



**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

This Funding Announcement is not a request for applications. This announcement is to provide public notice of the National Park Service's intention to fund the following project activities without full and open competition.

ABSTRACT	
Funding Announcement	P13AS00170
Project Title	Engage Diverse Youth through Natural Experiences
Recipient	Global Explorers
Principle Investigator / Program Manager	David Shurna
Total Anticipated Award Amount	202,972.48
Cost Share	29377.32
New Award or Continuation?	Task Agreement under Cooperative Agreement P13Ac00724
Anticipated Length of Agreement	From date of award to June 30, 2015
Anticipated Period of Performance	From date of award to June 30, 2015
Award Instrument	Cooperative Agreement
Statutory Authority	16 USC 1g
CFDA # and Title	15.931 Conservation Activities by Youth Service Organizations
Single Source Justification Criteria Cited	(2) Continuation
NPS Point of Contact	June Zastrow 303-987-6718, june_zastrow@nps.gov

OVERVIEW

Cooperative Agreement Number P13AC00724 was entered into by and between the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, (NPS), and Global Explorers (GEx) for the purpose of engaging diverse youth through natural experiences and to develop a conservation ethic among young citizens. Unless otherwise specified herein, the terms and conditions as stated in the Cooperative Agreement will apply to this Task Agreement.

Global Explorers is a non-profit organization that works to share the most educational and life-changing place-based travel experiences available. GEx's interdisciplinary pre-trip curriculum prepares students for travel with lessons on leadership, service, science and culture — all with an eye towards responsible global citizenship. Through experiential learning, travel experiences help students discover the individual impact they can have in the world. This inspiration is then leveraged through social media and post-travel service initiatives to reach even more young people. GEx helps to instill the knowledge and skills necessary to inspire responsible and effective action. GEx works with a representative cross-section of American youth and educators. This includes targeted programs that address the specific needs of low-income students as well as disabled students and other underserved communities. GEx is unique among educational travel organizations in its focus on life-changing experiences for its students as well as the impact students can have on their home communities.

The Natural Resource Stewardship & Science directorate of the NPS is charged with advancing understanding of our nation's treasures. The environmental changes confronting the NPS are widespread, complex, accelerating, and volatile. The increased pressures on parks require a broad perspective, engaging citizens across the landscape, using new communications techniques. Several topics epitomize this new approach of the 21st Century, including natural sounds, dark night skies, and climate change.

The NPS's Natural Sounds Program was established in 2000 to help parks manage their acoustical environments in a way that balances the various expectations of park visitors with the protection of park resources. The general mission of the Natural Sound Program is to provide assistance, coordination, guidance and a consistent approach to addressing sound related activities with respect to park resources and visitor use by working in partnership with parks and others to increase scientific understanding and inspire public understanding of the value and character of park soundscapes.

The mission of the NPS Night Sky Program is to provide assistance, coordination, and national leadership to address the preservation of natural darkness. The NPS's Night Sky Program was established in 1999 to help parks manage their natural lightscapes in a way that supports visitor expectations of night sky scenery, protection of nocturnal habitat and natural ecological processes impacted by artificial light, and provide advice to parks and park partners on meeting their safety needs while maximizing environmental protection. The program also undertakes several levels of outreach and education to encourage enjoyment of the night sky, to promote understanding of the issue of light pollution, and to encourage night-sky friendly outdoor lighting.

Established in 2009, the Climate Change Response Program (CCRP) of the NPS promotes a cohesive approach to climate change goals and actions across all parks and programs in the national park service. The CCRP is a cross-disciplinary program that provides guidance, training, technical expertise, project funding, and educational and outreach products that support our actions to further climate change science, adaptation, mitigation, and communication.

The guiding vision of the CCRP is to adapt to climate change and effectively preserve and restore park resources and opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Through collaboration with employees, partners, and the public the NPS teaches and promotes climate change science and uses the best management and communication practices and sustainable behaviors toward reducing climate change and its impacts.

The Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division (NSNSD) merged the Natural Sounds Program and Night Skies Program in 2009. The group focuses on protecting two physical resources that are critical to ecosystem health as well as the visitor experience in national parks across the country.

Both the NPS and the Global Explorers have interests, respectively in the conservation of, management of, and understanding of natural resources, including but not limited to acoustic resources, night sky scenery, nocturnal habitat, and how our natural and cultural resources are impacted by climate change as well as finding meaningful individual solutions for this global issue. The NPS has several initiatives, especially within the themes of connecting people to parks and advancing the education mission, that are directly supported through partnership with GEx. GEx specializes in creating the “transformative experiences” that the NPS seeks, especially in the younger generation. Together we will further youth knowledge of natural resources and cultural heritage, learn and contribute to conservation strategies, and increase relevance of national parks in the 21st century.

In order for the NPS to meet its stewardship and education goals for public enjoyment and ecological integrity, broad-based cooperative conservation efforts are necessary. The mitigation of threats such as noise, light pollution, and carbon emissions will require that civic awareness is elevated and that natural sounds, starry night skies, and other landscapes are viewed as relevant to an increasingly urban population. It is especially important to connect with youth across the widening gap between everyday life and nature and the impediment of proliferating virtual technologies. While the NSNSD and CCRP have made progress developing educational and awareness products for park staff and interpreters, reaching youth has proven more difficult. It is not enough that they simply experience the resource; there must be a deeper understanding, connection, and belief in stewardship as well as creating meaningful and hopeful connections so youth are empowered to contribute to stewardship solutions and not feel the despair in the magnitude of global issues.

The purpose of this task agreement is to use the life-changing power of GEx expeditions and GEx’s educational and social media networks to introduce messages and activities that speak directly to youth, which will result in them appreciating, connecting with, and protecting natural sounds, night skies, and our planet’s climate.

RECIPIENT INVOLVEMENT

A. GEx agrees to:

1. Further the youth understanding of park natural resources and science through development and field trips, execution of experiments and citizen science activities jointly designed by the National Park Service and Global Explorers.
2. Develop inclusive educational experiences that bring science, and stewardship together to foster a conservation ethic amongst all students, including people with disabilities and underserved youth.
3. Provide the appropriate NPS division products of expeditions and activities, including, but not limited to, data collected through experiments and citizen science efforts, feedback from expedition participants, results from social media campaigns, and reports.
4. Seek additional partners in the public and private sectors with like-minded individuals who are interested in enhancing youth understanding of the importance of acoustical environments and soundscapes. Seek external funding for individual and group scholarships.
5. Deliver educational materials for educators, jointly developed by the NPS and Global Explorers, in a variety of formats to the Global Explorers network of educators.
6. Execute trip follow-up campaigns to leverage the experiences of youth expedition participants and involve unaffiliated youth in the initiative. Utilize social media, videos, public service announcements, contests, artistic expressions, and other methods to widely engage youth. Use social media as an entry point for new youth audiences.
7. Relating to the understanding and stewardship of soundscapes in national parks:
 - a. Integrate existing and future Natural Sounds activities into GEx expeditions and retreats. Provide opportunities for youth to experience and reflect upon a natural sound environment.
 - b. In concert with the NPS, develop and implement youth expeditions to NPS units where natural sound content is most applicable targeting diverse youth including youth with disabilities.
 - c. Prepare GEx staff in delivery of appropriate Natural Sound activities.
 - d. Develop and implement initiatives that fulfill the shared goals of this Cooperative Agreement.
8. Relating to the understanding and stewardship of night skies in national parks:

- a. Integrate existing and future Night Sky activities into GEx expeditions and retreats. Provide opportunities for youth to experience and reflect upon a natural nighttime environment.
 - b. In concert with the NPS, develop a youth expedition to take place in the Colorado Plateau that focuses on artistic expression and supports the initiative to develop a “dark sky cooperative.”
 - c. Coordinate with the NPS to share the art and writing from the Colorado Plateau Expedition in a traveling exhibit managed by the NPS.
 - d. Develop tactile representations of the night sky that can be used for blind and low-sighted youth to experience the night sky.
 - e. Prepare GEx staff in delivery of appropriate Night Sky activities.
 - f. Develop and implement initiatives that fulfill the shared goals of this Task Agreement.
9. Relating to the understanding and stewardship of climate change in national parks:
- a. Develop curriculum activities on place-based climate change.
 - b. Engage students on experiential learning field trips to national parks to be immersed in the resource while learning about climate change.
 - c. Develop and implement outreach initiatives including, though not limited to, a climate change Public Service Announcement video.
 - d. Host a contest in the humanities for students to share their art, creative writing, or other innovative communication forum approaches to climate change communication.
 - e. Prepare GEx staff in delivery of appropriate Climate Change activities.
 - f. Develop and implement initiatives that fulfill the shared goals of this Cooperative Agreement.
10. Create and apply evaluation tools to better assess relevance among GEx participants and control groups. Utilize knowledge gained from Texas A&M University study conducted in 2011 and other sources.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE INVOLVEMENT

Substantial involvement on the part the National Park Service is anticipated for the successful completion of the objectives to be funded by this award. In particular, the National Park Service will be responsible for the following:

1. Provide financial assistance as provided for in Article VI.
2. Provide strategic consultation to Global Explorers regarding the design and implementation of natural sound, night skies, climate change, and other science research initiatives and social science activities.
3. Provide examples of appropriate methods and protocol for conducting science experiments and field activities related to natural sounds, night skies, and climate change.
4. Provide the necessary equipment and resources to conduct scientific research as part of select Global Explorers Expedition. This may include loaning or providing guidance on the purchase of equipment necessary for citizen science research.
5. Discuss with Global Explorers future destinations within the National Park System that would be ideally suited for expeditions and academies related to this agreement. Facilitate communications between Global Explorers and park staff that may have a particular interest in educating youth or on the scientific and stewardship topics covered by this agreement.
6. Offer professional development opportunities to GEx Expedition leaders to increase exposure and comfort levels with park resources.
7. Provide scientific data from national parks that enriches the experience of youth participants.
8. Provide data and guidance on developing educational and experiential materials for sensory disabled students, such as developing creative methods for low-sighted students to “see” the night sky, or hearing impaired students to experience natural sounds.
9. Provide electronic files for existing NPS outreach and educational materials such as the Junior Ranger Night Explorer booklet or climate change Web Rangers activities. Provide audio, video, and imagery suitable for outreach programs.
10. Communicate natural sound, night sky, climate change, and other science knowledge and conservation strategies to GEx liaisons and GEx expedition leaders. Such information transfer may be conducted through in-person presentations, in-person field trips, webinars, reading material, attending meetings, attending conferences, or other approaches suited for the audience.
11. Assign an appropriate NPS Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division employee and Climate Change Response Program employee to monitor ongoing work, to respond to questions about the nature and goals of the project, and act as an on-site liaison among the parties.

SINGLE-SOURCE JUSTIFICATION

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SINGLE SOURCE POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Department of the Interior Policy (505 DM 2) requires a written justification which explains why competition is not practicable for each single-source award. The justification must address one or more of the following criteria as well as discussion of the program legislative history, unique capabilities of the proposed recipient, and cost-sharing contribution offered by the proposed recipient, as applicable.

In order for an assistance award to be made without competition, the award must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Unsolicited Proposal – The proposed award is the result of an unsolicited assistance application which represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach which is not the subject of a current or planned contract or assistance award, but which is deemed advantageous to the program objectives;
- (2) Continuation – The activity to be funded is necessary to the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of an activity presently being funded, and for which competition would have a significant adverse effect on the continuity or completion of the activity;
- (3) Legislative intent – The language in the applicable authorizing legislation or legislative history clearly indicates Congress' intent to restrict the award to a particular recipient of purpose;
- (4) Unique Qualifications – The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based upon a variety of demonstrable factors such as location, property ownership, voluntary support capacity, cost-sharing ability if applicable, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications;
- (5) Emergencies – Program/award where there is insufficient time available (due to a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety) for adequate competitive procedures to be followed.

The National Park Service did not solicit full and open competition for this award based the following criteria:

(2) UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS

Single Source Justification Description:

THIS IS A NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

This is a Task Agreement (P13AC01031) under Cooperative Agreement (P13AC00724) in the amount of \$202,972.48 with a period of performance from date of award until 6/30/2015.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

16 U.S.C. §1g authorizes the NPS to enter into cooperative agreements that involve the transfer of NPS appropriated funds to state, local and tribal governments, other public entities, educational institutions, and private nonprofit organizations for the public purpose of carrying out National Park Service programs.

This section provides broad authority for NPS to enter into cooperative agreements with most recipients for a public purpose. Although broad, this authority must be read in conjunction with the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 and other authorities that prescribe whether a particular relationship should be a procurement contract or a cooperative agreement. Thus, in making this determination, one must always consider whether the principal purpose of the work is to acquire goods and/or services for NPS's direct benefit in furtherance of its mission or for a public purpose.