The Smithsonian is seeking an experienced and recognized leader in the field of science and research to lead a portfolio of world-class scientific units engaged in a variety of disciplines focused on the origin and nature of the universe, the formation and evolution of the Earth and similar planets, the discovery and understanding of the evolution of life and biological diversity, conservation of materials and artistic artifacts, and the study of human diversity and cultural change.

Science and research has been at the core of the Smithsonian’s mission since its founding in 1846, and today the Institution is committed to pursuing world-class research by leveraging strengths such as the ability to pursue a long-term, synthetic, big-picture research on scientific issues of the day. The Institution is uniquely placed to play a leading role in the next decade in the search of life outside our solar system, biodiversity and the balance of human activities and nature, and how we can improve public understanding of science. Smithsonian’s science mission involves using its unique, publicly accessible collections, research facilities and staff to inform, educate and inspire a diverse public. Smithsonian science seeks to increase scientific knowledge and improve society’s scientific literacy by inspiring the public to understand how scientists learn about the world and how science affects people’s lives.

The Under Secretary for Science and Research is a member of the Secretary’s senior leadership team and meets weekly with the three other Under Secretaries as part of the Deputy Secretary’s Under Secretary forum, which discusses and, in some cases, makes decisions on pan-institutional issues. The Under Secretary will be expected to work closely with other leaders across the organization, to include the individual museum and research center directors.

The Under Secretary for Science and Research at the Smithsonian will have an exceptional scientific background, preferably in a scientific discipline in which the Smithsonian is involved, and strong credibility in the scientific community. The successful candidate will know how to build a research program and will have had experience leading a multi-disciplinary, complex scientific organization or a significant science department/division within a larger entity. S/he must have a passion for science broadly speaking and must be able to look beyond the boundaries of her/his own academic field.

The ideal candidate will be courageous, willing to lead through a time of significant change. S/he will have experience working with a variety of stakeholders (e.g., Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, governing boards, media, donors, the national and international scientific community, and the public) in order to build strong, lasting relationships. S/he will demonstrate excellent management and communication skills in order to interface constructively with people at all levels of the Institution, make and defend tough decisions, and work with ambiguity and limited resources.

Interested candidates should submit their resumes and a brief statement of interest to Meroe Park (Park@si.edu) and Greg Bettwy (BettwyG@si.edu) by Feb. 10.