



# BLACK ROCK FOREST

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

Guidelines for 2026

Application Deadline:  
January 30, 2026 5:00 PM EST

Announcement of Awards:  
March 2026

## INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## **BACKGROUND**

Black Rock Forest (BRF) is a non-profit organization with a mission of advancing scientific understanding of the natural world through research, education, and conservation programs. BRF maintains 70-km of roads and trails inside our 1,586-ha forest within the Hudson Highlands providing access to a variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

The David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants Program (herein: “Redden Fund”) seeks to support research projects in BRF with applications to conservation. Research can be focused at any scale, from molecules to ecosystems. Projects must be completed, at least in part, within BRF.

The maximum request is \$10,000 and all proposals should reflect a one-year project period.

At BRF 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 and/or marginalized group members.

## **RESEARCH AREAS OF INTEREST**

Proposals in all areas of science with conservation relevance will be accepted.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

- Projects must involve research related to BRF and must be completed, at least in part, within BRF.
- Projects must have a clearly stated application to conservation or forest management.
- Proposals are welcomed from students (high school, undergraduate, or graduate), postdoctoral researchers, and senior researchers at any academic, research, non-profit, for-profit, or institution for higher learning.
- Previous Redden Fund awardees are eligible to reapply only if they have submitted an interim report and all other requirements detailed in their previous award letter have been met.
- To maximize the diversity of research and applicants, no project will be awarded more than three grants within five years of the first award.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Proposals must be prepared by at least one Principal Investigator (PI) that will serve as the primary contact, will receive and administer funds, submit reports, and will be responsible for all communications related to the project. Proposals with more than one PI must designate the “primary responsible agent”. Students can serve as a PI and/or project lead but must have an advisor/mentor as a co-PI that serves as the “primary responsible agent”.
- Proposals from students must be written with expressed written support from their advisor/mentor. An advisor/mentor must be qualified to provide support to the student and their proposed research plan. Advisors/Mentors on student-led proposals must email

a letter of support to ([slapoint@blackrockforest.org](mailto:slapoint@blackrockforest.org)) by the proposal deadline. This letter must state how the writer will facilitate the research and support the student.

- The PI, not their institution, submits the proposal.
- The grant period is one year from spring 2026 to spring 2027. All proposals should be constructed to reflect a one-year project.
- Award funds may be used for stipends or salary (but not benefits) to support students, research assistants, postdoctoral associates, subcontractors, and/or faculty.
- Travel expenses to/from/within Black Rock Forest are allowed. Fees for lodging, including at BRF facilities, are allowed (please check our [website](#) for fees and availability). Food and/or per diem expenses are not allowed.
- Indirect costs or other forms of institutional overhead are not allowed.
- If a 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 protected species must conform to State and Federal regulations. Copies of institutional or government approval (e.g., IAUCUC approval, NYSDEC collecting permits, etc.) must be given to BRF before the permitted activities may commence.
- All awarded proposals will be required to acknowledge and accept the BRF Research Code and Guidelines available on our [website](#) and will accompany the award letter.

## DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted via the BRF [website](#) by 5:00 PM EST on January 30, 2026.

## PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Communication with BRF staff may help determine if the proposed project is appropriate and feasible. Proposals should be submitted directly through the BRF [website](#), exclusive of letters of support that should be emailed directly to [slapoint@blackrockforest.org](mailto:slapoint@blackrockforest.org). A reply email will be returned to the PI indicating receipt of the application. Incomplete applications and those submitted 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) and check all boxes that apply.

The following sections, except letters of support, may be combined into one document .pdf or .doc and uploaded at the website above.

- **Project Description:** The project description is limited to a maximum of four single-spaced pages (exclusive of Literature Cited) with one-inch margins and 12-point, standard font. The **Introduction** should state the problem, questions, hypotheses being addressed, 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 in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to assess feasibility. Special emphasis should be placed on work to be conducted within BRF, including lab space requirements, sites or community type targets, and 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 study markers and equipment from the Forest at the end of the project.

**Literature Cited** should be the last section of the project description.

- **Proposed Budget:** At minimum, 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 [slapoint@blackrockforest.org](mailto:slapoint@blackrockforest.org) with allowable expense questions. Unless otherwise stipulated in the award letter, equipment costing >\$400 purchased via the award will become the property of BRF at the end of the grant period.
- **Budget Justification:** Specify the reasons for the funds requested. If funds are being used for student or consultant stipends, a clear contingency must be stated in the event of a change in personnel or relationship. Requests for equipment costing >\$1500 require manufacturer, model number, and web link.
- **Funds Administration:** Proposals must state intended plans for managing grant funds if awarded. BRF recommends one of the following options:
  1. *Institution administration:* BRF will provide a payment for the full award amount to the PI's institution. The institution will distribute funds as described in the proposed budget.
  2. *Principal investigator administration:* BRF will provide payment for the full award to the PI and they will be required to complete a W9 and be issued a 1099-misc for their tax purposes.
  3. *BRF administration:* BRF will purchase equipment, lodging, or supplies as directed by the PI. If awarded, details for all purchases will be required (e.g., receipts), any salary payments will require a W9 and the individual will be issued a 1099-misc for their tax purposes.

Each option will require the PI to provide routing and account information for any transfer of funds, be it to the institution or individuals.

- **Acknowledgement of BRF research guidelines:** State that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by the BRF Research Code and Guidelines available on our [website](#).
- **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 Products from Prior Redden Fund Awards:** If applicable, a list of publications, presentations, and student theses resulting from prior Redden Fund awards. If you have not already, please share with BRF pdfs etc. of such products.
- **Curriculum Vitae:** A short ( $\leq 2$  pages) CV of the PI and of each student investigator participating in the project; but see below for high school exceptions.
- **Letter(s) of Support:** All student PIs must arrange to have their advisor/mentor (i.e., primary responsible agent) email their letter of support to the [slapoint@blackrockforest.org](mailto:slapoint@blackrockforest.org) by the application deadline. This letter must endorse the proposed research, briefly describe the role the advisor and home institution will provide in supporting that research (e.g., use of laboratory facilities or scientific equipment), and the expected involvement of the advisor in the proposed research.
- **Applications from High School Students:** We welcome high school students and their teachers to apply. BRF can help facilitate all projects, but we cannot directly supervise any project or applicant, making the primary responsible agent's letter of support a critical

component of the application. High school applicants do not need to provide a CV nor do their primary responsible agents.

- **Applications from Current Redden Fund Awardees:** We welcome applications from current Redden Fund awardees as a continuation of the current project or a new research proposal. However, your previous project must be in good standing and/or completed before BRF will disburse a new award. The interim and final reports are described in your award letter.

## EVALUATION

Each proposal will be judged on the extent to which it (1) reflects a well-conceived, feasible project, (2) has clearly stated goals, (3) has evidence of scholarly promise/productivity, (4) demonstrates the importance of BRF in answering the research questions, and (5) it's level of conservation relevance.

The Redden Fund Grant Committee, which consists of representatives from the Forest staff, Consortium partners, and external reviewers will make award decisions. Final decisions will be announced by written notification in March 2026.

## REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTS

All projects at BRF require prior written approval (see [BRF Research Code and Guidelines](#)). A grant award meets this requirement. All equipment and materials must be labelled appropriately while in use and removed and properly disposed of at the end of the study; see section G of the [BRF Research Code and Guidelines](#) for field marking requirements. All unspent award funds must be returned to BRF within 90 days of the end of the proposed work. These unspent funds will be returned to the BRF-managed fund that supports this grant program. Substantive changes to either the project design or budget must be approved by BRF in advance.

Awardees are required to submit an interim report and metadata in fall 2026, and a final report and data (due at the end of March the following year) as dictated in their award letter. In general, PIs should share study site and plot locations and other metadata as soon as possible. Previously awarded projects must be in good standing (i.e., have submitted their interim report) if applicants are applying in consecutive years. The final report must be submitted before BRF will disburse a second award.

Awardees are required to provide photographs highlighting the awardee and the project for use in BRF communications materials. Working with BRF to feature your research in public outreach efforts is required. Awardees are highly encouraged to present their findings at our biennial research symposium at BRF.

A copy of any publication(s) resulting from the project, including peer-reviewed, non-peer-reviewed, or popular press, should be shared with BRF as they arise. Publications must contain an acknowledgement of support from the Black Rock Forest David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants Program.