

Research Code (Modified March 2016)

A. General Policies

1. The provisions of this code apply to all research activities involving utilization of RMBL facilities, and/or involving RMBL- approved research plans, and/or involving research carried on under the umbrella of a RMBL permit. This applies to research on RMBL, Forest Service, and private land.
2. The provisions of this code apply to class and group projects as well as to individual investigators.
3. Failure to comply with any element of the Research Code may be grounds for rejection of subsequent research applications, loss of space, and/or termination of the research.

B. Review Process

RMBL reviews proposals in order to prioritize space assignments, minimize conflicts among research projects, manage environmental impacts, ensure compliance of projects with all regulations, assess the extent to which projects take advantage of RMBL's unique resources, and to ensure that research programs meet a minimum standard of quality.

1. A [new research application](#), [renewal research application](#), or a [collection application](#) must be submitted by Feb. 1 for the upcoming field season. RMBL will process applications received after Feb. 1, but there is a late fee and we cannot guarantee that the application will be processed in time to approve field research that same year.
2. All research must be submitted for review and any work must be explicitly described in the new or renewal research application. Work will not under any circumstance be considered "approved" unless it is explicitly described within an application and that application is approved.
3. Regardless of whether scientists have outside funding, RMBL cannot guarantee that any given research application will be approved until it has been reviewed.
4. All research is reviewed by the Science Director. The Science Director works with the Chair of the Research Committee to determine how many research committee members, if any, will review the proposal. The Chair and the Science Director may ask for ad hoc reviews if additional perspective is needed.
5. The Research Committee and the Chair are appointed by the Executive Director.
6. With feedback from the Research Committee, the Science Director will determine what conditions, if any, are placed upon the research.
7. The Science Director will also decide whether to pass on any comments from the Research Committee as useful feedback. If such feedback is provided, RMBL will make it clear that the feedback is advisory and not a condition of approval.
8. Research projects can be approved for up to five years. Longer-term approval can be granted under special circumstances upon request. Once research has been approved, researchers need only submit a continuing research application by April 1. Research projects submitted by new researchers are typically approved for one year.

9. Research with vertebrate animals requires documentation of appropriate permits and submission of a protocol for review by the RMBL Animal Care Committee.
10. Scientists will receive the final decisions, and any conditions of approval, in writing.

C. Evaluating and prioritizing proposals

The Research Committee works with the Science Director to evaluate proposals based upon the criteria listed below. They provide recommendations to the Executive Director concerning whether projects should be approved and if so, whether any conditions need to be placed upon the research. Additionally, they make recommendations concerning prioritization of space, and whether scientists meet minimum standards of quality in terms of research productivity or proposed research. The Executive Director shall make final decisions. If the Executive Director makes a decision that is contrary to a recommendation from the Research Committee, s/he shall notify the Chair of the Research Committee in writing of the final decision and the reason for the decision. An individual wishing to appeal the decision can make such a request in writing to the Board President, who will decide whether and how the Board will consider the appeal, primarily on the basis of whether the decision is unreasonable or whether an individual has been treated unfairly.

Review Considerations

1. *Quality of the proposal.* Proposals are evaluated based upon their promise for scientific discovery. Proposals should have compelling objectives, carefully thought out methodologies, and should clearly describe the relationship between the proposed work and existing or historical work. RMBL accepts a diversity of approaches, including experimental and observational work, natural history investigations, and exploratory as well as hypothesis-driven research.
2. *Feasibility, and appropriateness of RMBL to facilitating the research.* Projects will be evaluated based upon whether the work can be done at RMBL (e.g., are organisms or study sites available) as well as whether they take advantage of resources unique to RMBL.
3. *Compliance with federal and state law.*
4. *Compliance with RMBL research policies.*
5. *Appropriate treatment of animals.* Intrusive research on or holding of vertebrate animals will be approved only if RMBL is the appropriate site to conduct the research, the work itself is scientifically sound and has all appropriate permits. All vertebrates maintained in captivity must have a plan for housing and caring for them in a humane fashion. Laboratory and field studies involving vertebrates must be in accordance with current Federal and State regulations.
6. *Impacts on ongoing research.* Ongoing research has precedence.
7. *Impact on natural systems.* Extensive collections, significant habitat alterations such as modifications of chemical, physical or biological properties of terrestrial or aquatic environments, and introductions of species/genes are less likely to be approved. Additionally, the use of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals will face higher scrutiny. Impacts on natural systems include those associated with installation of equipment or structures, or that generate high levels of traffic to a site. The greater the impact the more important it is to demonstrate strong intellectual motivation for the project.
8. *Impacts on future research.* Projects which potentially exclude large amounts of future research may not be approved. For example, projects which take up large portions of available study sites will face a higher level of scrutiny. The use of radioactive or stable isotopes that potentially foreclose future research will be carefully reviewed.

9. *Impacts on unique areas.* Some types of research may be prohibited or discouraged in unique areas such as the Iron Fen or the Mexican Cut, or areas under special management regimes, such as wilderness areas or the Gothic Research Natural Area.

10. *Scientific productivity.* Scientists who have worked at RMBL and who are proposing additional work need to demonstrate the fulfillment of scientific achievement based upon the work at RMBL. Such achievement can be demonstrated by, though it is not limited to, scientific publications, scientists trained, external funding, and grey literature based upon the work conducted by the scientist.

11. *Prior conditions of approval.* Failure to meet prior conditions of approval, including cleaning up historic sites, may be a basis for denial or additional conditions.

Animal Care

RMBL's Animal Care Committee makes final decisions concerning protocols/organisms covered under the Animal Welfare Act.

D. Space Assignments

When space is limited, including but not limited to housing, laboratory, or research sites, the RMBL Science Director shall prioritize space assignments based upon feedback from the Research Committee concerning scientific productivity of the scientist, the promise of excellence, and the appropriateness of RMBL to facilitating the research. Additionally, the Science Director will also work to maintain a diversity of institutions (e.g., teaching colleges, research institutions, agency research), a diversity of conceptual areas, and a diversity of individuals at different career stages. Research by graduate students and research scientists has priority over educational research projects such as class projects or independent undergraduate student projects.

The Science Director reserves the right to determine whether space is limited and shall have the freedom to set aside unassigned space in order to deal with unanticipated needs.

E. Restrictions on Types of Research

1. Research that is not grossly intrusive and that does not cause significant conflicts with RMBL's infrastructure may be carried out within the Gothic Townsite.

2. RMBL currently conducts control measures on seven non-native, invasive plants, *Matricaria perforata* (Scentless Chamomile), *Chrysanthemum (=Leucanthemum) leucanthemum* (Oxeye Daisy), *Barbarea vulgaris* (Garden Yellow Rocket), *Tragopogon* spp. (Salsify), *Cirsium arvense* (Canada thistle), *Linaria vulgaris* (Butter and eggs), and *Bromus (Bromopsis) inermis* (Smooth Brome). In addition, new noxious weeds are pulled on sight. This list includes, but is not limited to *Bromus tectorum* (Cheatgrass), *Carduus nutans* (Musk thistle), and *Cynoglossum officinale* (Houndstongue). New projects should not interfere with ongoing control efforts. There are an additional 20 non-native species that may be controlled in the future. Please contact the Science Director about any potential conflicts between weed control and research projects.

3. Given the importance of pollination research at RMBL and the emerging information on the role of commercial bee colonies in disease transmission, scientists proposing the introduction of commercial colonies must submit research plans by October 1 or 7 months prior to initiation of

the research, whichever comes first. Commercial bee colonies will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances. The work must occur inside in a double-enclosed environment and there must be a good reason why such work must happen at RMBL (as opposed to somewhere else).

4. Access to some locations, e.g., wilderness or special management areas, may be restricted.

5. Genetic experiments that involve moving genetic material among organisms of different species, in a way that would not naturally occur, will be scrutinized carefully and may be denied in some cases. The risk that genes could escape and cause ecological disruption is weighed against the perceived scientific value of the proposed research. Scientists proposing this type of genetic experiment must submit a pre-proposal to the Science Director by October 1 or 7 months prior to initiation of the research, whichever comes first.

F. Conducting/Managing Research

1. Scientists must submit citations of published work to RMBL's publication database. Three copies of publications resulting from work done at the RMBL (that is conducted in the ecosystems surrounding Gothic) shall be transmitted to the Science Director as soon as they become available, though PDF's may be provided in lieu of hard copies. One copy of each thesis, preferably bound, shall be transmitted to the Science Director.

2. The use of RMBL facilities shall be acknowledged in each such publication. Additionally, any NSF support received through RMBL and RMBL fellowships support should be acknowledged. When appropriate, scientists should list RMBL as one of their institutions. When the work is conducted on Federal Forest Service lands, the USFS should be acknowledged. When work is conducted on the Mexican Cut Preserve, scientists should acknowledge access to the Mexican Cut Preserve, owned by the Nature Conservancy.

3. All research sites must be mapped and archived using RMBL's GPS/GIS system. Research sites which are not mapped in such a fashion will not be managed to avoid conflicts with new research and/or infrastructure development, and may be cause for denial of future research projects.

4. Animal care logs and annual check-in forms must be filed with the Science Director at the end of each field season. A new research season cannot be initiated until logs and forms from the previous season are on file. The Animal Care Committee shall monitor ongoing projects periodically to ensure compliance with state, federal and RMBL requirements. The Animal Care Committee and Science Director may terminate projects at any time that are not in compliance with regulations. In the event of termination of a project, the researcher may appeal to the Executive Director.

5. Only active sites will be managed. Historical sites will not constrain management or future research unless special arrangements have been made in writing.

6. Researchers must check the Current Research Map and communicate with the Science Director before initiating research at new sites. Under certain circumstances, the Science

Director will be required to sign off on new sites before research can begin. Faculty and student mentors are responsible for avoiding conflict among their students and other researchers.

7. Research shall be conducted on private land only with permission of the owner. Research on Forest Service or other public lands shall be done in accordance with the appropriate regulations. Researchers shall provide the Science Director with documentation of permission to work on private land and/or special permits to work on public land.

G. Code of Conduct

Working at RMBL involves participating in a broader community dedicated to scientific discovery and training. As a means to promoting scientific discovery, RMBL actively encourages a scientific community that is egalitarian, open, and collaborative. Furthermore, our community includes private and public funders that subsidize the cost of operating RMBL because they share our commitment to excellence in research and training. We expect scientists working at, and representing RMBL, to

- Respect and acknowledge the work of other scientists.
- Ensure that research and behavior while at RMBL, meets all laws and regulations, including RMBL's rules and regulations, and previous conditions of research.
- Conduct high quality research and training that advances science and/or society's needs.
- Work with RMBL's Research and Animal Care Committees and staff to balance the impacts of research on people, animals and the environment with the public benefits of that research.
- Declare conflicts of interest.
- Present evidence honestly when speaking about RMBL science or as a RMBL scientist, and to clarify the extent to which they are speaking as an expert or a citizen. Scientists shall not indicate that they are representing RMBL, or official RMBL viewpoints, unless they have been asked by the Executive Director to officially represent RMBL.
- Act in ways which promote a healthy scientific community, including avoiding using positions of authority (such as mentoring, service on committees) or RMBL resources, to create hostile work environments or to advance individual agendas at the expense of scientific discovery, research training, or the larger community.
- Make good faith efforts to work with the Science Director to ensure research projects have all appropriate approvals, include Research Committee approvals.

H. Denial of services for behavioral problems

For anybody who does not have an approved research plan, RMBL reserves the right to ask such a person to leave, or to deny services, for inappropriate actions, including violations of our handbook, without any additional review or appeal. Recognizing the substantial investment by scientists in research programs operated through RMBL, we provide a higher level of review before denying services or asking someone to leave if they have an approved research plan, or if they have plans to be an active part of the RMBL research community.

1. A scientist may be denied services because s/he has violated the Code of Conduct given above, broken RMBL's regulations, failed to work in good faith with the Science Director to obtain appropriate approvals for research before conducting that research,

failed to honor prior conditions of approval, or otherwise caused significant problems for RMBL. If the Executive Director determines that a denial should be considered for behavioral problems, s/he shall notify the individual. If the individual decides not to withdraw their application to work at RMBL at that stage, then the individual will be asked to pay a review charge as set by the Executive Director based upon the extent of the situation to demonstrate their good faith in having the situation reviewed. Upon receipt of payment, RMBL will generate in writing a review and analysis of the issues. That information will be provided to the individual, who will be given the opportunity to respond in writing within a reasonable amount of time as set by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will then make a decision based upon the information. The Executive Director will provide the initial analysis, any response by the individual, the final decision and any additional supporting information, to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board of Trustees' President. That committee can let the decision stand by taking no further action, remand the decision back to the Executive Director for further consideration, or recommend to RMBL's President that the Board of Trustees intervene.

2. The Executive Director can deny or withdraw services without review to a scientist at any time if s/he believes allowing the person to use RMBL services (including staying at RMBL), creates a significant threat to individuals or RMBL, or is likely to result in serious legal, liability, or behavioral problems. In cases involving sexual harassment, the Executive Director can immediately remove individuals from the community for serious incidents, for evidence of recurring behavior, or for less serious incidents in which the individual does not demonstrate a willingness to correct behavior. If the Executive Director denies services without review by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board President, the Executive Director will notify the Board President in writing of the action taken and the basis for the action. The individual who is affected by the decision may appeal the decision in writing to the Board President.

I. Amendment/Interpretation

1. The Executive Director interprets all policies. His/her decision shall be final concerning interpretation of policies, as well as acceptance/rejection of research plans and decisions involving space prioritization, subject to Board oversight.
2. The Research Code must be consistent with the Bylaws, the Research Master Plan, and any other Board approved policies. In case of contradictions concerning research policies, the Research Code yields to Board-approved policies.
3. Other materials, including but not limited to written items, emails, information on the website, and oral communications, are only advisory and are controlled by the Research Code (and higher level documents).
4. Formal interpretations of research policies may be obtained by making such a request in writing to the Executive Director.

5. Amendment of the Research Code is by the Executive Director. Material changes that affect the ability of scientists to conduct research will not go into effect until the first April after they are made.