



Arboretum

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## 2025 UW–Madison Arboretum Research Fellowships

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Arboretum is pleased to announce requests for proposals for graduate research funding. We are soliciting proposals that will address our mission and vision, as well as build on a long tradition of research in restoration ecology and conservation. We welcome proposals from students with who are interested in using the Arboretum for studies in botany, landscape ecology, horticulture, soil science, wildlife ecology, entomology, environmental engineering, social science, and public health.

**Arboretum Mission:** Conserve and restore Arboretum lands, advance restoration ecology, and foster the land ethic.

**Arboretum Vision:** The Arboretum is a global source of knowledge of and a model for restoring ecologically sustainable relationships between people and the land through integrative, innovative, and collaborative approaches in science, stewardship, education, and public engagement.

**Resources and connections:** Arboretum research fellows will have access to the 1,200 acres of Arboretum land in Madison and over 500 acres at outlying sites; long-term records of restoration and management activities on these sites; facilities, vehicles, equipment, and staff support as appropriate and available; and connections with the public.

**Focus research areas:** We invite research proposals in all areas relevant to the Arboretum mission, including the social sciences and humanities. We are particularly interested in restoration ecology, invasive species monitoring and management, stormwater impacts, horticulture, visitor experiences, citizen science, science communication, public engagement, K–12 outdoor education, addressing diversity and inclusion, and the collection and analysis of long-term monitoring data at remnant and restored sites. Proposals may address any of these areas or others that use Arboretum land and other resources. Other scholarly activities may be considered if they align with the Arboretum’s mission and vision.

Faculty members or students with interest in these fellowships should contact the Director, Patrick Bohlen ([patrick.bohlen@wisc.edu](mailto:patrick.bohlen@wisc.edu)), or another relevant staff member to ascertain programmatic fit. Potential Arboretum staff research advisors include the Citizen Science Coordinator, Longenecker Horticultural Gardens Curator, Geospatial Specialist, Native Plant Garden Curator, Education Programs Manager, and Communications Manager (<https://arboretum.wisc.edu/about-us/people/>).

## Description of Fellowships:

- 1) **Arboretum Leopold Fellowship. ALREADY FILLED FOR 2025**. Full support (academic year and summer stipend, equivalent to a 50% Research Assistantship at your department's RA rate, fringe, and tuition, plus up to \$4,000 annually for research support) for up to three years. Fellowships typically begin during the first or second year of the graduate program. The Arboretum Leopold Fellow's appointment must be housed in a UW–Madison department (not at the Arboretum), with primary advising responsibility held by a campus faculty member and an additional advisory connection to one or more Arboretum staff members.
- 2) **Arboretum Research Fellowships**. Research support of up to \$8,000 per year, with the possibility of renewal for ongoing projects. This can include summer stipend (set up as an appointment through your home department—not through the Arboretum), support for undergraduate research assistants, materials, analyses, or other research needs. Arboretum Research Fellowships are for one year, but no-cost extensions may be requested. Three to four fellowships will be awarded each year. The fellowship can occur at any time during the graduate program.

Arboretum Leopold and Research Fellows working each year will form a cohort that 1) will meet regularly with campus faculty and Arboretum staff, 2) may choose to conduct collaborative research, and 3) will engage in and learn about outreach to the public and land managers; land management implications of research; and other aspects of public/land management/research connections. We anticipate that most research will occur during the summer, although it could take place at any time of the year.

## Eligibility:

### Arboretum Leopold Fellowship (ALREADY FILLED FOR 2025)

- Student is a current or matriculating Master's or PhD candidate at the UW–Madison
- If the student is an incoming PhD candidate, there must be existing support from the home department for at least one additional year of funding
- A significant portion of the work will be conducted on Arboretum property

### Arboretum Research Fellowship

- Student is a current or matriculating Master's or PhD candidate at the UW–Madison or other Wisconsin college or university
- A significant portion of the work will be conducted on Arboretum property

**To apply:** The following items should be electronically submitted by February 1, 2025, formatted to standard page size, single-spaced, and using 12-point font (references and table or figure legends may be in 10-point font) and 1-inch margins. All pages should be numbered sequentially. Two reference letters should be submitted directly by the referees (not included in the applicant's package). In most circumstances, fellowships will begin the following fall term for the Leopold Fellowship, and in the following summer for the Arboretum Research Fellowships. Completed applications should be sent as a single pdf (except the letters of reference) in the order listed below to Maddie Smith, Community Education Coordinator, at [msmith79@wisc.edu](mailto:msmith79@wisc.edu)

1. **Cover page** should include applicant's name, department, advisor, project title and abstract, and name of the Arboretum staff person with whom you have been in communication. In addition, indicate the fellowship for which you are applying and the amount of funding requested. If you are applying for the Arboretum Leopold Fellowship and would like to be considered for the Arboretum Research Fellowship if you are not selected for the Arboretum Leopold Fellowship, please include two separate budgets (one for each award) and indicate your desire to be considered for both awards if you are not awarded your preferred choice.
2. **CV** should be up to two pages long and include undergraduate institution, graduate advisor, and other standard information.
3. **Personal statement** should be up to two pages long and include relevant background information about the candidate, a summary of why research interests are relevant to the mission and vision of the Arboretum, and professional goals.
4. **Research statement** should be up to four pages long and should clearly address 1) the relevance of the research, including descriptions of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks within which the project is set, 2) the questions and hypotheses that will be addressed, 3) the methods that will be used to address the question or test the hypotheses, 4) proposed project timeline, 5) any relevant previous findings by the applicant, 6) both the intellectual merit (the potential to advance knowledge) and broader impacts (the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes) of the proposed research, 7) why the Arboretum is an appropriate location for the research, and 8) references cited (references not included in page count).
5. **Budget** should detail 1) the amount of the request and 2) the way in which the funds will be spent. For the Arboretum Leopold Fellowship, include the standard amount of a 50% RA in the home department, fringes, tuition remission, and anticipated annual research costs (research costs will be awarded separately for each year of the Fellowship). For the Arboretum Research Fellowships, detail all costs (allowable costs include summer stipend via appointment in your home department, undergraduate research assistant student help salary and fringe, travel, equipment, and other research costs). A budget justification should follow the budget, with detailed explanations for all costs.
6. **Plan for data management and for sharing the products of research.** This should include identifying an external audience to which you will present research findings (i.e. conference, campus event, etc.).

7. **IRB and/or IACUC Certifications** should be included if relevant (if the research involves human subjects or vertebrate animals). If these certifications have not been obtained, note the expected application date.
8. **Two letters of reference** from 1) the faculty advisor, who should include a statement regarding the availability of resources necessary to carry out the proposed research, and 2) an undergraduate professor, other faculty member at the graduate institution, or someone familiar with the candidate's professional science or research skills.

### **Expectations of Fellows:**

- Attend a spring kick-off meeting with Arboretum staff (this expectation may be waived for fellows who are not current UW-Madison students).
- Obtain proper permits to conduct work, including an Arboretum research permit (<https://arboretum.wisc.edu/science/research-permits/>).
- Participate in, and periodically lead, cohort meetings focused on ecological, cultural, and social issues around land conservation and restoration (~every 3 months).
- Each year, submit a brief progress report—including project title, permit number, names and titles of investigators, preliminary findings, and photos of research activities—for inclusion in the Arboretum annual research report.
- Participate in the annual Arboretum Research Symposium (<https://arboretum.wisc.edu/science/research-symposium/>) and other Arboretum events for research fellows, possibly including a presentation to the Arboretum Committee (<https://arboretum.wisc.edu/about-us/people/arboretum-committee/>).
- Acknowledge the Arboretum as a source of funding in presentations and publications.
- Present research findings to an external audience (e.g. conference, campus event, public outreach event, etc.).
- Provide project updates and summaries upon request for inclusion in Arboretum communications.
- Submit data and resultant publications or reports to the Arboretum.
- Submit a final report in the final year of funding that includes:
  - Project title
  - Project leader(s): name, title(s), department(s)
  - Project duration
  - Grant amount
  - How grant funds were spent (include specific line items and dollar amounts)
  - Project accomplishments

**Review Process:** Proposals will be reviewed by the selection committee in late February. A high-quality proposal will detail the following elements:

- **Intellectual Merit:** How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
- **Significance of the Research:** Contribution to knowledge in the relevant field.
- **Feasibility:** Is there a high likelihood that the project will be completed successfully?
- **Justification:** Has the applicant demonstrated knowledge of relevant literature?
- **Approach:** Are there well-reasoned hypotheses? Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis well-reasoned, well-organized, and appropriate to meet the specific aims of the project? Is the timeline appropriate to meet the objectives of the project?
- **Resources:** Is the applicant qualified to conduct the proposed activities? Is the proposed budget reasonable and well justified? Are other sources of budgetary support identified?
- **Arboretum & Broader Impact:** Is the project in line with the Arboretum’s mission and vision? Does the project support or build from current Arboretum research or programs? Will the project contribute to the understanding of land management, people’s relationships with the land, or environmental outreach to diverse audiences? Does the project have the potential to benefit society?

**Diversity Statement:** Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW–Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin–Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background—people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

**Questions?** Contact Maddie Smith, Community Education Coordinator, (608) 262-2101 or [msmith79@wisc.edu](mailto:msmith79@wisc.edu)