

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Sequoia Legacy Tree Replacement Public Art Installation
Visit Visalia / Arts Visalia / Visalia Heritage
Proposal Due Date: September 30, 2025

Introduction

Visit Visalia, in partnership with Arts Visalia and Visalia Heritage, invites qualified artists and design teams to submit proposals for a site-specific public art installation in the parklet located on the Southeast corner of Locust and Acequia on the US Post Office lot in downtown Visalia. This project seeks to replace the historic [Sequoia Legacy Tree](#), a cherished symbol and feature of the community for nearly a century, with an inspiring and educational public art piece celebrating Visalia's historical relationship with Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

Project Background

The original Sequoia Tree was donated nearly 100 years ago from General Grant N. P. Superintendent to the US Postmaster in Visalia. The tree's removal leaves a symbolic space that offers an opportunity for a new, meaningful art installation. The site is a small parklet covering approximately 3,885 square feet, with a circular walking path of about 102 feet in circumference, mimicking the size of the base of the famous General Sherman Tree.

Visalia's history is deeply connected with the preservation and accessibility of Sequoia National Park. Key figures include:

- **George Stewart**, who initiated efforts in 1884 to establish the area as a national park. His effort led to the creation of Sequoia National Park and is known as the Father of Sequoia National Park.
- **Brigadier General Charles Young**, who led the Buffalo Soldiers in building the road connecting the valley to the park, opening it to tourists. This happened in 1903 and as a result of his extraordinary work, a Sequoia Tree in the park was named in his honor and remains today.
- **Stephen Mather**, who advocated for the creation of the National Park Service, often came to Visalia with dignitaries, sometimes staying at Visalia's Palace Hotel and gathering federal officials there. In 1916 while at the Palace Hotel, he learned that the President of the US had signed legislation creating the National Park Service. In 1917, he became the first Director of the National Park Service.

The new installation must honor Sequoia National Park and these individuals' contributions and inspire ongoing passion for National Park and National Forest preservation.

Project Objectives

- **Educational Impact:** Educate the community and visitors about Visalia's historical connection to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, specifically highlighting

Stewart, Young, and Mather along with the Parks role in agriculture product production; trees, row crops and livestock.

- **Inspiration:** Foster a passion for the preservation of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks and history.
- **Community Engagement:** Create an interactive educational experience suitable for all ages, with a focus on engaging young visitors.
- **Durability and Accessibility:** Design a resilient, vandalism-resistant installation that is safe and accessible to all.

Scope of Work

- **Design, development, and fabrication** of a public art installation responding to the site's constraints and opportunities. The property is leased from the US Post Office by Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau AKA Visit Visalia)
- The artwork needs to be imaginative and can incorporate elements such as a large slab of a Sequoia Tree, to educate about the tree's size and age through rings.
- The design must protect the existing walking path and landscaping, avoiding benches or other features that could be vandalized or pose safety concerns.
- Materials need to be durable and suitable for outdoor public spaces, with consideration for vandalism, safety, and longevity.
- Selected artist and subcontractors are responsible for obtaining relevant project permits.

Budget

- **Immediate available funding:** Up to \$100,000 for design, fabrication, and installation.
- **Potential future funding:** Visit Visalia in collaboration with Arts Visalia and Visalia Heritage will seek grants to support a larger project. Proposals should not be limited by current funding.
- **Note:** Creativity in design and concept development is encouraged regardless of budget constraints.

Proposal Requirements

- A personal statement describing your connection to Visalia and/or Sequoia National Park.
- Concept sketches or visualizations illustrating your proposed design.
- Description of materials, safety considerations, and vandalism mitigation strategies.
- A project timeline, including milestones from design to installation.

- Identification of contractors or subcontractors involved in fabrication and installation.
- Include reference(s) and contact information for previous relevant experience with outdoor public art, especially in natural or high-traffic environments.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following four equally weighted elements:

1. **Artistic Excellence & Connection to Sequoia National Park:** Creativity, originality, and relevance to the historical and natural themes.
2. **Educational Impact:** Effectiveness of the design to educate about Visalia's historical figures and its relationship with Sequoia National Park.
3. **Inspiration for Preservation:** Ability to evoke passion and commitment toward conserving Sequoia's natural and cultural heritage.
4. **Endurance & Accessibility:** Durability of materials, safety, vandalism resistance, and accessibility for all visitors.

Submission Details

- **Response Due Date:** September 30, 2025
- **Submission Format:** Digital submissions via email or online portal (details to be provided).
- **Questions and Clarifications:** Please submit inquiries by [insert date], to [contact information].

Additional Notes

- The selected artist or team must demonstrate a personal or professional connection to Visalia or Sequoia National Park in their proposal.
- The final design must be approved by the project committee before fabrication begins.
- The installation should stand the test of time, requiring minimal maintenance.

The selection committee agrees to honor the submitted proposal and will not modify, alter, or reproduce the approved design without prior written consent from the artist or team. The artist shall receive appropriate credit in all public displays, signage, promotional materials, and documentation related to the artwork. The committee shall ensure that the artist's name and contribution are prominently recognized during and after installation.