



BLACK ROCK FOREST

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David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants for Conservation Research at Black Rock Forest

Guidelines for 2023

Application Deadline
January 29, 2023 5:00 PM EST

Announcement of Awards
March 10, 2023

Earliest Funded Project Start Date
April 1, 2023

INFORMATION CONTACT:

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BLACK ROCK FOREST DAVID REDDEN CONSERVATION SCIENCE FUND SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM 2023 GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND

Black Rock Forest is a non-profit organization with a mission of advancing scientific understanding of the natural world through research, education, and conservation programs. The organization maintains a 1,586 ha forest and a scientific field station in the Hudson Highlands which features a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats. The nearly 70 km of forest roads and trails provides easy access to a rich resource of intact mixed deciduous forest.

The David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants Program seeks to support research projects at Black Rock Forest focused on science with applications to conservation. Research can be focused at any biological scale - molecules to ecosystems. **Projects must be completed, at least in part, at Black Rock Forest.** The maximum request is \$6000 with a one-year grant period.

ELIGIBILITY

- Projects must involve research related to the biota or physical environment of Black Rock Forest.
- Projects must be completed, at least in part, within Black Rock Forest.
- Proposals are welcomed from high school, undergraduate, or graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and senior researchers at any academic, research, non-profit, or other institution for higher learning.
- At Black Rock Forest we value diversity, in our ecosystems and in our organization. We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workplace and in our science, education, and conservation. We strongly encourage applications from underrepresented group members as we seek to diversify and strengthen our organization, science, and society.
- If a Principal Investigator (PI) has previously received a David Redden Conservation Science Small Grant, all previous requirements (e.g., submission of final report) must be met before any new grant is awarded.

RESEARCH AREAS of INTEREST

Proposals in all areas related to conservation science will be accepted and proposals seeking to utilize the newly installed wireless mesh network are highly encouraged (visit <https://blackrock.treefi.net/> for more information on our in-forest wireless network). Additionally, Black Rock Forest has identified several key areas of interest:

- Habitat disturbance and landscape connectivity,
- Invasive species management,
- Forest pests and pathogens,
- Restoration ecology, and
- Species inventories.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Proposals must be prepared by a PI who must be a faculty member, post-doctoral researcher, or graduate student at their institution. For proposals being submitted by more than one PI, one should be designated as the “primary responsible agent”. This PI will serve as the primary contact, will receive and administer finances, submit reports, and will be responsible for all communications related to the project.
- If a proposal is largely to support the work of a graduate student, then the student should submit the proposal with the written support of their advisor.

- Undergraduate and high school students may apply if their proposal is submitted in collaboration with a faculty member or teacher who will supervise the project. All students - high school, undergraduates, and graduates - must arrange for submission of a letter of support from their advisor stating their support for the student and research.
- The PI, not the institution, submits the proposal and the award will be made directly to the PI. The PI should inquire within their home institution for guidance on handling small grants early to avoid award delays.
- The maximum request is \$6000; however, PIs may request larger grants if prior permission is given by the Executive Director.
- Partnerships between institutions are especially encouraged and may merit larger requests.
- The grant period is one year and all proposals should be constructed to reflect a one-year project. A grant award neither prohibits nor guarantees a successive award.
- If a PI has previously received a David Redden Conservation Science Small Grant, all previous requirements (*e.g.*, submission of final report) must be met before any new grant is awarded.
- Award funds may be used for stipends or salary (but not benefits) to support students, research assistants, post-doctoral associates, and for specialized consultants. Support in the form of summer salary, wages or stipends for faculty is not allowed.
- Travel expenses to and from Black Rock Forest are allowed. Faculty and students should arrange their own transportation to/from and within the Forest. Food expenses are not covered. Lodging costs at Black Rock Forest facilities may be included (call 845-534-4517 or check our [website](#) for availability).
- Indirect costs or other forms of institutional overhead are not supported.
- Unless otherwise stipulated in the award letter, equipment purchased will remain at or be returned to Black Rock Forest at the end of the grant period.

DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted via the by 5:00 PM EST on Monday January 29, 2023.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Contact with BRF staff prior to proposal preparation may help determine if the proposed project is appropriate. Proposals should be submitted directly through the [Black Rock Forest website](#), exclusive of letters of support which should be emailed directly to the Research Manager (kterlizzi@blackrockforest.org). A reply email will be returned to the PI indicating receipt of the application. Applications that are incomplete after the deadline will not be reviewed.

Proposals must contain:

- **Cover Sheet:** This is the fillable form on the website. Provide a short descriptive title (< 200 characters). In the form, check all boxes that apply. If a research project involves human subjects, you will be required to conform to guidelines established by the NIH and NSF regarding consent forms and the rights, privacy, and welfare of your subjects. If your project involves vertebrate animals, you are required to adhere to your institution's animal welfare guidelines as set forth by NIH and NSF. Research involving endangered species must conform to State and Federal regulations. Copies of institutional or government approval (*e.g.* IAUCUC approval, collecting permits, etc.) must be given to Black Rock Forest before the permitted activities may commence.
- **Project Description:** The project description is limited to a maximum of six single-spaced pages (exclusive of Literature Cited) with one-inch margins and 12-point, standard font. The **Introduction** should state the problem, the questions, or the hypotheses to be tested and the project's conservation relevance. Specific objectives for the period of support should be listed. Background material should place the project in perspective and include a brief review of relevant literature. The **Research Design** section should present descriptions of proposed

research including the procedures to be used to sufficient detail to allow reviewers to assess feasibility. Special emphasis should be placed on work to be conducted within Black Rock Forest, including lab space requirements and their duration. Schematics and or figures for sampling or surveying plots, transects, etc. are encouraged when appropriate. Provide a list of expected **project deliverables**, including data sets, maps, manuscripts, etc. Provide an **approximate schedule** for the stages of the project and plans for removal of equipment and materials from the Forest at the end of the project. **Literature Cited** should be the last section of the project description. The project description should be attached to the application on the website.

- **Proposed Budget:** The following budget categories must be included when applicable: personnel, equipment and supplies, travel, lodging, and other expenses (e.g., lab processing fees). Please contact the BRF Research Manager with allowable expense questions.
- **Budget Justification:** Specify the reasons for the funds requested. If funds are being used as student or consultant stipends a clear contingency must be stated in the event of a change in personnel (e.g. if a partnership between Co-PIs dissolves, a special consultant is no longer available, *etc.*). Requests for equipment costing >\$1500 require manufacturer, model number, and web link with the need for the requested model clearly explained. Briefly describe expendable supplies requested. Unless well justified, requests for computers or computer upgrades are not allowed. Unless otherwise stipulated in the award letter, equipment purchased will become the property of Black Rock Forest at the end of the grant period.
- **Other Funding:** A list of current awards relevant to the proposed research controlled by the PI, including source, amount and period of support. If there are no current awards, state “None”.
- **List of Prior Black Rock Forest Awards:** A list including a final report, any publications or conference presentations resulting from these awards and the professional outcomes of student participants.
- **Curriculum Vitae:** A short (≤ 2 pages) CV of the PI and of each student investigator participating in the project.
- **Letter(s) of Support:** Applications from graduate students should include a letter of support from the student’s advisor endorsing the proposed research and briefly describing the role the advisor and home institution will provide in supporting that research (e.g., use of laboratory facilities or scientific equipment, expected involvement of the advisor or other collaborators in the proposed research). Applications from undergraduate and high school students should include a letter of support from the advisor or mentor with details of how that mentor will supervise that project. Any application from an undergraduate or high school student without a detailed mentoring plan will not be considered. Questions about the expectations for mentors of undergraduate or high school research can be directed to the Research Manager in advance of submission.

EVALUATION

Each proposal will be judged on the extent to which it reflects a well-conceived design, clearly stated goals, conservation relevance and a reasonable promise of successful completion. Research proposals will be scored as to (1) evidence of scholarly promise/productivity; (2) significance of the project regarding its potential contribution to the field; and (3) evidence of the importance of Black Rock Forest in answering the research questions. Research awards will generally support independent, original projects that will lead to peer-reviewed publication and potential for additional funding from other sources.

The David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants Program Committee, which consists of representatives from the Forest staff and Consortium partners, will make award decisions. Final decisions will be announced by written notification by March 10, 2023.

REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTS

All projects at Black Rock Forest require prior written approval of the Research Manager. Approval of a grant will satisfy this requirement. All PIs must file a written plan documenting procedures (including a COVID-19 or other safety protocols, as appropriate), equipment and materials, discussion of access and safety issues prior to initiation of research if these issues are not sufficiently addressed in the grant application. PIs must submit data, with metadata in appropriate format, within two years of collection. **All equipment and materials must be removed and properly disposed of at the end of the study.** Substantive changes to either the project design or budget must be approved by the Research Manager in advance. Grant recipients must also cooperate with the BRF communications department if their work is featured for public outreach, including possible social media posts, website highlights, or newsletters. Recipients will be encouraged to provide data to support curriculum development and education programs at the Forest. For those interested, there may also be opportunities to mentor and support youth interns.

Grant administration for successful proposals will be governed by the conditions of a grant letter sent to successful applicants.

At the end of the grant period, the PI must submit a final report within 60 days. The report should briefly present and discuss the results and account for expenses. A copy of any publication(s) resulting from the project, including in-house, peer-reviewed, non-peer-reviewed, or popular press, should be submitted as they arise. Publications should contain an acknowledgement of support from the Black Rock Forest David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants Program.