Title: Mount Rushmore Ethnographic Overview and Assessment

The Midwest Region Cultural Anthropology program is interested in conducting an Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EOA) for Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU) in South Dakota. The program acting on behalf of MORU is seeking a partner to aid in identifying and understanding historic and contemporary cultural associations between traditionally associated peoples and American Indian tribes with Mount Rushmore and the land encompassed within the boundaries of the park. The National Park Service defines “traditionally associated peoples” as:

“social/cultural entities such as tribes, communities, and kinship units, as well as park neighbors, traditional residents, and former residents who remain attached to a park area despite having relocated, are “traditionally associated” with a particular park when (1) the entity regards park resources as essential to its development and continued identity as a culturally distinct people; (2) the association has endured for at least two generations (40 years); and (3) the association began prior to establishment of the park.”

The partner will be tasked with completing an ethnographic study that will document the historic relationship and contemporary values and beliefs the identified groups have with MORU. The Ethnographic Overview and Assessment will review existing information on park resources traditionally valued by the identified associated groups. The final report will identify park resources such as landscapes, objects, plants and animals, or sites and structures that are important to a people’s sense of purpose and provide an overview of major themes regarding culture and lifestyle and their implications for MORU resource managers. Information for the completion of the EOA will come mostly from archives and publications and will be supplemented by interviews with tribal and community members and other constituents. This will involve trips to specific sites to supply any missing ethnographic data. The study will also identify areas for future research and collaboration. The EOA study is one of many undertaken by the National Park Service to inventory the wide range of resources (natural, historic, archeological, ethnographic) that are found on park lands. Results of studies like these are fully considered in resource management plans, park interpretive or educational programs, and in the day-to-day operations of parks.

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is located approximately 25 miles southwest of Rapid City, South Dakota in the Black Hills. The 1300-acre national memorial was established on March 3, 1925, as the Mount Harney National Memorial to provide a location for the carving of giant statues within the Harney National Forest. The name of the mountain and memorial were later changed to Rushmore, dedicated to “symbolize
the spirit and ideals of the westward expansion of America and the growth of democratic ideals and institutions.” The idea of carving large statues in the Black Hills was originally conceived in 1923 as a tourist attraction. The carving project was led by Gutzon Borglum, from 1927 to 1941, to erect the likenesses of four prominent U.S. presidents on the south face of Mount Rushmore. Seen by almost three million visitors each year, the “Shrine of Democracy” sculpture is regarded as one of the most highly regarded national icons in the country.

**Nature of Work Required**

The MWR Cultural Anthropology Program envisions the project will:

1) provide a meaningful exchange of knowledge and ideas that will enhance scholarly research and the park’s and public’s understanding of Mount Rushmore and the lands encompassed by the park’s boundaries;

2) will identify which Native American tribes attach cultural meaning and/or significance to MORU;

3) will identify other traditionally associated people’s, if any, that attach cultural meaning and/or significance to MORU;

4) will identify areas of shared interest or scholarship, and

5) will identify other areas in which future consultation and cooperation is desired, warranted, or requested.

Responses to this LOI should identify the specific capabilities within the university that will allow them to address the needs of the project, including identification of the relevant departments, faculty, students, and resources that will be involved in the project. Response to this LOI should also outline their approach to the project.

The MWR Cultural Anthropology Program’s substantial involvement with the project will include: providing the cooperator previously collected ethnohistorical and ethnographic studies; coordinating and consulting the findings with the appropriate park units, the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO); assisting the cooperator in locating and determining park and jurisdictional boundaries; and aiding the cooperator in producing a report on the project that meets desires and requirements of the National Park Service and Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

**Project Timeframe**

Deadline for responding to this letter of interest is Monday, April 20, 2015.

**Requirements**

The research will be directed and overseen by a Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should be an applied cultural anthropologist with a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, or with demonstrable and comparable research experience, evidenced by a publication record demonstrating a professional level of research, analysis, and report preparation. It is expected that this record will reflect an understanding and ability to
apply ethnographic and cultural anthropology research methods, and a level of education and experience beyond that of a B.A. and two years of graduate study in cultural anthropology. The researcher must demonstrate significant involvement in the research, writing, and the timely completion of ethnographic research.

**Products**

The products from this project will include a report documenting the ethnographic study.

**Funds Available**

Project funds available are approximately $90,000 per year for two fiscal years. The actual amount of funding for the second fiscal year is contingent on future appropriations. The funding includes the CESU overhead rate of 17.5 percent. The project will be funded by the National Park Service. Only universities within the CESU network are eligible to apply.

**Letters of Interest**

Letters of Interest (LOI) should be sent to the address located in the “contact” section. LOI’s will be reviewed by a panel. The panel will select the top candidate(s) who will be asked to provide and submit a full proposal responsive to a Scope of Work. That proposal will detail the work to be conducted, providing and describing the methodology and research design, and outlining a schedule of deliverables.

The LOI should describe your research interest(s) in the projects, past projects that are similar in topic and/or form, and any relevant experience in completing ethnographic projects, along with a copy of a resume or vita for the Principal Investigator. Please include your name, affiliated organization(s), and contact information. Please try and limit LOI’s to 2 pages.

**Contact**

Responses of interest should be directed before the closing date to Michael J. Evans, Ph.D. (Michael_Evans@nps.gov). Additional questions can be answered by contacting Michael J. Evans, Ph.D., Chief, Cultural Anthropology Program, Midwest Region Ethnography Program, National Park Service (612-345-0019).