Request for Letter of Research Interest (LOI)

**Title and Background:** Scholars-in-Park Program --- 2016 to 2017

Sitka National Historical Park (SITK) is the only National Park Service Unit that represents the historical significance of Russian colonial expansion into the northwest portion of North America and the eventual purchase of the Alaska Territory by the United States in 1867. The park was authorized by Congress to commemorate Tlingit and other Native Alaskan resistance to Russian expansion into Alaska, the evangelical and missionary work of the Russian Orthodox Church---supported directly by commercial interests and the Russian Crown, and the ongoing influence of Native Alaskan culture and art in SE Alaska.

Sitka National Historical Park protects and preserves the location of the Battle of Sitka in 1804, where Tlingit warriors of the Kiks’adi clan defended their land against Russian forces, the Russian Bishop’s House---the physical, spiritual, and geographic center of the Orthodox Church’s ecclesiastical landscape from the early 1840s until the mid-1900s, and a collection of totem poles that reflect the cultural continuity of Native Alaskan cultures into the present. Park managers view the continuation of a program of historical research into these three primary areas of preservation as essential to keeping the cultural meanings of the park relevant and interpreted in modern and culturally-appropriate ways.

To support park objectives, the selected scholar will serve a residency agreed-upon by the scholar, their university or institution, and the park, in Sitka, Alaska---initiating, carrying out, and/or completing scholarly or popular historical works that relate to the park’s themes. The selected scholar may also participate in training staff, presenting programs to the public, and working with other NPS historians. Ideally, the selected scholar will be granted sabbatical leave by their host university to participate, or, if the scholar has a graduate student or academic project, that all parties approve the project as mutually beneficial.

**Nature of the Work**

In preparation for the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase in 2017, Sitka National Historical Park would like to gain a better understanding of how both Native Alaskan and Russian cultures have contributed to the history of Alaska. Suitable research topics could include the following:

- Native Alaskan responses to expansionist trade in SE Alaska,
- Sequential exposition of the expansion/administration of Russian Colonies and Orthodox missions and parishes from circa 1760 to 1860,
The role of New England merchants in the expansion of trade in SE Alaska from 1795 to 1867 and its role in supporting---and competing with---Russian commercial interests,

Travels of the Russian American Company officials, other merchants, the Russian Navy, and Orthodox church officials throughout Alaska during the period of interest,

Financial support of the Russian colony during the period of interest,

Demographic changes resulting from Russian mission establishment and direction from the Bishop,

The initiation, expansion, and maintenance of education programs in Alaska from 1760 to 1867,

Establishment, maintenance, and social implications of Sitka-based, Orthodox-taught boarding school education for Native Alaskans, and

Recruitment of Native Alaskans for positions in commercial, religious, and social organizations in Sitka, in Alaska, and in Russia.

Work completed during the residency may include:

- Reading and synthesizing historic works on Russian America, including those written in languages other than English,
- Researching, transcribing, and summarizing original unpublished letters, manuscripts, ledgers, reports, and other documents,
- Analyzing original and secondary historical documents to develop a time-sensitive and historical-theme-sensitive publication that interprets a significant, long-term change in many Native Alaskan societies,
- Developing accurate and accessible (easy for the public to understand) figures, graphs, and other multi-media products that will convey the importance of the history of Russian colonization in Alaska to the overall history of the United States,
- Producing academic papers, reports, and other written works suitable for publication on the theme of Russian colonial history in Alaska that have a broader focus that a single site or site complex.

This project requires that the principal investigator(s) have deep knowledge and experience in the study of Russian History or the colonial history of the North Pacific, as well as knowledge about historic preservation and planning, and knowledge and experience with completing actionable planning documents at either the state or federal level.

**Project Timeframe**

Deadline for responding to this letter of interest is January 30, 2016.

**Work Products**

The products from this project will include scholarly and popular historical papers that jointly satisfy requirements of the scholar’s research interest, the scholar’s university, and the National Park Service. These papers will be on topics that relate directly to the park’s legislated purposes (see Background section above). Additional products could include electronic, scanned copies of any primary source documents used in the creation of scholarly and popular papers, author’s notes and document summaries, specific recommendations for enhanced interpretation of the Totem Unit and Russian Bishop’s House, and general recommendations for further study and the collection of primary reference materials related to the park’s primary assets and purposes.

**Funds Available**
Project funds available are up to $45,000 that include the CESU overhead rate of 17.5 percent. Funding limitations require that Sitka NHP managers maximize the return on expended NPS funds. Only universities within the CESU network are eligible to apply.

**Contact**
Letters of Research Interest should be directed to Brinnen Carter (Brinnen_Carter@nps.gov) before the closing date. Dr. Carter can answer additional questions either by e-mail or phone (907-738-4960).