



Request for Proposals for Field Research: Archaeology in Central America

Earthwatch Institute is an international non-profit organization with the mission to ***“engage people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment.”*** Earthwatch is currently seeking proposals from field-based researchers to provide grants to address ancient civilizations in Central America including prehistoric archaeology, historical archaeology, and projects concerned with the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. Projects with direct meaning and benefit for resident constituencies, net positive impacts on local environments and that relate to modern day situations and resource use are encouraged. The opportunity for volunteers to be substantively involved in excavation in the field is an essential component, but should be part of a wider range of activities (e.g. including work in the lab, a museum, or doing data analysis). Particular areas of interest include Aztec, Inca and Mayan studies.

Earthwatch will only consider proposals for field research that have a strong rationale for requiring involvement of non-specialists (Earthwatch volunteers) in a variety of scientific tasks. Earthwatch volunteers are highly motivated citizens from around the world who are interested in improving environmental understanding. A typical project would engage a minimum of 30 volunteers over 3-10 teams per annum. Average team size is 4-12 participants and each team typically can spend 3-12 days in the field. Students are increasing becoming a priority audience for Earthwatch; therefore ideal projects have flexibility to engage audiences such as students (age 16+) and/or groups (15-30 participants). All projects are conducted in English.

Earthwatch encourages proposals that are interdisciplinary and/or transnational. Preference will be given to projects that directly contribute to environmental or social change on the ground as well as providing scientific evidence to inform management strategies and improve livelihoods of local communities. All projects should contribute to the scientific literature and improve public understanding of science. Professionals from any nationality are eligible to apply, but should be affiliated with a university or environmental organization and have in-country experience (and permits).

Concept Notes and Proposals

Concept Notes for projects starting in spring or summer 2013 will be accepted through Friday, January 27, 2012. Invitations for full Research Proposals will be communicated in late February. Applications must be submitted online in English: <http://fs22.formsite.com/EarthwatchResearch/ConceptNote/index.html>

Research topics that may be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:

- *The reliance, sustainable use, and exploitation of societies on the local environments and landscapes*
- *Projects investigating major developments in cultural evolution, e.g. origins of agriculture and urbanism*
- *Human adaptation to natural or anthropogenic environmental change*
- *Archaeological documentation/conservation of threatened or otherwise disappearing cultural resources*

Grants

An average annual grant of \$20,000 USD is available to cover research related costs, which can include the following if appropriate: equipment (under \$1000 USD), tools, supplies, research permits, scientist transport to the field, support staff, staff and scientist food and accommodation while running volunteer teams. The grant cannot be used for scientist salaries, overhead, capital equipment, and other expenses not directly related to the project. Volunteer costs in the field (volunteer accommodation, food and transport in the field) will be budgeted for in partnership with Earthwatch. The field research proposals are tenable for three years, and potentially renewable in the fourth year.

Additional

- Comfortable accommodations for volunteers must be in reasonable travel distance of the research site(s)
- Incorporation of time for volunteers to experience the surrounding environment and culture is encouraged
- For additional information about Earthwatch's application process see our website: <http://www.earthwatch.org/aboutus/research/scientistopps/reqresprop/>

All questions should be directed to the Research team at research@earthwatch.org