

# **GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR PREPARATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**HURON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION**  
Revised, October 2016

## ***I. General information:***

The Huron Mountain Wildlife Foundation (HMWF) entertains proposals for research in the natural sciences focusing on the landscape of the Huron Mt. region. Proposals are required for all research conducted under HMWF auspices, regardless of funding.

Brief, exploratory visits to the Huron Mts. and HMWF Field Station may be arranged without a full proposal, but require prior approval by the Director of Research. Requests for such visits should include a brief statement of the purpose of the visit in terms of potential future research, along with a general work-plan.

HMWF entertains multi-year proposals for periods of up to five years. Longer-term projects are encouraged, but will require renewal proposals. See specific guidelines below for preparation of multi-year proposals.

*Annual progress reports and final reports are required for all HMWF projects, including multi-year projects. HMWF expects investigators to publish results and to archive data in appropriate and accessible ways. See the section on reports for more details.*

Any questions should be addressed to the Foundation's Director of Research, Dr. Kerry Woods (kwoods@bennington.edu).

## ***II. Who may submit proposals:***

Faculty and post-doctoral researchers at recognized research institutions may submit proposals, as PIs, through appropriate institutional channels. Graduate students may submit proposals as co-PI's with a faculty member serving as senior co-PI. Undergraduate students may be employed as research assistants under direct supervision while at Huron Mts. but may not have PI status.

Researchers not affiliated with a university or research institution may submit proposals through their organization or business, or as individuals. In such cases, *if HMWF grant funds are requested*, the submitting entity must have an IRS 'employer identification number' (EIN). If institutional submission is not possible, HMWF funding may be disbursed to individuals directly *only as reimbursement for documented, direct expenses*. Payment schedules may be contingent on submission of annual reports and submission of receipts and documentation of expenses.

## ***III. Availability of HMWF grants:***

The Foundation offers a limited number of small grants in support of approved research proposals. Grants typically range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars per year. Grant funds may be requested for multi-year projects (see budgeting information below), in which case HMWF will make a good-faith effort to maintain funding, throughout the grant period, at levels committed at initial approval. However, each year's funding will be contingent on submission of annual reports, appropriate progress (according to initial grant schedules), and the Foundation's budgetary capacity.

Foundation funding is preferentially used as 'seed money': projects that may, with initial results, be attractive to other, larger-scale funding agencies may receive preference. Researchers should plan to use initial results from HMWF-funded projects to support proposals for more extended work after several years (exact period to be assessed case by case); continued HMWF funding beyond such a period may be contingent on demonstrated efforts to obtain funding from other sources.

#### ***IV. Schedule for submission:***

**To be eligible for funding from the Huron Mt. Wildlife Foundation, proposals *must* 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. Proposals will be evaluated by the Director of Research, the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee, and further peer review as deemed necessary by the Director of Research. Following review, the Director of Research will make recommendations concerning approval of projects and for funding to the Foundation's Board for final decisions. Researchers may expect notification of decisions regarding their proposals by the end of March.

*Approval of a research project does not necessarily mean that requested funding will be provided.* HMWF will approve proposed research on the basis of scientific merit and the Foundation's guidelines, but may not be able to fund all approved projects.

#### ***V. Criteria for review of proposals:***

Proposals will be reviewed under the following.

A. *Scientific merit:* Proposals must be based in current scientific context, offer clear research questions and plausible approaches to these questions, and offer a reasonable expectation of adding to scientific understanding.

B. *Impact on study system:* Proposals are evaluated for potential environmental and esthetic impact on the study systems of the Huron Mt. research area – particularly the lands of the Huron Mountain Club.

C. *Long-term potential:* Long-term research with the potential to attract funding from other sources may receive higher priority.

D. *Unique potential of study area:* Research exploiting special properties of the Huron Mountains area – particularly 'reference ecosystem' properties of Huron Mt. Club holdings – may be given priority.

E: *Biodiversity documentation*: HMWF supports biodiversity documentation, particularly for taxa not already well-studied at the Huron Mountains (see the All-Taxon Biodiversity Inventory published on the Foundation's website, [www.hmwf.org](http://www.hmwf.org)). Surveys that *also address ecological questions* will receive higher priority.

Generally, proposals meeting 'scientific merit' and impact standards will be approved so long as facilities permit. *However, funding decisions will take additional factors into account.* While question- or hypothesis-driven research will have high priority for Foundation support, proposals for more descriptive projects will be entertained as well.

## **VI. Proposal format and content:**

Proposals should be submitted by email to the Director of Research at [kwoods@bennington.edu](mailto:kwoods@bennington.edu), and should be in the form of an editable document in any generally compatible digital format. Proposals should include:

- cover page(s) with information listed below;
- a brief (<300 words) abstract of research question and basic approach
- a narrative explaining proposed research (normally not to exceed 2500 words, not counting references; further information will be requested as necessary)
- a references cited section
- an approximate schedule and work-plan for proposed research (for full anticipated duration of proposed project)
- where funds are requested from HMWF, a budget for the full grant period, broken down by major expense categories and by year
- BRIEF CV's (2 pages maximum) for all principal investigators;

*If proposed research is part of a larger project, funded by another agency, it may be sufficient to provide a copy, in whole or part, of the proposal funded by that agency; contact the Director of Research with questions if this applies.*

**A. 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), address, email, phone number. Indicate which P.I.(s) will be responsible for communications with HMWF
3. *Renewal proposal/continuing research*: If proposed work is for renewal of an ongoing project, indicate when research was initiated. In this case, *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*: If you are proposing a multi-year project (up to 5 years maximum), this must be indicated here.
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 if you are requesting HMWF funds.*

6. *Funds requested:* If you are requesting HMWF funding, provide total request and amounts per year for multi-year projects on cover page (detailed budget should be in subsequent sections)

**B. Narrative:** The narrative should build upon clearly stated research questions or hypotheses. Establishing conceptual context is important, but extensive background information is not necessary. Narrative should focus on how the research problem is to be approached, how results are to be interpreted, and how potential results would contribute to general understanding. 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 in denial of the proposal.

Narratives should also include **plans for dissemination, publication, and data-archiving**. Researchers are expected to pursue publication of research results in appropriate, accessible venues (generally, in peer-reviewed journals). HMWF expects original data-sets (and, in some cases, physical samples) to be placed in secure and accessible (preferably digital) archives in a timely way.

**C. Schedule:** An anticipated calendar and work-plan for field research should indicate anticipated number of people involved and housing requirements. 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.

**D. 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. HMWF grants typically range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars per year. Funding offers may be partial, in which case, investigators may explore, with the Director of Research, possibilities for re-scaling of the proposed project. Annual requests for more than \$5000 should be reviewed with the Director of Research in advance. Some specific guidelines:*

1. **HMWF does not pay ‘indirect costs’ or institutional overhead.**
2. Housing and facilities at the HMWF’s Ives Lake Field Station are available free of charge for approved projects. Facilities include fully equipped kitchens, bedding, and work-space (with simple wet-lab capacity, research refrigerator/freezer, a small natural history library, microscopes).
3. Researchers must provide their own food, field supplies, and equipment beyond materials available at Ives Lake. *Per diem* food costs for time spent in the field may be budgeted **at a maximum of \$20.00/person/day**.
4. *The Foundation does not typically fund major equipment purchases;* in some instances it may share the cost of such purchases. In such instances, the Foundation may choose to retain ownership of equipment.
5. *Salary supplements for faculty members and institutional employees are not*

- generally considered.* Hourly pay for field/research assistants may be requested, with priority for supporting field-work. Support for research assistants or technicians at home institutions will have lower priority, and must be justified in terms of hours committed to the proposed project.
6. Researchers receiving funding directly (i.e., not through an institution, business, or organization with tax number) may budget *only* direct, documentable expenses.

### ***VII. Special considerations for long-term studies:***

HMWF encourages long-term research, but first priority for Foundation grant funds will be for 'seed money' or 'start-up' funding to help researchers build strong proposals to other and larger funders. Researchers are expected to pursue other sources of funding after an initial period of HMWF funding; this period may vary from project to project, but will normally be in the range of 3-5 years. Continued HMWF funding beyond such initial periods may be considered, *but investigators will be expected to show evidence of efforts to obtain other funding* (e.g., submitted proposals to NSF or other funders).

Special consideration may be given to long-term monitoring studies that make use of the Huron Mts. 'reference ecosystem' attributes but are a) relatively inexpensive and b) not strong candidates for other funding sources. In such instances, continued HMWF funding may be considered, but annual grants should be on the order of \$750 or less, and will generally be limited to basic expenses of travel and subsistence and minor, expendable field supplies.

### ***VIII. Annual reports, final reports, and data-archiving:***

Annual progress reports are ***required*** for all multi-year HMWF projects, and should be submitted by the 1 Feb deadline for research proposals unless otherwise arranged. *Failure to submit reports may lead to loss of HMWF sponsorship and loss of access to the field station and research area*, even if an initial multi-year proposal was approved. A final report is required for all projects. Some portion of any agreed-on funding may be withheld until report submission(s).

*HMWF expects researchers to make reasonable efforts to publish research results in the open, peer-reviewed literature.* Annual and final reports should include information about planned, submitted, and accepted research publications. *Final reports must document how primary data-sets have been archived. Data should be archived in some generally known and accessible repository, appropriate to particular field.* The HMWF Director of Research should be provided with a copy of original data-sets. HMWF expects that all data-sets be made publicly available in a timely way. Researchers may maintain exclusive usage rights for up to three years after the project period; longer exclusive rights require approval by the Director of Research. Any data-sets held by HMWF will, after that interval, be provided freely to requestors.