



## 2022 National Wildlife Federation EcoLeaders Graduate Student Fellowship Request for Applications

**Topic:** NWF K-12 Education Fellow

**Location:** Any U.S. location

**Background:** National Wildlife Federation has a long and rich history of providing environmental education to K-12 schools across the country through our Ranger Rick magazines, Youth Leadership, Schoolyard Habitats®, and Eco-Schools USA programs. Over 16,000 schools participate in some level of educational programming via Schoolyard Habitats® and Eco-Schools USA. NWF's [Schoolyard Habitats®](#) began in 1996 with the goal of creating wildlife habitat on school grounds. Since then, it has expanded to include the development and utilization of outdoor classrooms that provide communities with equitable access to nature. NWF became the sole host for [Eco-Schools](#) in the United States in 2009. This global education for sustainability program provides schools with a seven-step framework to address 12 different sustainability-related pathways (issues). Schools can apply for award recognition through a 3-tiered award program. NWF education programming utilizes several virtual and on-the-ground resources, tools, and programs. Ideally, our ultimate goal is to get kids outside, to interact with, learn and take action in the natural environment and local communities.

When the pandemic hit in the spring of 2020 - - our programming, tools, resources all had to shift to accommodate the needs of teachers, students, and families who were now learning primarily in a virtual classroom. Since then, how and where students learn shifted depending on whether they are at school, at home, or in a hybrid situation. In the past two years, school communities have overcome vast challenges and continue to meet them. Educators are overburdened and stressed yet have been creative and dedicated. As a result, the school learning landscape has changed. To understand how we can best meet this changing landscape and support school communities, we need to listen and seek ways to adapt and enhance our programs with critical input from practicing educators.

### **Goal(s) of Fellowship:**

In an effort for National Wildlife Federation to better serve the K-12 education community, the goal of this Fellowship includes researching the changing landscape of education in the U.S. today as a result of the continuing pandemic. How has learning and the tools used to reach students changed? How much of this change will define new ways of learning post-pandemic, and what strategies will NWF need to develop and incorporate into our environment-based programming to meet these needs. This Fellowship will also explore the development of an *NWF K-12 Educator Advisory Board* to provide staff with input from practicing teachers. The research will include how best to strategically set up an advisory board, criteria for choosing educators, compensation, and structure the process. Fellows will have the opportunity to utilize this research to support staff in developing the advisory board. The specific responsibilities and deliverables of the Fellowship will be determined based on the interests and strengths of the Fellow, as expressed in their fellowship application. Fellowship applications should address one or more of the following goals:

- Research the current landscape of K-12 learning today. How has the pandemic changed how and where students learn, and teachers teach? What strategies are proven to enhance student learning and address the impacts of the pandemic? *This includes research and writing.*
- Research best strategies for NWF K-12 Education programs to support this new learning landscape. The research might address how NWF K-12 Education programs can adapt, enhance and re-envision their programming and resources and how they can best support improving education, ensuring equity and social/emotional health for students and staff. *This includes research and writing.*
- Research how to build and effectively utilize a diverse K-12 Educator Advisory Board. This might include developing criteria for participant selections, goals for the board, and suggestions for participant compensation. *This includes research and writing.*
- Support NWF staff in the actual build-out of a K-12 Educator Advisory Board. *This will include research, interviews, and writing.*

### **Key Responsibilities**

- Register and maintain an active personal profile and presence within the NWF EcoLeaders community, and promote to your network for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Create a project plan for a 4-6 month Fellowship term based on the agreed-upon Fellowship goals.
- Coordinate with 1-2 other Fellows to share ideas, progress, and cohesion. [Optional]
- Assist the NWF K-12 Education team with additional duties as assigned.
- Develop and share a summary report of findings and programmatic recommendations

### **Fellowship Program Requirements:**

- Participate in a Fellowship kick-off call - date TBD.
- Participate in periodic phone check-ins with NWF staff 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.

### **Competencies:**

- Motivated by values of equity and responsibility to those most marginalized
- Dedicated to deepening understanding of cultural and systemic racism and the intersectionality of multiple forms of social inequality
- Demonstrates awareness of positional power and privilege (both personally and professionally) and its attendant impacts
- Consistently brings a high level of empathy and social skills to work and interpersonal interactions
- Demonstrates awareness of the attributes associated with a white-dominant culture and takes actions to dismantle hierarchies of oppression within that culture
- Must be a strategic thinker, self-starter, well-organized, strong communicator, and relationship builder.
- An entrepreneurial spirit, with initiative and energy--is critical to success.
- Must have a passion for and commitment to NWF's mission.

### **Perks and Privileges:**

- \$6,000 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. 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 2022, with the specific date TBD. Fellows spend various amounts of time on their projects each week. The average 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. The stipend should cover any Fellowship-related expenses accrued during the Fellowship period.

Payments are dispersed in two installments: The first installment of the grant award is made within two weeks of awarding the fellowship and finalizing the fellowship agreement. The second installment will be made by August 31, 2022. Grant funds may be distributed to the student directly (with submission of a W-9) or to an Administrative Office on campus (e.g., Research, Grants and Contracts Office, Financial Aid Office, Campus Sustainability Office) to the appropriate administrator's attention. 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 2022 NWF EcoLeader Graduate Student Fellowship [HERE](#).
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)*

## **The deadline to submit applications is May 15, 2022 by midnight.**

A committee reviews applications to determine which meets 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
- Engagement with students, faculty, community organizations, and businesses
- Interest in environment-based education
- Interest in the conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Strong communication skills of applicant to build a diverse constituency
- Initiative to overcome barriers and seek alternative avenues when necessary
- Proactive research and outreach to ensure the project will successfully achieve the above
- 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