

2019 Conservation Connect Fellows Program *With Practicum*

The National Forest Foundation (NFF) invites Masters or PhD student applications for a Conservation Connect Program Fellowship, with a structured practicum in the summer of 2019 at the Missoula, Montana office, a field office of the NFF, or hosted by a partner organization.

Important Dates	
February 8, 2019	Applications Due
March 1, 2019	Fellow Selections Announced
April 1, 2019	Fellowships Begin with Web Orientation and Practicum Matches
Dates TBD	In-person Training and Orientation for all new Fellows
May 6-8, 2019	Conservation Connect Advisory Council meeting
Mid-late May, 2019	Practicums Begin
Mid-August, 2019	Practicums Conclude
September 2019 – March 2020	Quarterly web trainings and meetings

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 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.



The Fellowships are funded and administered by NFF, with NFF or partner organizations providing a practicum experience.

Overview of Fellowship Award and Duration –Fellows receive a \$5,000 stipend over a period of 12 months, with \$4,000 at the beginning of their practicum 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 an on-site practicum either at an NFF office or at a participating host organization, with an expectation that the Fellow will work at least 360 hours. Exact dates of work are flexible.

FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Practicum (360 hours)

The NFF will match each Fellow to a practicum either at the NFF Missoula office, an NFF field office, or a partner host organization for a practicum. A typical practicum will require the Fellow to work 32 hours/week for ten to twelve weeks during the summer of 2019. During the practicum, each fellow will focus on one or more projects. NFF will strive to match Fellows with practicum opportunities according to the Fellows' learning objectives and host organization needs. In addition to each practicum's focus, Fellows may spend a portion of their time (up to 20%) performing tasks associated with nonprofit administration.

Professional Development and Networking (estimated 40 hours over the total 12 month Fellowship)

- **Fellow Orientation**: The NFF is planning a two-day, in-person orientation, to be scheduled based on Fellow availability. The orientation will provide training in a variety of topics, including collaboration, best practices for neutral facilitation, NFF's approach, working with the USDA Forest Service, and relevant federal laws. The location of the training has not yet been determined.
- **Conservation Connect Advisory Council Meeting**: Each Fellow will have an opportunity to participate in a three-day meeting of the Conservation Connect Advisory Council, composed of leading thinkers in the field of natural resources collaboration (May 6-8, 2019, location TBD). The meeting will offer the opportunity to meet members of the Advisory Council and work closely with NFF staff. Fellows will learn about community-based forest collaboration and NFF's collaborative facilitation methodology and gain an understanding of the Forest Service and NFF's non-profit partners.
- **Peer Networking and Trainings**: Fellows are expected to participate in a quarterly videoconference or in-person "check-in" where the NFF offers trainings on topics and to support Fellows meeting as a group to discuss issues that arise, share accomplishments, and solicit feedback from both their peer Fellows and NFF.



Coaching/Mentor Support

Each Fellow will be assigned a Mentor from the NFF or the Host Organization. We encourage Fellows to schedule meetings with his/her Mentor to talk through questions and ideas as they 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 experiences and accomplishments throughout the 12-month period. The evaluation process will include an in-person or video interview with the Fellow.

Fellowship Award

The NFF will provide the selected Fellow with a \$5,000 stipend over a period of 12 months, with \$4,000 at the beginning of their practicum 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.

Academic Program

We prefer students in their first year of graduate study if they are working toward a master's degree, or in the first half of their program if pursuing a doctorate but will consider students at other points in their academic programs.

Fields of Study

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

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The Conservation Connect Fellowship Application is an electronic compilation of the following components into a single PDF submitted to kdibari@nationalforests.org by February 8, 2019. Please clearly mark in the subject of the email: **2019 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 PhD dissertation, and how would a Conservation Connect Fellowship enrich its content and value?
 - c. Please describe three learning objectives for this practicum.



3. **Resume** of academic and professional experience.
4. **Letter of Recommendation:** The Fellowship application requires one letter of recommendation from a member of the faculty in the student's academic program, addressing the merits of the applicant. The NFF requests the **letter writer** email a signed copy of his/her letter directly to kdibari@nationalforests.org by February 8, 2019.
5. **Academic Liaison:** Each applicant must secure the endorsement of faculty member from the university where enrolled to serve as his or her liaison throughout the entire 12-month fellowship. Responsibilities include serving as point of contact for NFF, willingness to respond to occasional NFF inquiries about the Fellow, provide programmatic feedback to the NFF, and support the Fellow as needed in their engagement with the NFF. We request that the **academic liaison** email a signed copy of a letter stating their willingness to serve in this capacity directly to kdibari@nationalforests.org by February 8, 2019 (*if the academic liaison is also providing the letter of recommendation, he/she can also state the commitment to serve as the liaison in the same letter*).

CONSERVATION CONNECT FELLOW SELECTION CRITERIA, PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION*

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 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, 12 months after initiation.

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, fellowships, or scholarship 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.*



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.

The NFF uses the following definition of collaboration: A voluntary 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 in that collaboration involves a diverse array of stakeholders; a partnership is likely to engage a few parties that are interested in working together on a specific project.

Through the support of collaboration among key stakeholders and the Forest Service, NFF supports the development of a “zone of agreement” around the complicated challenges of forest management on National Forest System lands.

