



## 2025 National Wildlife Federation Graduate Student Research Fellowship Request for Applications

**Topic:** NWF EcoLeader Online Community Research

**Location:** Remote, any U.S. location

**Background:** In the spring of 2014, the National Wildlife Federation launched the EcoLeaders Program and online community to serve as a project-based leadership and career development program for high school and college students and early career professionals designed to help emerging environmental leaders turn their passion into a profession. EcoLeaders provides participants with opportunities to learn about a variety of environmental topics, pursue project-based leadership certifications and connect with members across the country. The EcoLeaders Career Center facilitates the development of personalized sustainability career plans, learning about trends and opportunities in green careers, connecting with employers, and sharpening job skills.

The NWF EcoLeaders team is currently in the process of revising and enhancing the online community to ensure we are meeting the needs of our constituents' and providing a useful and engaging user experience.

**Goals of Fellowship:** In an effort to better serve our constituents and grow community engagement, the EcoLeader Research Fellow will support the research and development of engagement strategies and user experience improvements. The specific goals and deliverables of the Fellowship will be determined based on the interest and strengths of the Fellows, as expressed in their Fellowship applications. Fellowship applications should address one or more of the following goals:

### Research Goals:

- *User Engagement Tactics/Gamification:* Research best practices for user engagement through badging, gamification, leader boards and strategies for implementation.
- *Market/Peer Analysis:* Research other national-scale environmental education and engagement initiatives/programs and suggest best practices in business model/program design to meet the needs of our constituency while ensuring fair and equitable impacts and benefits for communities of color and low-income communities.
- *Product Research:* Research technologies and strategies for building, growing, and enhancing vibrant and diverse virtual communities that connect members to on-the-ground actions.

### Qualifications:

- Ability to gather and interpret relevant data and report findings
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail
- An entrepreneurial spirit, initiative and energy
- The ability to use initiative and work autonomously in addition to team working skills

### **Fellowship Program Requirements:**

- Participate in a Fellowship kick-off call - date TBD.
- Create project plan for a 4-6 month Fellowship term based on agreed upon Fellowship goal.
- Participate in periodic phone check-ins with NWF staff and Fellow cohort about project status and responsibilities.
- Submit biweekly project updates throughout the Fellowship detailing the progress you have made and plans for the duration of your Fellowship.
- Develop a summary report of findings and programmatic recommendations

### **NWF Values:**

Your actions are expected to reflect the staff values of the National Wildlife Federation: collaboration, mindfulness, empowerment, inclusivity, and mission focus. Your competencies should include:

- Being motivated by values of equity and responsibility to all individuals.
- Consistently bringing a high level of empathy and social skills to work and interpersonal interactions.
- Actively seeks feedback, direction, and guidance from all team members and keeps staff informed of decisions that impact them.
- Passion for and commitment to NWF's mission of uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife and people thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Applicants are invited to learn more about National Wildlife Federation's required equity competencies at <https://www.nwf.org/About-Us/Careers>.

### **Perks and Privileges:**

- \$5,000 stipend
- Professional development resources, assistance, and networking
- Possibility of academic credit for successful completion of the project, as an independent study or integration of fellowship project into course curricula

**Eligibility:** Graduate students from any college or university within the U.S. are eligible to apply and if awarded the Fellow must submit a W-9 and provide proof of valid work authorization to receive stipend payment. Applications are invited from students in all disciplines and are not limited to environmental studies majors. Current and former employees of National Wildlife Federation and former NWF Campus Ecology Fellows are ineligible to apply. Former NWF interns are eligible to apply following one year from their final work date. The name on the application must be limited to **one individual** and the Fellowship reporting, training, or other requirements cannot be transferred to or shared with another student. Additional involvement should be noted in the proposal. The applicant must be enrolled in school through the duration of the 4-month grant period.

### **Grant Terms:**

The Fellowship is for a term of 4-6 months, depending on Fellow's schedule. The fellow will begin in May of 2025, with the specific date TBD. Fellows spend various amounts of time on their projects each week. The average amount of time spent is 10 hours weekly or 40 hours monthly. The time invested by each student is typically considerable, but it is also flexible to account for schoolwork and other commitments and the

working style of each Fellow. Fellows will receive a stipend for their work. Any Fellowship-related expenses accrued during the Fellowship period should be covered by the stipend.

Payments are dispersed in two installments: First installment of grant awards are made within two weeks of awarding the fellowship and finalizing fellowship agreement. The second installment will be made by August 31, 2025. Grant funds will be distributed to the student directly (with submission of a W-9). Grant funds may be taxable; consult your tax advisor for U.S. Internal Revenue Service reporting requirements.

### **How to Apply:**

1. Carefully review the information provided in this document.
2. Complete and [submit the application form](#) for the 2024 NWF EcoLeader Graduate Student Fellowship:
3. Submit an electronic letter of recommendation from your identified Advisor via PDF attachment to [Fellows@nwf.org](mailto:Fellows@nwf.org). Please make sure your name is in the subject line of the email.

*All applicants must identify and work with an Advisor for the duration of the grant period. An advisor is a member of the staff, faculty, or administration on your campus who is willing to serve in an advisory capacity for the duration of the grant period. The advisor should be from the department on campus this is most closely related to your fellowship and can validate that the project is one that is supported by the department and/or campus.*

*Please secure an electronic copy of a letter of recommendation from the Advisor explaining the qualifications of the applicant and his or her role in advising the student and submit the letter as a PDF attachment via email to [Fellows@nwf.org](mailto:Fellows@nwf.org) with the applicant's name in the subject line.*

**The deadline to submit applications is April 20, 2025 by midnight ET.**

Applications are reviewed by a committee to determine which meet the selection criteria. All applicants will be notified of their status within one month of their application deadline.

### **Applications will be evaluated based on the following:**

- Demonstrated interest in and experience working within or with diverse constituencies
- Demonstrated knowledge of and/or skillset in market research
- Engagement with students, faculty, community organizations, and businesses
- Interest in conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Strong communication skills of applicant to build diverse constituency
- Initiative to overcome barriers and seek alternative avenues when necessary
- Proactive research and outreach to ensure project will successfully achieve stated goals
- Commitment to advancing environmental initiatives on academic, personal, and professional levels
- Desire to remain an active member in NWF after the conclusion of the Fellowship