

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS TO THE HURON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Revised for 2023 season

I. General information:

The Huron Mountain Wildlife Foundation (HMWF) entertains research proposals 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 Ives Lake 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 full renewal proposals, and HMWF funding beyond an initial proposal may be limited. 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.

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

II. Who may submit proposals and request grants:

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 research institution may submit proposals through an 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. In the case of funding requests for multi-year projects, HMWF will make a good-faith effort to maintain funding over the project at levels committed at initial approval. However, each year's funding will be contingent on appropriate progress as documented by annual reports, and the Foundation's budgetary capacity.

HMWF funds are used preferentially as 'seed money' to support projects that may, with initial results, be viable in attracting funding from other agencies. Researchers should indicate in proposals any plans to pursue additional funding for future work. Continued HMWF funding will typically be contingent on demonstrated efforts to obtain funding from other sources.

IV. Schedule for submission and review:

To be eligible for grants from HMWF, 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 and peer reviewers as deemed necessary by the Director of Research. The Director of Research forwards recommendations regarding approval and funding to the Foundation's Board for final decisions. Researchers may expect notification of decisions regarding their proposals by the end of March.

V. Criteria for review of proposals:

Proposals will be reviewed under the following criteria.

A. *Scientific merit:* This criterion is preeminent. Proposed research must be grounded in current scientific context, offer clear research questions and plausible approaches to these questions, and have a reasonable expectation of adding to scientific understanding.

B. *Impact on study system:* Potential environmental and esthetic impact on the study systems of the Huron Mt. research area – particularly the lands of the Huron Mountain Club – will be considered. Some types of work may be inappropriate on these grounds.

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.

F. Question- or hypothesis-driven research will have highest priority for HMWF funds; more descriptive projects will be entertained, but with lower priority for funding. HMWF also 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). Surveys that combine biodiversity documentation and hypothesis-driven research will receive higher priority.

Approval of a research project does not necessarily mean that requested funding will be provided. HMWF will approve proposed research on the basis of guidelines above, but funding decisions may take additional factors into account.

VI. Proposal format and content:

Proposals should be submitted by email to the Director of Research at 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) (see below for format and content);
- an abstract (<300 words) of research question and basic approach
- narrative explaining proposed research and methods (normally <2500 words, not counting references; further information will be requested as necessary), *including a data-management plan*
- a references cited section
- approximate schedule and work-plan for proposed research (for full anticipated duration of proposed project if multi-year)
- 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. *Indicate whether this is a new project, a continuing (approved) multi-year project, or a renewal/continuation of a previous project.* If proposed work is for renewal/continuation of an ongoing project, indicate when research was initiated and time-frame for previous approval. *Anticipated duration of project:* If you are proposing a multi-year project (up to 5 years maximum), this must be indicated here.
4. *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.*
5. *Funds requested:* If you are requesting HMWF funding, provide total request and amounts per year for multi-year projects on cover page

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.

Field methods must be clearly explained. Anticipate potential concerns about impacts of the research on the study system or study organism (see “Guidelines for field methods and taking of organisms”). Inadequate address of these issues may result in denial of the proposal.

Narratives should also include **plans for dissemination and publication** of research. Researchers are expected to pursue publication of research results in appropriate, accessible venues (generally, in peer-reviewed journals).

Include specific data management and archival plans. HMWF expects timely placement of original data-sets in secure and accessible digital archives. Established data-archives (e.g., environmentaldatainitiative.org, datadryad.org, figshare.com, knb.ecoinformatics.org, or similar); plans may include a reasonable 'embargo' period for limited access to data-sets by other researchers.

C. Work Schedule/Logistics: Indicate anticipated calendar and work-plan for field research, with *anticipated number of people involved and housing requirements*. Work-schedules in proposal may be approximate; detailed field-station scheduling will be required subsequent to approval. Schedules should also include plans for dissemination of products.

D. Budgets: *If funding is requested from HMWF, include budgets for each year of the proposal*, with 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 \$6000 should be reviewed with the Director of Research in advance. Note these 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 free of charge, *as available*, 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 \$25.00/person/day**.
4. *The Foundation does not typically fund permanent 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 field-work. Research assistant or technician

support 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 use of Foundation funds as 'seed money' or 'start-up' funding to help researchers build strong proposals to other and larger funders will be given particular priority. Researchers are expected to pursue other sources of funding after an initial period – normally 3-5 years -- of HMWF funding. 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 \$1000 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, along with work-plans for each subsequent year, 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. A 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/will be archived.* The HMWF Director of Research should be provided with a copy of original data-sets or URL/DOI for archived data-sets. HMWF expects that all data-sets be made publicly available in a timely way.