Sequoia Science Learning Center
Research Grant Program 2019

Presented by:
Sequoia Parks Conservancy and
Sequoia & Kings Canyon
National Parks

Science for Service!

Research and Learning grants are available to qualified students, scientists and educators at accredited academic or research institutions or non-profit organizations. Grants will support projects that contribute to stewardship of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.

The *Sequoia Science Learning Center* *builds capacity to address science and education needs by leveraging park staff and resources to engage academic and non-profit partners.*

**Deadline for submission is
March 15, 2019.**

Competitive grants may be awarded for up to $5,000.

Funding is to be used for expenses incurred in doing research. Common expenditures are:

- Purchase of supplies and equipment.
- Transportation and housing at research sites.
- Salaries or stipends to enable data collection.

Funding may NOT be used for:

- Tuition, textbooks, curriculum development.
- Manuscript preparation & publication costs.

Learn more: http://www.sequoiaparksconservancy.org/rfp.html

Sequoia Science Learning Center
RESEARCH AND LEARNING GRANTS
2019 GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDE

Introduction
The [Sequoia Science Learning Center (SSLC)](#) at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) has partnered with Sequoia Parks Conservancy (SPC) to implement a Research and Learning Grant Program. The program is intended to promote and facilitate the use of parks for scientific inquiry and to increase the effectiveness and communication of research and science results to help SEKI steward its natural and cultural resource. At its core, the SSLC builds capacity to address SEKI's science and education needs by leveraging park staff and resources to engage academic and non-profit partners.

The SSLC encourages and supports a Research and Learning Grant Program to supplement research programs of the National Park Service. Specifically, the Program is aimed at helping to implement the parks' new Climate-Smart Resource Stewardship Strategy. The Grant Program is targeted to individuals affiliated with an accredited academic or research institution or non-profit organization interested in pursuing research or learning in the management, preservation, and interpretation of SEKI's natural and cultural resources. The SSLC anticipates disbursing around $40,000 in 2019. Proposals are limited to $5,000 per project. Grant proposals are reviewed by a Research Committee which consists of park staff with backgrounds in science or learning.

Climate-Smart Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS)
In October 2017, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks' completed a [Resource Stewardship Strategy](#) (RSS) to help guide park management through the coming years. The RSS is a long-range strategic planning tool that is informed by current, accurate science. The purpose of the RSS is to:
- guide funding, planning, and implementation of resource stewardship activities, including science, direct management, and education;
- track and evaluate progress in resource stewardship; and
- integrate new ways of thinking about resource stewardship, including management tools that take into account the realities of climate change.

The SSLC Research and Learning Grant Program will prioritize projects that help the parks implement its RSS. To learn more about SEKI's stewardship goals and activity priorities, please visit: [go.nps.gov/sekiRSS](#).

Contact Information
Questions about science priorities? Contact Christy Brigham, Chief of Resource Management and Science, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, 559-565-3120 or [Christy_brigham@nps.gov](#).

Grant submission and other general questions about the granting process? Contact Elizabeth Gonzalez, Conservancy,ʼ559-565-3757 or [elizabethg@sequoiaparks.org](#).

Research Grant Proposal Requirements

1. All funding requests are limited to natural and cultural research and learning projects conducted in support of SEKI. In most cases, research will occur in SEKI, but in some circumstances research could occur adjacent to help achieve stewardship goals for landscape integrity and biodiversity.

2. Applications must include the following information from the principal investigator (PI):
    a. <u>Project Information</u>**:** Project title; name and address and contact information for PI; names, affiliations and contact information of other participants; amount of funding requested, proposed start and end dates, and name and contact information of park project sponsor.
    b. <u>Abstract</u> (max. 250 words). The abstract should briefly describe the study, the research objectives, the methodology, and expected outcomes.
    c. <u>Purpose of the Research</u>. Include relevant background information such as a brief description of related research with references, and a description of the significance of project and how it advances science and stewardship. Explain how this project will help implement the parks' RSS or otherwise benefit the parks. List the stewardship goals, objectives, and/or priority activities that the project will address.
    d. <u>Research Questions</u>**.** Include a numbered list of your primary research questions stated in clear, specific and measureable terms. Research questions are brief – a sentence or two at most. Major research questions may be followed by a series of sub-questions that are more specific.
    e. <u>Research Design and Methodology</u>. Describe how the research project will be conducted. Include the procedure for data collection and analysis. Explain how you will use your data to answer your research questions. Specify what types of specimens, if any, you will need to collect, whether they will be kept or destroyed, and whether you already have an NPS Research and Collecting Permit. Review NPS research guidelines at http://science.nature.nps.gov/research. NPS is not allowed to give permits for the sole purpose of creating a specimen collection. Samples are only allowed for answering research questions.
    f. <u>Project Evaluation</u>. Describe how you will know when your project is completed and state your expected date of completion.
    g. <u>Dissemination</u>**.** Describe how your research findings will be shared. Grant recipients are required to present their research to park staff. Include other dissemination opportunities and explain why they are appropriate for your project.
    h. <u>Budget.</u> A budget table and budget justification must be included.
    i. <u>References.</u> References used in the proposal should be cited in a consistent format. The citation format that is appropriate for your field of study may be used.
    j. <u>Research Qualification.</u> All principal investigators must provide a 1 page or less 'statement of competency' which addresses previous research, publications, and experience related to the research proposal. Students also should include a letter of support from their research advisor.

3. Proposals should not exceed 4 pages in length, not including references and research qualifications.

4. Individuals may be PI on only one proposal per year, although they may participate as a collaborator in more than one proposal.

5. **Submit applications by March 15, 2019 as Microsoft Word or PDF attachments emailed to admin@sequoiaparks.org with the subject line "SSLC Grant Proposal".**

Selection Criteria
The Research Committee will select proposals based on the following criteria, but will also strive to support a diversity of research that addresses stewardship across the parks many priority resources:

Relevance and Need
• Research goals and objectives are clear.
• Proposal makes a significant contribution to the understanding of park resources.
• Proposal helps to implement the park's [Resource Stewardship Strategy](#).
• The research has the potential to improve park planning and management actions.

Methods
• Methodology is clear and appropriate to the research question.
• The design combines robust qualitative and/or quantitative methods with innovative thinking.
• Research approach is culturally appropriate and participatory methods are included where relevant.

Research Team
• Researchers have demonstrated capacity to deliver the proposed work.
• Proportion of time committed by the Principal Investigator(s) is sufficient to ensure quality.
• Research team includes expertise across disciplines relevant for addressing the research questions.

Value
• Proposal lists a variety of products (i.e., report, database, graphics, presentation to park staff, GIS layers, visitor activity, etc.) resulting from the outcome of the research.
• The level of support requested is appropriate for the research activities described.
• Projects leverage significant cost-sharing or in-kind support.

Who May Submit
The SSLC welcomes proposals from all qualified scientists and educators based at an accredited academic or research institution, or non-profit organization. Qualified researchers not based at an accredited academic or research institution, or non-profit organizations will not be considered for funding. SSLC will not consider funding research proposals submitted by current National Park Service employees. All individuals working on the project must be identified. Proposals submitted without identifying an appropriate PI will not be considered for funding.

The SSLC strongly encourages women, minorities and persons with disabilities to participate fully in this program. In accordance to Federal statutes, regulations and NPS policies, no person on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin or disability shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, for any project receiving financial assistance from SSLC.

PIs are highly encouraged to work with a park project "sponsor". The sponsor is park staff member who will serve as the primary liaison between the PI and the park. It is the PI's responsibility to coordinate with the sponsor, supervise the project, ensure that the project is being conducted in a professional and timely manner, and that all required reporting is completed on time. PIs are encouraged to work with their park project sponsor to coordinate any logistical planning.

Budget Administration

A budget limitation of $5,000 per project per year will be placed on all research projects. Please ensure that any matching or in-kind funds are noted in the budget. SSLC does not provide funds for publication costs through this grant program.

Research projects are generally funded for one year. If the PI believes a one-year project will likely lead to a subsequent request for further work, the proposal should be written as a multiyear project as described below. The Research Committee will consider multiyear proposals for up to 3 years if the initial proposal states the time it will take to complete the research, and if each year's objectives, methods, participants, and estimated budget (with justification) are explicitly outlined. Funding beyond the first year's budget will only be approved if adequate and timely interim reports (Investigator Annual Reports) have been received and only if requested through the continuation research proposal process each year.

This continuation request is a concise 1-2 pages that include project title; name and address and contact information for PI and a summary of progress to date, objectives for the next year(s), and any significant changes to the initial proposed projects and budget(s), together with the budget and its justification. Approval of first year funding does not automatically assure funding of second or third years. Funds for second or third years cannot be released until all reporting requirements for prior years have been met.

Travel, equipment, and supplies required to conduct the research must appear in the budget and be clearly explained. All requests for salaries, stipends, or payment for any individual must indicate what work is to be done to merit the payment and the rate of pay for reimbursement. Graduate student stipends will be supported, but not tuition payment.

A portion of the grant (75%) is released to the PI once SSLC receives written notice that he/she is ready to begin and it is after the proposed start date. The remaining funded amount will be withheld until the final report, resource brief, and all other identified products are approved by the Research Committee. Failure to submit a final report and resource brief may result in termination of funding.

Indirect Costs

SSLC will not approve grants that include administrative or overhead costs of other organizations or institutions that is greater than 17.5%.

Salary Restrictions

SSLC regards research as one of the normal functions of faculty members at institutions of higher education. SSLC grant funds may not be used to augment the salary of faculty members during the period covered by the term of faculty appointment or to reimburse faculty members for consulting if they receive a regular institutional salary covering the same period of employment as the research project.

Permits

All researchers engaging in scientific activities that involve fieldwork, specimen collection, and/or having the potential to disturb resources or visitors on National Park Service property must have a valid Scientific Research and Collecting Permit. Consult [SEKI's research permit guidance](). Submit an application

at the NPS Research Permit and Reporting System website (http://science.nature.nps.gov/research).
Local, state and/or federal permits may be required for scientific activities related to plant and animal
resources or cultural resources, including archeology, ethnography, history, cultural museum objects,
cultural landscapes, and historic and prehistoric structures. Research involving the survey of visitors on
NPS lands may require additional clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
Instructions for obtaining OMB clearance are found at the NPS Social Science Program website
(http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/expedited.cfm).

Timelines for Proposal Submission and Selection
Research proposals must be submitted by **March 15, 2019**. The proposed start date for research should
be after April 22, 2019 and no later than December 31, 2019. Selections will occur by March 27, 2019. A
sample evaluation form is attached to illustrate the general approach of the review process.

Final Reporting Requirements
At a minimum, the PI must submit a final report and a resource brief in Microsoft Word or PDF format.
Reports will be made available to the public through the NPS Research Permit and Reporting System.
Final reports and other products outlined in the proposal are due one year after the stated project
completion date. Funding will be terminated if final products are not received by that date.

While all project PIs are encouraged to present their research to park staff, selected PIs may be asked to
present the research to park staff and/or the Sequoia Park Conservancy board of directors. Additional
funds for travel may be available.

Final Report
The final report may take a form suitable to the discipline of the researcher, but it also should be
understandable to park resource managers and interpreters. A peer reviewed publication may be
accepted in lieu of a final report. It is critical that any data, maps and photos contained in the report be in
a readable format. Please include references to other project products, such as scientific articles published
or in preparation, reports to other agencies, maps, checklists, GIS databases, student theses, etc.

Resource Brief
The Resource Brief should consist of no more than two (2) pages summarizing the project in language
that is understandable by the general public. Please include at least two photos in the brief. It is critical
that any data, maps and photos contained in the resource brief be in a readable format. A template for the
Resource Brief will be available.

Photos: Two photos of researchers in action must be submitted with the final report and resource brief.

Extension Requests
A no-cost extension for up to one year to complete the stated research may be requested. Such extension
requests must be submitted to the Research Committee Chair with proper justification and must be
received two months before the scheduled completion date of the project.

Research Committee's Recommendation for Approval
After the Research Committee Chair approves the final report or paper, it will be forwarded to the
Research Committee for review and final approval. A sample of the final report evaluation form used to
review the final report or paper is attached.

Research Proposal Evaluation Form
For Use by SSLC Research Committee

Title:

Principal Investigator(s):

Date: _____ Reviewer: _____

Elements 1 through 7 are to be rated on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being inadequate and 7 being superior. Circle the appropriate rating for each element.

	INADEQUATE					SUPERIOR	
1. Clear statement of problem and research objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Relationship to park priorities (RSS)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Appropriateness of methods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Qualifications of PI and team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Clearly defined end products	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Appropriateness of Budget	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Overall evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other issues specific to this proposal that should be considered:

Final Report Evaluation Form
For Use by SCRLC Research Committee

Title: Amount Awarded:

Principal Investigator(s):   Form due date:

Date: _____ Reviewer: _____

Please circle the appropriate rating for each element:

	POOR				SUPERIOR
1. Are the objectives of the research clearly stated?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Do the stated objectives conform to those originally proposed?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Are the research methods clearly stated and explained?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is reference made to the pertinent literature?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Are the technical details clearly represented?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Are the findings/results explained clearly?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Are the results clearly related to the originally proposed work?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Are the findings/results interpreted in terms of their significance to the park?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Is the overall structure of the report clear and appropriate?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Overall evaluation	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Final payment recommended: Yes _____ No _____