



College of the Environment, Forestry,
and Natural Sciences

Information Packet and Application Instructions:

Brad McRae Fellowship for Innovation in Conservation of Biodiversity

and

John Prather Graduate Scholarship in Conservation Biology

Two funding opportunities are available to Northern Arizona University graduate students pursuing research in conservation biology. This packet contains information on the origin and intent of each opportunity.

Graduate students interested in either or both of these opportunities are invited to submit a **single** application packet in pdf format, following the instructions contained in this document. The selection committee will screen applications for the criteria of both funding opportunities, with the aim of awarding 1 to 3 McRae and 1 Prather Fellowships from the pool of applicants.

Brad McRae Fellowship for Innovation in Conservation of Biodiversity

In his NAU graduate thesis, Brad McRae (PhD, NAU School of Forestry, 2004) invented the circuit theory model of gene flow and animal movement. Unlike previous models, circuit theory reflects gene flow and movement across all paths in a landscape, not just within a single least-cost corridor. Circuit theory quickly became a dominant paradigm in conservation biology and other scientific disciplines. In the wake of Brad's untimely death in July 2017, his family and colleagues established this award to help NAU graduate students develop their own innovative ideas. It is anticipated that 1 to 3 fellowships (\$2,500 to \$7,500 each) will be awarded annually.

Selection Process

A selection panel, consisting of faculty from at least 2 academic units in CEFNS, will review applications, conduct interviews if needed, and select awardees based on the following criteria:

- Minimum requirement: Enrolled (or accepted, with enrollment before an award is made) as a degree-seeking student in a thesis-based graduate program with a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the graduate program. Students not meeting this requirement will not be considered. US citizenship is not required.
- Degree to which the project will advance conservation of biodiversity or wilderness.
- Degree of innovation in the project, and the scientific rigor and practical utility of the innovation.
- The degree to which the Fellowship will add value to the student's research. It is expected that the student has funds for living expenses, tuition, and health insurance, so that the Fellowship is providing resources to take the research to a new level.
- Personal qualities of the applicant, including work ethic, academic ability, and commitment to a career in conservation. Diversity and family background (e.g., first generation in family to attend college or grad school) may also be considered.

The selection committee will recommend awardees, and an amount for each award, to the Dean of CEFNS.

Requirements if Awarded

Before filing their thesis, each recipient must submit (a) a post-project report (500-1,000 words) that describes outcomes in relation to proposed project goals, and (b) a list of expenditures. This report will be distributed to the selection panel and to Founders of the McRae Fund within 90 days of the completed funding period.

John Prather Graduate Scholarship in Conservation Biology

John Prather (1969-2006) was a conservation biologist and landscape ecologist who combined consummate field skills and an encyclopedic knowledge of birds with a creative flair for spatial statistics to advance biodiversity conservation in the Southwest and Central America. From 2002 until his untimely death in 2006, he was a postdoctoral scholar and research professor at Northern Arizona University, where he discovered a passion for cave exploration and helped develop innovative approaches to collaborative landscape design. He spent endless late nights helping graduate students and lightening sprits with his penchant for off-balance humor and genuine kindness. He died instantly from a brain hemorrhage that came without warning at home one evening, and his loss reverberated through the university and Flagstaff community. Those who knew him created an endowed scholarship in his name, so that his memory would continue to inspire. They still feel his loss acutely, but have the consolation of knowing that students still benefit from his generosity of spirit.

The John W. Prather Scholarship supports graduate student research in conservation biology. Application is open to all graduate students in good standing at Northern Arizona University who are focusing their studies on biodiversity conservation.

Selection of the recipient will be based on the quality of the application materials and the student's potential impact in the field of conservation biology.

Award: \$1,500



John Prather, 1969-2006, was a Conservation Biologist who inspired many NAU student researchers while contributing meaningfully to ecology and the conservation of biological diversity in Arizona and throughout the western hemisphere. He was a reliable friend, a steadfast colleague, and the brewer of Bayesian Brown Ale.

Application packet for one or both awards

- Project Title followed by a description of the student's thesis research. List the most plausible research outcomes, and state how each outcome would lead to particular conservation interventions. Highlight any novel or innovative aspects of the project. (maximum of 1000 words and 2 pages)
- References cited
- A statement of career goals. (maximum of 500 words and 1 page, including a required sentence that describes ethnic heritage and family history pertaining to higher education, e.g., first in family to attend college or graduate school)
- A CV including (a) Name, email, phone, NAU student ID, (b) professional preparation (education with GPA in each degree program, including current program; relevant work experience), (c) up to 5 publications or other products related to the student's research project, (d) up to 5 synergistic activities, and (e) name, email address, & brief description of professional relationship to the applicant, for two references not including the student's graduate advisor. (500 words maximum)
- A letter of support from the student's graduate advisor, stating when the student started & is expected to be complete their NAU graduate program, and describing the value of the project and the applicant's ability & work ethic. (2 pages max)
- A total project budget in broad categories (labor, travel, lodging, laboratory & field expenses, etc.), with separate lines in each category showing amounts expected from other sources (named) and amounts requested from the McRae award. Explain how the Fellowship funds would add value to the research project. (1 page maximum) (*Note that the expected Prather Award is in the amount of \$1500; there is no separate Prather Award budget required.*)
- These elements (in the order listed above) must be merged into a single pdf document and uploaded.