

2022 Conservation Connect Fellowship Program With Practicum

The National Forest Foundation (NFF) invites graduate students (pursuing a master's or doctoral degree) to apply to the 2022 Conservation Connect Fellowship Program. The fellowship includes a summer 2022 or academic year 2022-23 practicum associated with NFF's Missoula, Montana office, a field office, or hosted by a partner organization. Practicum projects vary regarding whether they are virtual and/or in person and may be adjusted depending upon pandemic conditions.

WHAT FELLOWS GAIN

- Applied experience with conservation programs and projects through a practicum project. For example, depending on the project, fellows may work with diverse stakeholders, support and facilitate collaborative efforts, coordinate and implement projects, conduct research to improve conservation programs, and develop training curricula and strategic communications.
- Mentoring from skilled conservation professionals at the NFF and other nonprofit host organizations.
- Trainings in collaborative conservation, facilitation practice, the roles of the National Environmental Policy Act and U.S. Forest Service, and other topics.
- Real-world understanding of forest and public lands management.
- An expanded personal and professional network.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION

Congress chartered the National Forest Foundation (NFF) with a simple mission: bring people together to restore and enhance our National Forests and Grasslands. The NFF is the leading organization inspiring personal and meaningful connections to our National Forests, the centerpiece of America's public lands. Working on behalf of the American public, the NFF leads forest conservation efforts and promotes responsible recreation on the 193-million-acre National Forest System. We believe these lands, and all they provide, are an American treasure and are vital to the health of our communities.

In 2006, NFF established Conservation Connect to serve community-based groups and Forest Service employees working on collaborative stewardship of National Forest System lands. Conservation Connect offers a variety of technical assistance and peer learning opportunities to support capacity building around collaborative stewardship issues. The objectives of Conservation Connect are to:

- Foster peer-to-peer and community-to-agency connections.
- Support exchange of knowledge, tools, and best practices.
- Identify common challenges and move to team problem solving.
- Promote the development of new understandings around the ecological, social, and economic objectives of collaborative forest stewardship.
- Build the organizational capacity of collaborative groups.

The NFF uses the following definition of collaboration: A process through which a broad array of interests, some of which may be in conflict, enter into civil dialogue to collectively consider possible recommendations and actions that improve the management of natural resources to benefit both the environment and surrounding communities. Collaboration is different from a partnership. Collaboration involves a diverse array of stakeholders while a partnership engages a few parties that are interested in working together on a specific project. Through the support of collaboration among stakeholders, the Forest Service, and other land-managing agencies, NFF supports the development of collective agreements to address the complicated challenges facing forest management.

ABOUT THE CONSERVATION CONNECT FELLOWSHIP: DESCRIPTION, TERMS AND ELIGIBILITY

NFF believes in the value of matching the cutting-edge knowledge acquired at the graduate level of universities with practical, hands-on experience. The purposes of the Conservation Connect Fellowship Program are to align NFF's collaboration and conservation work with a practicum and experiential education opportunity, and to build a cohort of next generation leaders in the field of natural resource conflict resolution. The NFF will strive to meet each fellow's learning objectives, while also effectively extending the capacity of NFF and its partners to deliver community engagement and conservation results for National Forests and Grasslands. NFF gives fellows the chance to gain direct experience in the variety of NFF and partner functions.

We are looking for students with interest and academic experience in collaborative process and natural resource conflict resolution and on-the-ground science applications. We will also consider applicants with an interest in nonprofit administration, grants administration, communications, or marketing. Please note that this is not a research fellowship. NFF administers the Fellowship Program, and NFF or partner organizations provide the practicum experience, which is a major component of the program. Between trainings, orientation, and the practicum, each fellow can expect to work 360 hours. Exact dates of practicum work are flexible.

FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS (360 HOURS TOTAL)

Practicum (at least 310 hours)

The NFF will match each fellow to a practicum at the NFF Missoula office, an NFF field office, or a partner host organization for a practicum. The practicum will take place over the summer or the academic year, with specific dates to be determined individually. The summer practicum schedule will require the fellow to complete their 310 hours over ten to twelve weeks during the summer of 2022. The academic year practicum is the same number of hours spread over a longer timeframe. During each practicum, the fellow will focus on one or more projects. NFF will strive to match fellows with practicum opportunities according to the fellow's preferences expressed in their application. As part of their practicum, fellows may spend a portion of their time (up to 20%) performing tasks associated with nonprofit administration, such as grant proposal preparation or organizational support.

Professional Development and Networking (estimated 50 hours over the total 12 month Fellowship)

- Conservation Connect Advisory Council Meetings: Each fellow will have an opportunity to participate in meetings of the Conservation Connect Advisory Council, composed of leading thinkers in the field of natural resources collaboration.
- Fellow Orientation: The NFF is planning an in-person orientation the second or third week of June 2022 near Coeur d'Alene, ID. The orientation will provide training in a variety of topics, including collaboration,



best practices for neutral facilitation, NFF’s approach to engaging community interests, working with the Forest Service, and relevant federal laws.

- **Peer Networking and Trainings:** Fellows are asked to participate in a bimonthly videoconference where the NFF offers trainings and supports fellows meeting as a group to discuss issues that arise, share accomplishments, and solicit feedback from both their peers and NFF.

Mentor Support

The NFF will match each fellow with a mentor from the NFF or the host organization, who functions as the practicum supervisor. We encourage fellows to schedule regular meetings with their mentor to talk through questions and ideas as they correlate their practicum work to the theories and methods they are studying at their university.

Evaluation

Fellows are required to participate in a post-fellowship evaluation process conducted by NFF. NFF will collect feedback and metrics on fellow’s experiences and accomplishments throughout the 12-month period.

Fellowship Award

Fellows will be hired as temporary, part-time employees and compensated at a rate of \$18/hour for their time (with no benefits offered). Fellows will be reimbursed for approved travel expenses associated with participation in the fellowship program and practicum.

Eligibility

Graduate students pursuing a master's degree or doctorate are eligible for the Conservation Connect Fellowship. We anticipate students will have taken coursework related to the study of natural resources, conflict resolution, collaboration, or non-profit management.

Important Dates	
Applications due	February 18, 2022
NFF review of applications (with interviews for finalists)	February 21 - March 25, 2022
Announcement of fellow selections with practicum matches	April 11, 2022
Program kickoff and welcome session (virtual)	May 2022
Fellow orientation (in person if possible)	2 nd or 3 rd week of June 2022
Practicums begin	Depends upon project
Fellowships end	May 2023

CONSERVATION CONNECT FELLOW SELECTION PROCESS

The NFF will select Conservation Connect Fellows based on their readiness to take advantage of what the fellowship offers, both in terms of professional development and practical experience and the strength of their application materials. The review committee will review written materials and will conduct interviews of candidates.



The NFF is committed to offering opportunities to as many students as possible and prefers providing stipends to students who do not already have internship funding available to them through other awards, fellowships, or scholarship programs.

** The National Forest Foundation welcomes a diverse pool of applicants and maintains a policy of nondiscrimination.*

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The Conservation Connect Fellowship application is an electronic compilation of the following components into a single PDF submitted to lzamesnik@nationalforests.org by February 18, 2022. **REQUIRED:** Clearly mark in the subject of the email: 2022 Conservation Connect Fellow Application.

1. **Cover Letter:** In one page, describe in a compelling narrative your interest in being a Conservation Connect Fellow and how your studies and career plans fit the intent of the fellowship. Please be sure to include your mailing address, email address, and phone number.
2. **Personal Statement:** In 250 words or less for each response, address each of the following three questions:
 - a. What life experiences have led you to choose your current field of study?
 - b. What is the topic of your master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, and how would a Conservation Connect Fellowship enrich its content and value?
 - c. Please describe three learning objectives for the fellowship.
3. **Resume** of academic and professional experience.
4. **Practicum Selection Form:** Please identify up to three practicum projects you are interested in using the table on the next page. Submit your project preferences using this survey link: <https://form.typeform.com/to/dISjV68Q>.
5. **Letter of Recommendation (submitted separately):** The fellowship application requires one letter of recommendation from a member of the faculty in the student's academic program. The letter must address the merits of the applicant and their fit for this fellowship. The NFF requests the **letter writer** email a signed copy of their letter directly to lzamesnik@nationalforests.org by February 18, 2022 with FELLOWSHIP and the applicant name clearly in the subject line.

QUESTIONS? Email lzamesnik@nationalforests.org



	Practicum project title	Practicum location <i>(may change due to Covid-19 status)</i>	Timeline for practicum	Practicum project description
1	Workshop Coordination and Forest Restoration StoryMap	Northern California preferred, remote possible	Summer 2022 and into Fall 2022	<p>The fellow will provide support for the ACCEL project, which aims to bring high quality spatial data and analytical tools to support restoration of California's forest landscapes. The NFF's role is to engage National Forest staff and stakeholders in the development of ACCEL, including developing communication materials and facilitating meetings and trainings. The fellow will provide support and coordination for training workshops on how to use the ACCEL data and tools and will take the lead to develop a story map illustrating the tool and its utility for forest management.</p> <p>Familiarity with ArcGIS and mapping tools as well as a strong interest in facilitated process and science delivery would be helpful in this project.</p>
2	Northern Arizona Strategic Projects: Wood for Life, Recreation/User Impacts, and Communications	Flagstaff or Northern Arizona preferred, remote possible	Academic year 2022-2023	The fellow will support strategic project areas for the Northern Arizona Forest Fund. The two priority areas of focus are 1) Wood for Life Tribal Fuelwood Initiative: support coordination, communications, project logistics, and sharing lessons learned/model with other geographies and 2) Build out our recreation and user impacts work, including partnership building, volunteer event coordination, and creative communications. Focus can vary depending on fellow's interest and priority program needs over the course of the fellowship.
3	Youth Engagement Research and Plan Development	Flexible	Academic year 2022-2023	The fellow will assist in developing comprehensive approaches for NFF's localized youth engagement programs, building an understanding of our program strengths and other organizations with whom we should affiliate, partner, or align. Additionally, the fellow will assist in developing a plan for a national NFF youth program.
4	Partnerships on Every Forest and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Support	Flexible	Summer 2022 or Academic Year 2021-2022, or some combination of both	<p>NFF is working with the Forest Service's National Partnership Office (NPO) to strengthen partnerships on every National Forest through forest level consultations and the documentation and dissemination of partnership lessons, challenges, and opportunities. The fellow will work closely with NFF and the NPO staff to (1) assist in meetings with forest leadership, (2) conduct and analyze qualitative research with external partners and internal Forest Service staff, (3) prepare and report results, (4) assist in the development of a partnership strategy, and (5) assist as needed with peer learning sessions and the Partnership Leader Development Summit.</p> <p>This fellow will also support the NFF's internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) working group as it works towards developing and implementing a DEI strategy. Work will involve coordination of the working group and committees, attending meetings and notetaking, and researching DEI best practices.</p>

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5	Northern Rockies Academic Year 2022-23 Collaborative Group Coordination & Facilitation	Missoula, MT	Academic year 2022-2023	The fellow will assist with the coordination and facilitation of collaborative groups in Montana and Idaho. A strong interest in collaborative process and community engagement, as well as National Forest restoration and recreation management are important for this project.
6	Northern Rockies Collaborative Group Summer Facilitation & Coordination	Missoula, MT	Summer 2022	The fellow will assist NFF with the coordination and facilitation of collaborative groups in Montana and Idaho. A strong interest in collaborative process and community engagement, as well as National Forest restoration and recreation management are important for this project.
7	Building a Circular Economy – Identifying Opportunities and Priority Investments to Optimize the Utilization of Restoration Byproducts Across the Northern Blue Mountains Project host: Wallowa Resources	Remote possible with site visits to the project sites in Oregon and Washington	Summer 2022	The Northern Blues All Lands Restoration CFLRP seeks to restore ten million acres across Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington to conditions in which wildfire can once again play its important role as a natural process. This goal is framed by the intention of sustaining and enhancing critical ecological conditions and services – including wildlife habitat and connectivity, watershed hydrology, the provision of First Foods, as well as traditional and commercial access and use of the forest and its products by the local communities. One of the key metrics guiding implementation is our intention to maintain or increase the number and diversity of wood products that can be processed locally. This metric recognizes the importance at multiple scales of ensuring large landscape restoration generates meaningful socio and economic benefits and contributes to a shift from unsustainable forms of natural resource use towards systems that embody principles of a circular economy. The Conservation Connect Fellow will: investigate current wood utilization capacity; differentiating the potential capacity and the actual flows of raw materials from this project; identify gaps and barriers in utilization – including those related to processing capacity, and those related to the form and structure of Forest Service timber sales and stewardship contracts; and, generate recommendations for improving utilization – including policy, contracting, programmatic and investment recommendations.



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8	Conservation Awards Diversifying Partnerships and Communications Strategy	Remote	Academic year 2022-2023 (could possibly start in the summer with continuation into the academic year)	This fellow will take an active role in creating, refining, and implementing tools and strategies for the NFF to deliver outreach and communication of informational resources to nationwide organizations with a conservation interest. This project will help the NFF diversify its grantees, contractors, and other conservation partners. This includes analysis of existing partners, existing communication tools such as the Taproot e-newsletter and associated distribution lists, research on ways to expand and diversify communications to best meet needs of partners, and execution of actions to maintain and improve partner communications. Tasks include coordinating internal task force(s) of NFF staff on the topic; creation of tools to track partner outreach and diversity; soliciting, compiling, writing content for, and sending the quarterly newsletter; tracking responses; production of recommendations for targeted partner communication strategies; managing tracking of recipients in a new CMS; and potentially implementing segmenting and other such strategies.
9	Cross-boundary Approaches to Forest Management in Montana and Nationally	Remote	Summer 2022 with potential continuation into the academic year	Shared Stewardship, or working across federal, state, private and tribal lands, is critical in order to achieve forest restoration at a scale that meaningfully reduces fire risk, improves forest health and wildlife habitat, and addresses community interests in recreation amenities. The fellow will help support NFF's engagement with the multi-agency and stakeholder Montana Forest Action Council, develop cross-boundary tools and training plans, and support virtual peer learning sessions.
10	Facilitate partnerships for Implementing Forest Climate Resilience Efforts Project host: Watershed Research and Training Center	Northern California, possibly remote	Summer 2022	In this program the Conservation Connect fellow will engage with a wide variety of organizations working on cross boundary forest climate resilience projects across Northern California. These will include USFS staff, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, county governments, fire safe councils and others implementing California Climate Investments Forest Health program. The NFF Fellow will work to identify capacity limitations and opportunities to overcome implementation challenges. Skills/familiarity with Git, Jupyter, geospatial analysis, Python, and R are helpful for this practicum. The ability to work with diverse constituencies and cultural sensitivity is essential.

