

# GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS

**Huron Mountain Wildlife Foundation**  
**Revised, February 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. In most instances, Foundation funding will be approved (contingent on appropriate progress) for an initial period of no more than two years, with the expectation that researchers will use initial results to support proposals to other funders 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:*

In order 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 review all proposals, consulting with other researchers of appropriate expertise as needed, and make recommendations concerning acceptance of proposals and funding to the Foundation's Board by 1 March. Depending on the Board's schedule, researchers will be notified of the status of their proposal soon thereafter.

*Criteria:*

Several criteria are applied in consideration of proposals. Foremost, and 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 reasonably high likelihood of adding to scientific understanding.

Proposals judged to be acceptable in terms of scientific merit will be prioritized, in terms of allocation of funding, on several other standards:

- Proposals that have potential for leading to long-term research with funding from other sources will be looked at particularly favorably.
- Research that makes good use 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' status of the research area, or research that addresses rare or unique natural features.
- Studies addressing the consequences of climate change or other large-scale environmental change will be given high priority, particularly if they make use of particular features of the Huron Mt. research area.
- Functional or visual impact on the study site may be considered in assessing proposals (see "guidelines for field methods and taking of organisms").

While question- or hypothesis-driven research will have a high priority for Foundation support, proposals for more descriptive projects will be entertained as well. Inventories of taxonomic groups not currently well-documented for the Hurons will be of particular interest (see [www.hmwf.org](http://www.hmwf.org) for information about current status of biodiversity inventories, or contact Director of Research). Such studies should, when feasible, be designed to yield quantitative information about populations and spatial distributions.

So long as facilities permit, all research judged scientifically appropriate will be permitted if no Foundation funding is required. This assumes that requirements and schedules for

housing and other facilities are clearly delineated in the proposal; subsequent additions or changes to schedules and requirements may not be allowed if facilities are fully utilized. In some cases, late additions or changes to personnel or schedules may be possible only if researchers use commercial lodging in the area at their own expense.

*Guidelines for Proposals:*

Proposals should be submitted, if possible, as an email attachment (preferably in form of an editable document, but any generally compatible format is acceptable). They should include:

- full contact information and brief (2 pages maximum) CV's for principle investigators
- contact information for appropriate institutional oversight representative where appropriate
- brief (<300 words) abstract or summary of research question and basic approach
- narrative explaining proposed research (normally not to exceed five pages)
- schedule for proposed research
- where funds are requested of HMWF, a detailed budget.

*Investigators:* For grants 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 P.I.s, but proposals with only graduate students as P.I. will not generally be entertained. Under normal circumstances, 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, their work should be under direct, on-site supervision of more senior investigators.

In the case of grants 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. While some context is appropriate, 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. Any potential concerns about the impact of the research on the study system or study organism should be anticipated (see "Guidelines for field methods and taking of organisms").

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

*Schedules:* Proposals should include anticipated calendars for field research, indicating number of people involved and housing requirements. It is understood that these may require adjustment as field season approaches, but a clear sense of these needs is important for planning allocation of space and resources. Every effort will be made to

accommodate appropriate changes to 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.

*Fees:* There are no fees for housing of approved investigators at the Ives Lake Field Station. Bedding and kitchen facilities are provided (see 'facilities' page for further information). Investigators must provide their own food.

*Budgets:* If funding is requested from HMWF, proposals should include budgets for each year of the proposal, with detailed estimates of expenditures for travel, subsistence, personnel, supplies, and equipment.

HMWF funding is primarily for the direct costs of conducting field work. Normally, the Foundation does not fund permanent 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.

HMWF grants may be used to pay hourly wages of field assistants while on site. Hourly wages for lab assistants at researchers' home institutions and fees for lab-tests may be considered. Salary supplements for faculty members and regular institutional employees are considered only under special circumstances.

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

Generally, HMWF grants are administered through funded-research offices of investigators' home institutions. However, in the case of proposals originating from independent investigators or if special circumstances warrant, researchers may be treated as independent contractors.