



## Weston Family Foundation Fondation de la famille Weston

### Northern Science & Research Northern Biodiversity Research Program – Program Details

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#### Important Dates:

Information Webinar	May 29 <sup>th</sup> and June 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 at 2:00pm ET
Letter of Intent (“LOI” or “LOIs”) Deadline	June 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2024 at 5:00pm ET
Full Proposal Deadline	September 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 at 5:00pm ET
Anticipated Award Notice	Late October, 2024

*\* Dates subject to change*

#### Background:

At the Weston Family Foundation, more than 60 years of philanthropy has taught us that there’s a relationship between healthy landscapes and healthy people. That’s why we champion world-class health research and innovation with the same passion that we support initiatives to protect and restore biodiversity on our unique landscapes. We take a collaborative approach to philanthropy, working alongside forward-thinking partners to advance Canada and create lasting impacts. We aspire to do more than provide funding, to enable others to find transformational ways to improve the well-being of people in Canada.

The Northern Science & Research focus area of the Foundation has supported high quality, novel research in northern Canada since 2007. Our Weston Family Awards in Northern Research have supported over 350 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows with over \$11 million invested in their natural science research projects over the last 16 years. The Northern Biodiversity Research Program builds on this history and success by expanding our northern research funding to new applicants who are able to demonstrate that their research will have on-the-ground conservation impact.

#### Program Overview

The Weston Family Foundation is pleased to announce new programming in support of biodiversity research and conservation action in northern Canada. The **Northern Biodiversity Research Program** aims to **support applied northern natural science research that is used by decision-making bodies for improved northern biodiversity outcomes.**

Funded projects must engage in applied northern natural sciences research focused on **protecting or restoring northern biodiversity.** Projects must demonstrate a realistic



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potential to inform conservation policy or practice that ultimately improves conservation outcomes for wildlife (flora and fauna) and ecosystem biodiversity in northern Canada.

The program will provide funding for applied research projects spanning up to three (3) years in length, seeking a **minimum of \$600,000** to a **maximum of \$3,000,000 CAD per project**.

**Important things to know:**

- The program’s focus is on applied research. Projects must convincingly demonstrate that the research will be used at northern conservation decision-making tables for improved biodiversity outcomes in Canada’s north.
- Our application process is interactive. Applicants are encouraged to connect with the Foundation to discuss their prospective applications for eligibility and fit. During the review process you may receive additional questions from the review committee that need to be addressed prior to final decisions being made.
- Funds are provided in tranches and contingent on meeting project milestones.
- Funds may be used for general operational overhead to a maximum of 5% of funds from the Weston Family Foundation.
- Only CRA-registered qualified donees are eligible to receive funding.

### Application Process

There are two stages to the application process: letters of intent (LOIs) and proposals. Organizations may submit up to three (3) applications that represent different projects; however, a different principal applicant is required on each application.

Applicants are invited to submit an LOI using [the template](#) provided on our website. All LOIs must adhere to the indicated restrictions. Applicants must submit a LOI to be considered for invitation of a full proposal. LOIs will be reviewed internally for eligibility and fit and by an arms-length scientific advisory committee for technical merit.

Completed LOIs should be submitted in PDF format by 5:00pm ET on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2024 to [northern@westonfoundation.ca](mailto:northern@westonfoundation.ca) with the subject line “Northern Biodiversity Research Program Application.”

The LOI stage of the application process is open to all interested applicants. Only applicants with the highest scoring LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals. Those invited to submit full proposals will receive further instruction and reviewer feedback at the time of invitation.



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Invited proposals will be peer-reviewed by arms-length subject-matter experts. Unsuccessful proposals will receive written feedback; however, no appeal process will be available. Contracting must be completed **within four weeks** of receiving notification by the Foundation that a project is successful. If contracting is not completed at this point, the Weston Family Foundation reserves the right to cancel the grant.

The Foundation, at its sole discretion, may adjust the timeline of the application process and will communicate any such changes to all applicants promptly.

Questions may be directed to Dr. David Bysouth at [David.Bysouth@westonfoundation.ca](mailto:David.Bysouth@westonfoundation.ca).

## Program Eligibility and Project Scope

### Applicant Eligibility

Applicants will be eligible to apply for this program if:

- ✓ They are a Qualified Donee<sup>1</sup> in accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency and *Income Tax Act*. Projects with collaborations involving non-qualified donees are eligible though the Qualified Donee must be the principal applicant and all Foundation funding must go to the qualified donee. In addition, a letter from the Qualified Donee explaining the relationship and support of project will be required at the proposal stage.
- ✓ The research project takes place in northern Canada in the identified geographical area (see below).
- ✓ The research project supports applied biodiversity-focused natural sciences research in northern Canada.
- ✓ The research has a demonstrated intention of being used with conservation decision-makers or at conservation decision-making tables or processes.

**To be eligible for this funding, applicants must demonstrate that the research findings will be used or have a realistic potential to inform conservation policy or practice.**

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be asked to provide a letter from the conservation decision-making partner or representative stating how the funded research will be used to inform the work there.

The Foundation is only able to accept LOIs and proposals from organizations that are Canada Revenue Agency-qualified donees in Canada. Applicants who have previously

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<sup>1</sup> A Qualified Donee may be a northern community that is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency as a “registered municipal or public body performing a function of government in Canada,” a charitable organization, etc. Please see the CRA’s [website](#) if there is uncertainty as to what a Qualified Donee is.



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applied to or received funding from the Weston Family Foundation are encouraged to join this competition. Non-qualified donees may be collaborators.

**Geographical Criteria:**

See Figure 1 for a visual illustration of the following:

Projects must take place in northern Canada. The terrestrial geographic scope of Canada's North for this program is anything north of the southernmost Boreal line as defined by Brandt (2009).

The marine geographic scope of Canada's North for this program includes the following marine bioregions:

- Arctic Basin
- Western Arctic
- Arctic Archipelago
- Eastern Arctic
- Hudson Bay Complex
- Newfoundland-Labrador Shelves



Figure 1. The geographic scope of the Northern Biodiversity Research Program



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### **Project Criteria:**

The project must:

- demonstrate that it will produce research findings in northern natural sciences that are related to protecting or restoring northern biodiversity;
- be strongly related to northern conservation decision-making processes that have realistic, long-term potential to improve conservation outcomes for wildlife (flora and fauna) and ecosystem biodiversity;
- demonstrate that it is needed, using a science-based justification and rationale, to address a current opportunity for or threat to northern biodiversity;
- be carried out by a capable scientific team using appropriate methodologies and research design;
- disseminate research results and data publicly (through peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed channels) for uptake at conservation decision-making tables;
- demonstrate that it will fit within some or all of the program's funding priorities (see below); and
- be done within the program's geographical areas of focus.

The project should:

- address and incorporate northern community research priorities;
- demonstrate a commitment to engage local northern communities in the proposed research, including providing opportunities for training and knowledge exchange; and
- demonstrate that it considers the available local, Indigenous, and scientific knowledge where appropriate.



## Funding Priorities:

Successful projects will be those that focus on:

<p><b>A) Population, ecology, health, disease, contaminants, and management studies of species of importance for northern ecosystems;</b> For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Umbrella” or bio-culturally important species that are indicators of overall ecosystem health;</li><li>• Interactions between species or species-ecosystem processes;</li><li>• Species’ responses to impacts of climate change; or</li><li>• Invasive species of concern.</li></ul>
<p><b>B) The response of ecosystems to impacts of climate change;</b> For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Freshwater or marine hydrological changes;</li><li>• Permafrost changes;</li><li>• Areas identified as climate refugial areas or with high projected value as future habitats; or</li><li>• Carbon-rich Landscapes, including Peatlands/Wetlands.</li></ul>
<p><b>C) Impact of anthropogenic activities on species or ecosystems;</b> For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Natural resource extraction and other development;</li><li>• Pollution; or</li><li>• Marine shipping traffic and high use areas, etc.</li></ul>

Projects will score higher if they can demonstrate that they take place in or around areas of high habitat value for wildlife (flora and fauna) and biodiversity in general. For example, Key Biodiversity Areas (terrestrial, freshwater, and marine), including:

- Habitat for endemic species;
- Important Bird Areas;
- Nesting, denning, or calving sites;
- Species migration routes, stop-overs, etc.; or
- Intact and connected land and seascapes.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Foundation should they have any questions regarding the eligibility of their proposed project.



## Funding Specifications

The Foundation will commit up to a maximum of \$14M CAD to projects selected through this program. The number of awarded grants is contingent on the receipt of a sufficient number of high-quality applications. The Foundation reserves the right to adjust the funding envelope in its sole discretion.

- Grants will provide between \$600,000 and \$3,000,000 CAD in funding for research projects.
- Project activities must be completed and funds used over up to three (3) years.
- Funds will be granted only for direct costs that are justifiable for the work proposed.
- Items and cost must be estimated in the LOI and clearly described in the budget of the proposal.
- The granted funds may deviate from the full amount requested.
- Budgets must be developed to account for rising costs during the tenure of the project.

Any grant provided by the Foundation pursuant to this program shall be directed to the Qualified Donee organization and not to the individual affiliated with and applying through the organization. Responsibility for the planning, direction, and execution of the proposed project will rest solely with the applicants.

**Multiple organizations:** In the event of collaboration between multiple organizations or institutions, it is the responsibility of the Principal Applicant to distribute/manage funds appropriately.

**Full or partial support of projects:** The Foundation can support a full project or a portion of any project. In the case of the latter, Applicants should provide proof of the necessary resources to complete the full project.

**Conditional funding and milestones:** Grants are conditional on grantees meeting pre-determined milestones and providing deliverables, including submission of progress reports and/or participation in Foundation sponsored assessment meetings. Continued support is contingent upon the progress reports being favourably reviewed by the Foundation.

**Supplemental funding:** The Foundation encourages grantees to seek additional funds to further their work once the term of the initial grant has expired. The Foundation has no guaranteed policy for renewal or continuation of grants. The Foundation may, at its discretion, seek to further support clearly successful projects. Grantees are also eligible to apply for funding through other Foundation programs.



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Information Webinars

The Foundation will host Information Webinars on May 29<sup>th</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 2:00 PM ET. Details will be forwarded to interested Applicants in advance of the meeting and can be found on the Foundation website. Applicants are asked to register for either the May 29<sup>th</sup> webinar (register [here](#)) or the June 5<sup>th</sup> webinar (register [here](#)).

Important Dates

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Review Criteria

The following criteria will be considered in reviewing LOIs and proposals. At the LOI stage, the primary focus will be on eligibility, the proposed research and whether there is a clear application of the research at a decision-making table. At the proposal stage, reviewers will place increased consideration on the strength of the research methodology, alignment with program aim and priority areas, appropriateness of the budget, the suitability of the project team, and the potential for improved biodiversity outcomes.

LOI Stage

**Project Details:** Has the applicant provided adequate background information, methods, and information about the significance of the project to biodiversity? Is the research timely, novel, or filling a current gap in knowledge that represents a threat or opportunity?

**Mobilizing Research Findings:** Has the applicant demonstrated a clear and tangible plan for how research findings will impact conservation decision-making? Is there an active and/or clear plan in place to share research findings with appropriate decision-makers?

Additional Criteria Considered at the Proposal Stage

**Vision and Criteria:** Does the project clearly align with the program aim? Does the project address the research priorities and satisfy the criteria? How well does the project incorporate northern community or government priorities for research and conservation action?

**Milestones and Timeline:** Are the milestones and timeline realistic yet aggressive for the proposed project? Are there clear and appropriate go/no-go criteria, quantifiable measure





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and clear endpoints for each tranche of funding? Has the applicant considered the technical, ethical and regulatory requirements that are necessary to conduct the work?

**Budgeting:** Are the proposed budget, milestones, and length realistic yet aggressive for the proposed research and impact activities?

**Project Team:** Does the project team have the capability and capacity to reliably execute the proposed research and conservation impact activities? Does the proposed project capitalize on any unique resources or competencies? Does the team have experience in translating scientific findings at conservation decision-making tables? Have strategic partners been identified to facilitate the mobilization and application of the research?

**Research to Impact:** What are the next steps needed to advance the research to real-world application at conservation decision-making tables? What additional resources will be needed? What is the timeline to delivery for both the project team and the broader conservation goal? Please consider both short-term and long-term steps. Applicants will require a letter of support from a partner involved in the conservation decision-making table or process indicating that the Applicants' research will be used and/or relied upon by the conservation decision-maker or as part of the process.

### Reports and Assessments

Grantees are responsible for the completion of the following if a grant is awarded:

- **Milestones.** Proposed projects must include clear milestones that guide the continuation of the research project and use of findings at conservation decision-making tables. Predetermined milestones, as agreed upon by the grantees and the Foundation, will be used to determine reporting dates and the distribution of payment tranches. A brief milestone report will be required in advance of payment along with latest estimates on the budget.
- **Progress and Budget Reports.** Interim reports including a brief written report on milestone achievement and financial reconciliation is due according to the milestone timelines. An annual progress report including a brief written report with a detailed budget reconciliation is due at minimum every 12 months unless otherwise notified by the Foundation. Submission dates and reporting frequency will be linked to project milestones and the nature of the research, as agreed upon by the Applicants and Foundation. Failure to submit reports on time may result in termination of the project.
- **Foundation Visits.** With prior consent of grantees, Foundation representatives may wish to visit Grantees to observe the funded project work underway.



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- **Financial Accountability.** Grantees are expected to account for the moneys expended under any Foundation grant; any moneys spent either not in accordance with the approved project or prior to pre-approval of any material change in the project are both (i) recoverable by, and subject to restitution by the grantees, to the Foundation and (ii) may be cause for immediate termination of funding by the Foundation.
- **Post-grant Impact Monitoring Reports.** Grantees are expected to report impacts related to the funded work, including, but not limited to, peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed publications or other media, novel research-, community-, or conservation-related partnerships, and follow-on funding. As a number of these items may occur after the grant completes, the Foundation would expect the grantee to report on these metrics annually for up to 3 years after grant completion.

## Other

### Confidentiality

The Foundation treats all LOIs, proposals, research projects, and associated research information (collectively, the “**Confidential Information**”) in confidence using reasonable care in protecting such Confidential Information from disclosure to third parties who do not participate in the grant review process and Foundation assessments. All Confidential Information will be used by the Foundation and its review committee for the purposes of reviews and assessments and will be shared only in accordance with the sharing policy as set out herein. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Confidential Information shall not include any information that:

- a. was generally known to the public prior to the effective date of this Program announcement;
- b. becomes generally known to the public through no unlawful or unauthorized act by any recipient of Confidential Information; or
- c. was independently developed by the Foundation or its review committee without reference to the Confidential Information.

If the Foundation or any of its review committee members is requested to disclose Confidential Information pursuant to a legal or governmental proceeding, the Foundation shall give the Applicant or other owner(s) of such Confidential Information notice of such disclosure request as soon as is reasonably practicable. Participating reviewers will be subject to the Foundation’s standard disclosure agreements for such engagements.



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### **Liability and Indemnity**

Each applicant pursuant to this program acknowledges and agrees in responding to the program announcement that the applicant shall have no claim against the Foundation, and its respective representatives or affiliates, should such Program response be unsuccessful for any reason. Each applicant hereby releases the Foundation, its representatives, and affiliates, from any cause of action, complaint, or claim in connection with the application process and its outcome.

The Foundation's role in grants awarded pursuant to this program is that of a funder. It is not the sponsor of funded projects. The Foundation will not assume any liability associated with funded projects and each Applicant who is ultimately awarded a grant pursuant to this Program releases the Foundation from any and all liability with respect thereto and further indemnifies the Foundation, and its respective representatives and affiliates, from any claim or loss whatsoever associated with the applicable grant.

### **Intellectual Property Policy and Intellectual Property Agreements among Collaborators**

The Foundation acknowledges that any intellectual property ("IP") that arises from research funded through this program is not the property of the Foundation. The Foundation does require that researchers and collaborators agree on any material IP issues prior to submission of a proposal.

### **Applicant Commitment**

Organizations and individuals affiliated with and applying through or on behalf of organizations should carefully discuss the program announcement and the terms of this document with their organization before submitting an application. The submission of an LOI or a proposal does not bind either the Foundation or the applicants to any commitment to provide or receive funding, respectively.

Successful applicants will be required to agree to terms substantially similar to those contained in this document and the Foundation reserves the right to alter, delete or add additional terms in the Grant Agreement between the successful applicants and the Foundation. The Foundation will not negotiate the terms of the specific Grant Agreement with applicants outside of those that are statutory in nature. The Foundation, at its sole discretion, may change the timeline of the application process and will communicate any such changes.