



CONSERVATION CONNECT FELLOWS PROGRAM

2018 GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP IN COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

The National Forest Foundation invites Masters or PhD student applications for its inaugural Conservation Connect Fellowship Program fellowships. The NFF will select up to four Fellows selected for the initial round, to launch their 18-month terms in June 2018. The application deadline is May 10, 2018.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION

The National Forest Foundation (NFF), chartered by Congress, engages America in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the 193-million acre National Forest System. NFF's focus is on addressing critical forest and watershed restoration needs across our most iconic National Forests and Grasslands. NFF believes that communities should play a leading role in determining the future of these lands, so NFF focuses its efforts on connecting these communities, and the people who comprise them, to tools, knowledge, and funding to support their active and devoted stewardship of our incredible public lands.

In 2006, NFF created 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.

Through the support of collaboration among key stakeholders and the U.S. Forest Service, NFF supports the development of a "zone of agreement" around the complicated challenges of inherited and current forest degradation on National Forest System lands. Typical interests

seeking to use and benefit from the forest include: land, water and wildlife conservationists; recreationists, including hunters and fishermen as well as hikers, boaters, and horseback, ATV and snowmobile riders; the forest products industry and wild-harvesters (e.g. for firewood or herbs); ranchers and farmers; local elected officials; and those with special cultural uses of the forest (e.g. Native American sacred sites and use for ceremony).

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 purpose of a Conservation Connect Fellowship is to align NFF's collaboration and conservation work with a practicum and experiential education opportunity. The NFF will strive to meet each Fellow's learning objectives, while also effectively extending the capacity of NFF and its partners to deliver conservation results for National Forests and Grasslands. NFF gives Fellows the chance to gain direct experience in the variety of NFF and partner functions, specifically regarding:

- Collaborative processes
- On-the-ground science applications

We will also consider applicants with an interest in:

- Nonprofit administration
- Grants administration
- Communications

Please note that this is not a research fellowship.

NFF Fellowships aim to build experience, knowledge and skills within the next generation of collaborative and conservation leaders to support each other and advance the field. The Fellowships are funded and administered by NFF, with NFF and partner organizations providing a practicum experience (internship) to each Fellow.

Fellowship Award and Duration –Fellows receive a \$5,000 stipend over a period of 18 months, with \$4,000 at the beginning of their internship and \$1,000 at the conclusion of the fellowship. NFF will also pay for approved travel expenses associated with participation in the Fellowship program and practicum. Throughout the Fellowship period, the Fellow must be actively enrolled or enrolled and graduating. Fellows will spend up to 50 hours during their fellowship participating in Conservation Connect professional development, mentoring and networking activities. The program requires on-site practicums either at an NFF office or at a participating Host Organization, with an expected 32-hour per week schedule lasting 10-12 weeks from June through August 2019. Exact dates are flexible.



Academic Base – Graduate students currently enrolled at one of the following universities are eligible to apply:

- Colorado State University
- University of Montana

We prefer students in their first year of graduate study if they are working toward a Masters degree, or in the first half of their program if pursuing a doctorate.

Eligible Fields of Study – We anticipate students will have taken coursework related to the study of natural resources, conflict resolution, collaboration, and/or non-profit management.

FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Practicum

The NFF will assign Fellows to a Host Organization (non governmental organization) for a minimum of 32 hours/week for ten to twelve weeks during the summer of 2019. A typical practicum is 380 to 400 hours. During the practicum, each fellow will perform work for that organization. NFF will strive to match Fellows with practicum opportunities according to the Fellows' learning objectives, Host Organization needs, and mutual interest. In addition to the main practicum focus, Fellows may also spend a portion of their time (up to 20%) performing tasks associated with nonprofit administration.

Professional Development and Networking

Fellows will participate in a three to four-day meeting in Spokane, WA at the outset of their fellowship in June 2018. This will give Fellows a chance to get to know their cohort and NFF staff, learn about community-based forest collaboration, NFF's collaborative facilitation methodology, and gain an understanding of the Forest Service and NFF's non-profit partners. Fellows are required to participate in two additional two-hour trainings by webinar throughout the academic year and following summer to build on knowledge gained during the practicum and academic course load.

Fellows are expected to participate in quarterly videoconference “check-ins” where the Fellows meet as a group, discuss issues that arise, share accomplishments, and get feedback from both their peer Fellows and NFF. At the conclusion of the Fellowship, the Fellows will assemble by videoconference in a post-Fellowship sharing of lessons learned.

Regular coaching by NFF staff will support Fellows as they gain experience through their practicum and correlate field practice 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 monitoring metrics on Fellowship accomplishments throughout the 18-month period. The evaluation process may include an in-person interview with the Fellow.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The Conservation Connect Fellowship Application is an electronic compilation of the following components into a single PDF submitted to kbarr@nationalforests.org by May 10, 2018. Please clearly mark in the subject of the email: **Conservation Connect Fellow Application**.

1. **Cover Letter:** In one page, describe in 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 five 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 PhD dissertation, and how would a Conservation Connect Fellowship enrich its content and value?
 - c. Please list three learning objectives you have for the summer Practicum. In other words, if you could design your "dream Practicum," what would it look like?

Additional required materials:

3. Letters of Recommendation:

Each Fellowship application requires one (1) letter of recommendation (no longer than a single page) addressing the merits of the applicant. Each **letter writer** must email a signed copy of his/her letter directly to kbarr@nationalforests.org by May 10, 2018.

- ### **4. Mentor Letter and Abbreviated Mentor CV:**
- Each applicant must secure the endorsement of an academic advisor from the university where enrolled to serve as mentor throughout the entire 18-month fellowship. Mentorship responsibilities include serving as point of contact for NFF and the Host Organization that will provide the practicum and willingness to respond to occasional NFF inquiries about the Fellow. The **mentor** must email a signed copy of the letter directly to kbarr@nationalforests.org by May 10, 2018. (*The mentor and the writer of the letter of recommendation can be the same person.*)



CONSERVATION CONNECT FELLOW SELECTION CRITERIA, PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION

The NFF will select Conservation Connect Fellows based on: readiness to take advantage of what the Fellowship offers, both in terms of professional development and practical experience in the field and at NFF; and strength of application materials submitted.

The NFF will contact applicants about interviews by May 15, 2018, and will make offers to Fellows no later than May 21, 2018. The NFF will review applications as they are received.

The NFF will award Fellowship funds in two phases, with one payment of \$4,000 awarded at the outset of the fellowship and the second payment of \$1,000 awarded during the evaluation at the conclusion of the fellowship (by December 31, 2019). The NFF will pay for travel to the June 2018 training.

**The NFF is committed to offering as opportunities to as many students as possible, and have a policy of providing stipends to students who do not already have internship funding available to them through other awards, fellowship or scholar programs. The NFF maintains a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, religion, political affiliation, physical disabilities, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or national origin.*

