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| National Park ServiceU.S. Department of the InteriorInventory & Monitoring Division |  C:\billy\NPS\images\MISC\NPS Logos\nps logo2.gifC:\billy\NPS\images\MISC\NPS Logos\nps logo2.gif  |

Request for Letters of Research Interest

**Title**: Inventory smelt at Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site to Inform Consultation Prior to Dredging

[Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site](https://www.nps.gov/sair/index.htm) (SAIR) needs an inventory of smelt and other fish species of interest to document current fish population status in the Saugus River within the park and evaluate use of known rainbow smelt spawning habitat. Comparison of current populations and habitat use to a previous study in the Turning Basin (2007) is desired. This inventory is a requirement for consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife and for NEPA compliance as the park prepares to dredge contaminated sediment from the Turning Basin.

## Goals and Objectives

This project will document smelt and other species of interest presence and smelt habitat characteristics along two tidally influenced river locations (approximately 750 linear feet total) and adjacent non-tidal riffle habitat. Ideally, the sampling effort will occur in late winter through summer of 2025 to allow sufficient lead time for park planning and consultation workflows. NPS can provide supporting information to assist sampling design.

Specific Project Objectives:

1. Survey selected river extents within the park for smelt and other fish species of interest occurrence using statistically valid sampling approaches, documenting spatial locations and habitat characteristics including potential spawning habitat and relevant covariate data.
2. Utilize appropriate sampling protocols to allow detection of smelt and other fish species of interest to the park.
3. Produce a final report suitable for the NPS Science Report series, and provide data, GIS products, and metadata related to the project to the NPS using [NPS Inventory Program deliverable standards](https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2286435).

**Project Timeframe**

Deadline for responding to this request for LOI is September 6, 2024. Funds will be obligated in winter 2025, with work starting by March of 2025. The anticipated completion date for the project is September 30, 2026.

**Funds Available**

Project funds available are approximately $50,000; this includes the CESU overhead rate of 17.5%. The project will be funded by the [National Park Service Inventory Program](https://www.nps.gov/im/inventories.htm) within the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Division.

**Materials Requested for Letters of Interest**

Letters of interest must include:

1. Name, Organization and Contact Information, including membership in a [CESU](http://www.cesu.psu.edu/).

2. Pre-Proposal (4 pages maximum): Description of the proposed approach for conducting the project, including proposed sampling methods that could be considered for this project. Describe in brief the proposed approach to collect new field data in a manner that will provide information on fish species presence and how you will use the new and existing data to summarize fish occurrence for this project and compare it to previous data.

3. Brief Statement of Qualifications (2 pages maximum) including:

a. Biographical Sketch(s) for key personnel (faculty, staff), including a description of discipline(s) of expertise. Curricula vitae can be submitted as an attachment.

b. Relevant past research projects.

Note: A proposed budget should be submitted (note CESU overhead rate above).

**Evaluation Letters of Interest**

Following a review of the Letters of Interest received, an investigator will be invited to prepare a full [detailed implementation plan](https://www.nps.gov/im/inventory-guidance.htm), schedule, and project budget by October 15, 2024. Letters will be evaluated based on the following criteria and scoring:

1. Soundness and validity of the proposed approach for meeting project objectives (15 points maximum)

2. Demonstrated experience surveying fish and fish habitat (10 points maximum)

3. Demonstrated experience assessing fish populations (5 points maximum)

4. Demonstrated ability to produce technical reports within schedule and budget and demonstrated record of professional publications (5 points maximum)

**Contact**

Direct questions and responses to Lisa Nelson, Inventory Project Manager (lisa\_l\_nelson@nps.gov). The deadline for responding to this request for LOI is September 6, 2024.