiding principles (see pg. 2 above), and create a final funding recommendation for the OASLC Board of Directors. The review panel will include a balance of experts in natural resources, cultural resources, and education and outreach, respectively. The Board of Directors will then review and discuss the panel's funding recommendation and approve final selections.

Milestone	**2016 due date**
Pre-proposals due	17 June
Pre-proposal review returned by OASLC	15 July
Full proposals due	16 September
Full proposals reviewed and ranked by technical experts	21 October
Final proposal rankings approved by OASLC Board	11 November
Proposal funds awarded	18 November

Four Proposal Ranking Criteria

1. Leveraging. A guiding principle of the OASLC is to leverage existing research and education resources to facilitate work in Alaska's coastal parks. Leveraging can include adding work elements to existing projects, in-kind support of personnel, equipment, or facilities from parks or partners; coordinating travel with other projects to reduce costs; or any opportunity to increase the value of the work completed for the money spent. Please be specific on how your proposal is leveraging resources.

> **5 points.** The proposal leverages resources to a high degree. Proposed work is a component added to an existing funded project; substantial in-kind support in terms of staff time is included, facilities or equipment are donated by a park or partner; dollar

value of leveraged resources is equal or greater than the proposed budget; proposed work would not be possible without the leveraged resources.
3 points. The proposal leverages resources to a moderate degree. Proposed work shares resources with a concurrent project; some in-kind support of staff time, facilities, or equipment are provided, dollar value of leveraged resources is less than half of the proposed budget; proposed work is possible without leveraged resources, but does not accomplish as much.
1 point. Leveraged resources are minimal to non-existent. Proposed work is not combined with any other effort; staff time, facilities or equipment are available but charged to the project.

2. Multiple Parks. The ocean is a shared common resource that connects all coastal parks. A national and regional goal is to establish a "seamless network" of coastal parks. In addition, the OASLC strives to work with all coastal parks in Alaska using limited funds. By focusing our efforts on cross-cutting issues and on multi-park efforts we aim to increase the overall capacity and inter-connectedness of coastal parks.

5 points. The proposal clearly involves multiple parks or identifies resources, issues, and/or deliverables that can very plainly be applied to management practices in more than one park.
3 points. The proposed work occurs in a single park but clearly has the potential to benefit additional parks through shared natural or cultural resources, solving similar management challenges, or providing shared deliverables in the future.
1 point. The proposed work involves only a single park and does not demonstrate a clear benefit to other parks.

3. Feasibility and Technical Soundness. Are the objectives and methods clear and appropriate? Is project completion feasible given the objectives, methods, proposed budget, timing of work, financial instruments (i.e. agreements, contracts, etc.), personnel experience, suggested partners, etc?

5 points. The project is very realistic as described in the proposal. Objectives are clearly stated and easy to evaluate; methods are an accepted and sound way to complete the work; a clear path towards obligating the money in FY16 is identified; the amount of work is feasible with the time available; the personnel are experienced and knowledgeable; adequate planning for timing field work is apparent; partners are obviously willing to work together (e.g. with a letter of support); etc.
3 points. The project is probably realistic as described in the proposal. Objectives are described but lack specificity; methods are untested, or fail to address important

considerations; a plan for conducting the work is identified but obligation of funds may depend on things beyond the PI's control (e.g. weather, successful funding of another proposal, seasonal hires, etc.); the work is feasible as long as things go according to plan; capable personnel (e.g. new staff or interns who have training but no experience) are likely to be available; capable partners have been suggested but not confirmed; etc.
1 point. The project is not realistic as described in the proposal. Plans for conducting the work suggest ideas without thought to the time needed to complete the work, hire staff, obligate money, fail to account for other needed resources (such as facilities or vehicles), or identify necessary partners.

4. Education and/or Outreach. Science and scientific results are far more effective when they can be communicated clearly and effectively. External and internal (i.e. NPS staff) audiences will be weighted equally. Do the education and/or outreach methods enhance understanding of the state of the science, the scientific process, or the role of science in responding to these cross-cutting issues? Do the methods effectively communicate the results or process used to conduct research?

5 points. The education and/or outreach component is effective and well planned. The proposal specifically increases the scientific knowledge of a particular audience. The target audience is clearly identified and appropriate. The methods are well tested with strong potential to create relevancy and meaning for the target audience. The proposal helps the chosen audience respond to the cross-cutting issues identified or informs them specifically about the overall project results. Appropriate staff are identified to fulfill the educational or outreach component of the proposal.
3 points. The education and/or outreach component is informative but lacks a targeted approach specifically designed to enhance scientific understanding. A target audience is identified. Methods may be new or untested. Staff are identified who could possibly do the work, but lack previous experience.
1 point. The proposal contains basic products that would generally inform audiences about the cross-cutting issue. The scientific aspects of the issue or project are not included. The audience is vaguely defined. Staff with the appropriate skills to complete the work are not identified.

Deliverables and Reporting Requirements

Project deliverables should be clearly identified in the proposal.

Annual reports are due by October 30th each year the project remains active. Reports should include the status of the proposed work, any deviations or unexpected changes that occurred, and a status of funds for the project. The annual report may be a page or less.

Final reports are due by October 30th in the final project year. Reports should include a brief summary of the final outcomes of the project, any deviations or unexpected changes to the proposal that occurred, lessons learned from the project, a final total of funds spent, and any partnerships that were created or involved.

Copies of technical reports or other tangible deliverables should be given to the OASLC, and uploaded to IRMA (an NPS data and information repository).

10 to 15 high resolution photos (300 dpi or better) of project-related work should be shared with the OASLC for future outreach products. Please include photo credits and a caption (who, what, when, where). Contact us if you have questions about the best types of photos.

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OASLC Funding Call Pre-Proposal Template

These may not exceed one page total (single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font)
Recommended Reviewers section does not count against one-page limit
Submit pre-proposals to Benjamin Pister at benjamin_pister@nps.gov

Project Title:

Participating Parks:

Principal Investigator/Lead:

Partners:

Project Duration:

Problem statement (200 words max): *What are the goals and objectives of the proposed project? Why are these important questions to answer for the participating parks? How do they relate to climate change?*

Proposed activity (300 words max): *What specific approach(es) will you use to achieve project goals and objectives? For research projects, please include a description of education and outreach activities.*

Proposed deliverables:

Estimated total funding request:

Estimated leveraging amounts:

Recommended Reviewers: This does not count against the one-page limit. *Please list three people qualified to rate the technical merits of the future full proposal (include affiliation, phone, email). Reviewers listed here should not directly benefit from the proposal getting funded or be recent collaborators. Feel free to list reviewers that do not work for the National Park Service. Please contact OASLC with any questions regarding a potential conflict of interest.*

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Submit Proposals to Benjamin Pister at benjamin_pister@nps.gov

Project Title:

Amount Requested: $

Parks Involved:

Project Manager/Contact Person:

Email:

Phone:

Brief Summary of the Project (250 words max):

Project Description (2,500 words max): *Be sure to address each of the four rating criteria listed in the funding call. Include objectives, methods, who will do the work and where, any partners that will be involved, and any final products or results that will be produced. The project must clearly address climate change. Succinct and concise proposals tend to be favored. Seriously. Make it easy for reviewers.*

Provide a List of Principle Tasks and a Timeline for Completion:

Deliverables: *Indicate the final products or results of the project.*

Budget: *You may add line-by-line budget in this Word document, or submit your budget in Excel. Please format the budget in a way that reviewers will easily comprehend. Be sure to include how you will obligate money if you plan to use a financial instrument such as a contract or an agreement, and the overhead rate. Reviewers use budgets to evaluate feasibility and extent of leveraging. Be sure to include enough detail to assess these components.*

Letters of Support: *Please attach any letters of support from collaborators as applicable. Scanned copies are acceptable.*

Superintendent's Letter: *Please include a letter of support from the superintendent(s) of the park(s) you are proposing to work in. Projects without this letter will not be considered.*