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Science and Research Guidelines

Cincinnati Nature Center (CNC) wishes to encourage scientific research on its properties to study the impact of human activities on the mixed Mesophytic forest of SW Ohio. CNC has a unique setting for this research, with its property situated in the middle of a gradient from highly urbanized in downtown Cincinnati to the west to the highly natural areas in the counties to the east.

Proposal Preparation and Submission

CNC's Science and Research Committee (SRC) will advise CNC's Leadership Team on all research and monitoring/census activities on CNC property. Any requests to carry out research on CNC property will be reviewed by the SRC. The CNC Land Preservation Specialist will chair the SRC. The SRC will be made up of CNC staff and one Board Trustee. Specialists outside of the SRC may be consulted as needed.

Researchers and teachers interested in conducting scientific research, census or monitoring activities on CNC property are asked to submit a proposal in advance, in order to receive permission to carry out the project.

1) Proposals to conduct any type of research or survey activities at CNC must be submitted to CNC's Land Preservation Specialist no later than the following deadlines:

<u>Research Season</u>	<u>Proposal Deadline</u>	<u>SRC Review</u>
Spring	January 1	Mid-January
Summer	April 1	Mid-April
Fall	July 1	Mid-July
Winter	Oct 1	Mid-Oct

2) The proposal should be limited to no more than 5 pages, and be written in language understandable by a diverse audience. The proposal, at a minimum, should provide all necessary details concerning the project. While formats may vary, all proposals are expected to be transmitted electronically and include the following:

- a. Title
- b. Abstract or Summary (one page or less)
- c. Statement of Objectives
- d. Background and Rationale
- e. Methods and Description of Activities
- f. For standardized sampling protocols, details must be explained in full or appropriate reference materials must be provided in an appendix.
- g. Details of collection methods, target species, number of individuals to be removed (if applicable)
- h. Proposed study areas indicated on CNC map(s), consistent with CNC land management and research zoning plans, and preferably with GPS coordinates.
- i. An approximate schedule (dates and times) of on-site activities
- j. Impact of Research Activities on CNC Lands (Environmental and Aesthetic Impacts)
- k. Any special requirements for the study to take place (e.g., the need to mow or not mow certain areas; the need to mark or flag study sites, etc.).
- l. Literature Cited
- m. If the proposed research is part of a larger study supported by a grant (e.g. National Science Foundation, Ohio EPA, National Geographic Society, etc.), a copy of that proposal should be provided.
- n. The proposal must include the primary investigator's curriculum vitae. Students must supply the names and curriculum vitae of the professor, or equivalent, which is ultimately responsible for their proposed research projects. Students must also submit a statement indicating their level of expertise in the subject matter of their proposal -- particularly with regard to "Methods and Description of Activities." Undergraduate and graduate students must supply a letter from their major professor, or equivalent, indicating that the proposal has been approved prior to submission to CNC.

Proposal Review

The proposal will be distributed (electronically) to the SRC prior to the scheduled committee review period. The Primary Investigator (PI) may be contacted with questions or to clarify aspects of the proposal. The PI may be required to meet with the committee to discuss the proposal. The committee will discuss the proposal; recommend approval, modification or denial of the proposal. Approved proposals will be presented to CNC's Leadership Team for final approval. The Committee Chair will notify in writing the PI, with a copy to the Sponsor and appropriate CNC staff, of the final determination for the proposal.

CNC is interested in facilitating research on its properties to:

- Increase knowledge about ecosystem ecology and natural history of this region's indigenous habitats
- Inform CNC and the surrounding region about effective ecological restoration techniques
- Inform CNC about effective management of native and non-native habitats for biodiversity
- Inform CNC about the impact and management of native and non-native invasive species
- Engage high school and college students in field study and/or research
- Encourage "citizen science" efforts to foster stewardship
- Help citizens better understand their impact on the natural world

In addition all research will be evaluated with the following constraints in mind:

- Designated zones of use on the property
- Aesthetic impact
- Impact on visitors
- Impact on the land
- Impact of species richness/presence/abundance

CNC Research Policies and Requirements

1) A copy of all state, federal or other permits required to do the proposed research must be on file with CNC prior to initiation of field activities.

2) Any and all changes in the research methods to be used on CNC property (e.g., collection of animals or plants, manipulation of any biotic entities, marking techniques, off-trail activities, etc.) must be submitted in writing for approval before any changes in research methods are undertaken.

3) Research activities conducted on CNC properties at times other than regular hours of operation (note: these will change seasonally) require special arrangements and notification of appropriate CNC staff.

4) Unless special arrangements are made, CNC is not responsible for any aspect of the “maintenance” of the researcher’s project. Researchers are expected to furnish all equipment and supplies necessary to carry out their projects.

5) CNC accepts no liability for personal safety of researchers other than that provided to other visitors to CNC properties.

6) CNC accepts no liability for the safety of, or damage to, any equipment, supplies, vehicles or other material items used in projects carried out on its properties.

7) Any serious injuries to a researcher, or his/her designees, resulting from research activities that take place on CNC properties must be reported immediately to CNC Director of Operations & Finance, Director of Education and Visitor Services or Executive Director. A detailed account of such an event must be submitted in writing as soon as possible after the event occurs.

8) Any and all vertebrate animal fatalities not covered in the original proposal, and resulting from researcher’s activities, should be reported immediately to the Research Committee Chair and in writing as soon as possible after the event occurs.

9) Any and all accidents or other potentially damaging events to CNC property or environments (e.g., a chemical spill, accidental removal of an endangered plant, obvious disturbance to habitat, damage to a CNC building, equipment, or vehicles, etc.) must be reported immediately to the Research Committee Chair, and submitted in writing as possible after the event occurs.

10) The PI will be required to remove traps, flagging, or other physical manifestations of their research activities within 30 days of completion of their project.

Post-Project-Completion Obligations

1) A short final report summarizing the project's findings must be submitted to the SRC Chair as soon as possible after completion of the project (but no later than 6 months). For multi-year projects, a 2-3 page written report summarizing findings to date should be submitted annually, prior to the committee deadline corresponding to the appropriate field season.

2) CNC should be acknowledged in any and all publications (including electronic; see below) resulting from any research that takes place on any CNC property even if CNC is only one of several study sites involved in the project.

3) One copy of any and all above-mentioned publications should be submitted to the SRC Chair as soon as it is available. Additionally, CNC would appreciate copies and/or notification of other materials related to the research (e.g., abstracts from spoken presentations at conferences or other meetings, newspaper clippings, web sites, etc.). CNC agrees that the data contained in any unpublished research reports are for reference only unless permission is granted to use them for some other purpose.

4) Upon request the researcher agrees to give at least one presentation of his/her findings for educational purposes at a mutually agreed upon time and location.

5) The PI may be requested to provide properly identified, labeled, and prepared voucher specimens of plants and non-vertebrate animals that are mentioned by name in a final report

6) If state or federally endangered or threatened species, or species of special concern, are found as part of research activities, their presence and location must be documented in writing and submitted to the SRC Chair at the same time that federal or state authorities are notified.

7) The presence and/or locations of any state or federally endangered or threatened species, or any other "sensitive" species, found on CNC property as part of research activities may not be disclosed publicly, other than to an appropriate wildlife or conservation agency or organization, without written permission from CNC's Executive Director.