

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS

HURON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Revised, August 2007

General information:

A proposal is required for all research conducted under the auspices of the Huron Mt. Wildlife Foundation, whether the research is funded by the Foundation or not. If the research is part of a larger project, funded by another agency, it may be sufficient to simply provide a copy, in whole or part, of the proposal funded by that agency, along with appropriate supplementary material.

Investigators considering a proposal to HMWF may, if warranted, arrange brief, exploratory visits to the Huron Mts. without submitting a full proposal. To explore this possibility, submit a letter to the Director of Research, explaining the general research interest and how a preliminary visit will contribute to planning of research.

Multi-year proposals will be entertained and, if a multi-year study is anticipated, it is important that the full scope of the project be delineated in the proposal. Acceptance by the Foundation of a multi-year proposal indicates tentative approval, *contingent on appropriate progress*, for the full term of the proposed research. However, see comments below concerning funding of multi-year proposals.

All projects supported by the Foundation are expected to submit annual progress reports and, at the conclusion of an approved project, a final report, including appropriately documented, archival data-sets where these may have value to future researchers at the Huron Mts. In addition, the Foundation expects every effort to be made to publish research results in the open literature.

Any questions should be addressed to the Foundation's Director of Research.

Funding:

The Foundation offers modest funding for a limited number of proposals each year. Typically, grants range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars per year. Funding may be requested for multi-year projects, but initial commitments of funding will generally not exceed two years. In all cases, funds will be released on a per-year basis, and *funding for subsequent years is always contingent on progress and submission of appropriate reports*. In general, the Foundation prefers to use research funds as 'seed money', giving highest priority for funding to projects that may, with initial results, be attractive to other, larger-scale funding agencies (see 'criteria' below). Where possible, researchers should plan to use initial results to support proposals for more extended work.

Researchers requesting funding should include in their proposal detailed annual

budgets for the full, anticipated period of the project. If they expect to submit proposals for funding from other sources during this period, they should so indicate.

Schedule:

To be eligible for funding from the Huron Mt. Wildlife Foundation, proposals should be received no later than 1 February of the initial year of the project. Proposals not requesting Foundation funding will be accepted at any time, but proposals arriving after 1 February may not be processed as quickly, and will have lower priority for use of facilities. The Foundation's Director of Research will assess all proposals, calling for peer review as needed, and make recommendations concerning approval of projects funding to the Foundation's Board by 1 March. Approval of a research project does not necessarily include provision of requested funds. Depending on the Board's schedule, researchers will be notified of the status of their proposal soon thereafter.

Fees:

There are no fees for use of the Huron Mt. Wildlife Foundation's housing and facilities at the Ives Lake Field Station; these will be made available to approved researchers and projects as capacity permits. Researchers must provide their own food, field supplies, and equipment.

Criteria:

Several criteria are applied in consideration of proposals. In all cases, successful proposals must have scientific merit. That is, they must be based in solid, current scientific context, they must offer clear research questions and plausible approaches to these questions, and there must be a reasonable expectation of adding to scientific understanding.

Proposals meeting the 'scientific merit' standard will be approved so long as facilities permit and requirements and schedules for housing and other facilities are clearly delineated (subsequent additions and changes to schedules will be approved as circumstances permit). However, funding requests are considered separately.

Proposals of appropriate scientific merit will be prioritized, in terms of allocation of funding, based on the following standards:

- Potential for leading to long-term research with funding from other sources will be looked at particularly favorably;
- Use of unusual features of the area – i.e., that could not easily be performed elsewhere – will be favored. This includes, but is not limited to, research that exploits the 'reference ecosystem' properties of the research area or makes use of historical data-sets from the area;
- Address of the consequences of climate change or other large-scale environmental change, particularly if combined with the previous standards;
- Documentation of taxonomic groups not previously inventoried (see the All-

Taxon Biodiversity Inventory published on the Foundation's website, www.hmwf.org);

- Functional or visual impact on the study site (see "guidelines for field methods and taking of organisms").

While question- or hypothesis-driven research will have high priority for Foundation support, proposals for more descriptive projects will be entertained as well. Such studies should, when feasible, be designed to yield 'baseline' data that will be of value in future, comparative research (for example, quantitative population data, habitat distributions).

Guidelines for Proposal Format and Content:

Proposals should be submitted by email, in the form of an editable document in any generally compatible digital format. They should include:

- cover page(s) with information listed below;
- a brief (<300 words) abstract or summary of research question and basic approach
- narrative explaining proposed research, with appropriate literature citation (normally not to exceed five pages; further information will be requested as necessary)
- references cited
- schedule for proposed research (for full anticipated duration of project)
- where funds are requested of HMWF, a detailed, year-by-year budget.
- BRIEF CV's (2 pages maximum) for all principal investigators;

Cover page: The cover page(s) must include all of the following information as applicable; failure to include this material may result in the proposal's not being considered:

1. *Title of proposal*
2. *P.I. names and contacts:* Include institutional affiliation (if any), mailing address for communications with HMWF, email and phone number. Indicate which P.I.(s) will be responsible for communications with HMWF
3. *Continuing research:* If proposed work is part of an ongoing project, indicate when research was initiated. *Narrative should include, under distinct heading, a brief summary of progress to date and citation of any published reports or papers.*
4. *Anticipated duration of project:* All HMWF projects are reviewed and approved on an annual cycle; if you plan a multi-year project, it is important to so indicate here (if open-ended, explain). *Narrative should include explicit rationale for proposed duration.*
5. *Other funding sources:* If other funding sources will support this project, list these (including proposals under review). Indicate source, amount, and period of funding. If no other designated funds are available, so indicate. *This information is essential in all proposals, but particularly if you are requesting HMWF funds.*
6. *Funds requested:* If you are requesting HMWF funding, provide total request

for the current year here (detailed budget and rationale should be in subsequent sections)

7. *Anticipated funding requests beyond current year.* If you anticipate requesting further HMWF funding, indicate number of years and approximate amounts. (NOTE: HMWF funding will normally be available for a maximum of 4 years, with the expectation that longer-term studies will obtain other funding. If you anticipate needs for longer-term HMWF funding, address them directly with the Director of Research.)

Investigators: For proposals originating from academic institutions or from established research agencies, Principal Investigators must include a faculty member or an individual holding appointment as a research scientist. Graduate students may be listed as co-P.I.s. Normally, it is not appropriate for undergraduates to be listed as P.I.'s; while undergraduate assistants are commonly and appropriately employed for research at the Hurons, they should be under direct, on-site supervision of more senior investigators. For proposals originating from independent investigators or through organizations not established as research institutions, investigators' credentials will be assessed individually.

Narrative: The narrative should revolve around clearly stated research questions or hypotheses. Establishing context is important, but extensive background information is not necessary. Rather, the narrative should focus on how the research problem is to be approached, how results are to be interpreted, and how potential results would bear on the initial questions. Narratives should also address any special or particular circumstances that make the Huron Mts. an appropriate site for the research.

It is particularly important to explain field methods clearly. Potential concerns about impacts of the research on the study system or study organism should be anticipated (see "Guidelines for field methods and taking of organisms"), and inadequate address of these issues may result

Narratives should also include some indication of the anticipated products of the research (types of publications, research proposals, etc.).

Schedule: Proposals should include anticipated calendar for field research, indicating number of people involved and housing requirements. We anticipate adjustments as field season approaches, but a clear sense of needs is important for planning allocation of space and resources. Every effort will be made to accommodate changes in schedules, but this may not always be possible, particularly with respect to housing at the Ives Lake field station.

Schedules should also include expected submission and publication of results.

Budgets: If funding is requested from HMWF, proposals must include budgets for each year of the proposal, with detailed estimates of expenditures for travel, subsistence, personnel, supplies, and equipment for at least the current year. Normally, the Foundation does not fund major equipment purchases; in some instances it may share the cost of such purchases. If special circumstances warrant such expenditures, the Foundation may choose to retain ownership of equipment.

Salary supplements for faculty members and institutional employees are not generally considered. Hourly pay for field/research assistants may be requested; first priority will be given to work on-site. Support for research assistants or technicians at home institutions must be justified in terms of hours committed to the proposed project.

HMWF annual grants typically range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Funding offers may be partial, in which case, investigators may explore, with the Director of Research, possibilities for re-scaling of the proposed project. Requests for more than \$5000 are unlikely to be considered, and should be reviewed with the Director of Research in advance.

NOTE that *HMWF does not pay 'indirect costs' or institutional overhead.*