



Haub School of Environment
and Natural Resources
Biodiversity Institute

Biodiversity Graduate Student Research Enhancement Grants

Announced February 9, 2026

The Biodiversity Institute seeks proposals that enhance biodiversity research efforts of UW graduate students, because graduate students are a major engine of biodiversity research and future leaders of conservation.

Program Scope and Expectations

Successful conservation of biological diversity requires both basic and applied research to better inform current and future policy decisions. For the purposes of this RFP, Biodiversity is defined as the variety of life on a genetic, organismal, or ecosystem level. The Biodiversity Institute (BI) is providing grants to enhance or expand ongoing graduate student research at the University of Wyoming that addresses how biodiversity, within and across scales, is generated, maintained, restored, or impacts ecosystem services, and how it can be conserved.

The tenants of the BI include not only supporting biodiversity research but communicating the importance of that research to a broad audience. We require that awardees communicate the value of their research to the public and propose impactful and assessable science communication in their application. Awardees will be required to present their research to the public in a BI-sponsored Science Café, **as well as** 1) volunteer at a BI-sponsored outreach event **or** 2) develop your own community engagement activity. Awardees are required to attend a science communication training, tentatively scheduled for November 3 & 4, 2026, 6 - 8 pm.

All of the funds that will be distributed are available because of the generous contributions of donors. Donors choose to give to the BI because of the quality of the research we support, and the high-quality communication of that research to the public. Successful applications will address both of these aspects.

We have two grant options. Please read through each option carefully before submitting your application. Requests for more than one award will be accepted but must be budgeted separately. Funding is available from **May 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027** (or until date of graduation, whichever comes first). Awards cannot be extended.

Grant funds can be spent on

The Biodiversity Graduate Student Research Enhancement Grant Program supports:

- Student-designed and driven research that 1) improves our understanding of how biodiversity is generated, maintained, restored, conserved, or how it impacts ecosystem services and 2) provides effective means of communicating the value of biodiversity

research to diverse audiences including assessment of the communication's effectiveness

Allowable Expenses

- Tuition and/or stipend
- Technician wages
- Travel and supplies that support the project
- Travel to support conference participation (i.e., not just attendance)

Successful proposals will:

- Enhance and expand ongoing biodiversity research by graduate students
- Be clearly articulated and compelling by appropriately framing biodiversity research questions or hypotheses and include a brief, accessible description of methods
- Include a substantive plan for communicating biodiversity research beyond academic audiences; examples and BI-supported pathways are provided below
 - If choosing to volunteer at a BI-sponsored event, please indicate which event(s) you are interested in and how they could benefit from your expertise (please peruse [our website for all of our outreach offerings](#), including but not limited to community science projects, K-12 education, Wyoming BioBlitz).
 - You can also partner with the Science Roadshow for K-12 activity development as a collaborator on behalf of the BI. You must propose an outline or learning objective for a K-12 activity. Help developing and implementing this activity will be provided if your proposal is selected.
 - If your research is based in a region outside Wyoming/Rocky Mountain region, describe how you will connect it to the local community. If choosing to develop your own outreach activity, please describe how the activity will communicate your research in a way that addresses the concerns and interests of the public across the state of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region. Be sure to discuss how you will reach communities beyond Laramie.
- Work in collaboration with the tribes of the Wind River Reservation is encouraged, but must demonstrate clear existing partnerships and appropriate support of tribal sovereignty

Eligibility:

- Grants are available to any master's or doctoral student in good standing at the University of Wyoming at the time the award is made.
- Graduate students must continue to be enrolled, with good standing, at the University of Wyoming throughout the duration of their proposal.
- Research must have ongoing support in the form of existing resources to the student or advisor, access to appropriate equipment, and already approved field or other permits.

Grant opportunities:

1. **Biodiversity Institute Graduate Student Excellence Grant.** \$5000 maximum, several will be given. The BI Excellence Fund supports UW graduate students whose research meets all the criteria mentioned above, without geographic restrictions.
2. **Don and Judy Legerski UW Teton Graduate Scholars in Biodiversity Fellowship.** \$2000 maximum; two will be awarded. These awards support research addressing biodiversity conservation in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and in alignment with the mission of the UW NPS Research Station ([UWNPS.org/about us](http://UWNPS.org/about-us)).

More information on the donors who funded these opportunities is available on the BI website, wyobiodiversity.org.

Submission Requirements:

Interested students should meet with BI staff to discuss their proposals. Proposals must meet both the biodiversity research and science communication requirements to be considered for funding. Email biodiversity@uwyo.edu to set up an appointment.

The proposal must follow the format provided below:

- Submit as a single pdf file to biodiversity@uwyo.edu.
- Proposals are limited to four pages of text including the budget justification and figures, but excluding references, and must use the format described below.
- A letter of recommendation from the student's graduate advisor indicating that a) the student is in good standing, and b) the faculty member is willing and able to provide guidance as well as any resources required to fulfill the project. Proposals will not be evaluated on the total value of the available resources but rather how the requested support from the proposal enhances the graduate student research. The letter must come directly from the advisor and should be submitted to biodiversity@uwyo.edu. This letter does *not* count toward the proposal page limit.

Proposal format:

Reviewers will prioritize clarity, feasibility, and alignment with BI's biodiversity and communication mission over technical detail

- **Proposal title**
- **Graduate student name, affiliation, email address, and phone number**
- **Name and email address of applicant's graduate advisor**
- **Requested amount, start and end dates**
- **Which grant opportunity(s) are to be considered.**
- **Objective of the project:** Addresses a question related to generation, maintenance, or restoration of biodiversity, as defined in the RFP, or its impacts on ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation. Applications that address genetic, species, and ecosystem levels of biodiversity research are all accepted, but must be clear on how they address conservation of biodiversity.
- **Background and rationale**

- **Questions or hypotheses**
- **Methods, timeline and deliverables**
- **Plan for communicating biodiversity research:** Briefly indicate a plan for how the research outcomes will be communicated in a way that connects the research to the concerns and interests of the public, especially in Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region even if the research occurs outside of this geographic area. The plan should also include a mechanism to evaluate effectiveness of the communication. If you intend to utilize biodiversity offerings, identify which offerings you will be involved with and why it is a good fit for your project. If you will be partnering with the roadshow, outline an idea for how your work could be communicated in a hands-on activity to a K-12 audience. This does not need to be fully detailed, as help with activity development will be available if your grant is selected.
- **Itemized budget**, including any leveraged support. Budget may include any of the following individually or in combination: 1) stipends at the current rate of the home department, 2) supplies and travel to conduct research, 3) travel to support conference participation (i.e., not just attendance), 4) wages for technicians or other assistants, and 5) tuition remission up to the cost of a full academic year. A separate itemized budget is required for each grant opportunity being applied for.
- **Images** that convey the project are encouraged and should be included in the four pages of the proposal. External links are allowed for portfolios of work.
- **References** should be appropriately cited. The reference section is not included in the page limits.

Proposal review:

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of Biodiversity Institute personnel.

Deadline for submission: March 23, 2026. Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged by email. Decisions will be made and communicated by April 6, with funds available May 1.

Questions are encouraged and may be addressed to biodiversity@uwyo.edu.