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***Environment Research Grant***

##### 2026 Request for Proposals

1. **Purpose:**

The Pierce Cedar Creek Institute (PCCI) *Environment Research Grants* aim to enhance the health and stability of ecosystems in West Michigan by providing scientific information to support land management decisions.The *Environment Research Grant* program funds student and faculty researchers in natural areas management, biodiversity, and environmental monitoring research. This work takes place at PCCI and/or other regional sites. PCCI is specifically interested in funding projects that involve the following:

* + - Conservation of threatened and endangered species
		- Water quality monitoring and management (e.g., E.coli, HAB, shoreline health)
		- Invasive species monitoring and management
		- Environmental issues impacting human health
		- Species and habitat resiliency to climate change
		- Species inventories in West Michigan, especially lesser-known species (e.g., bats, fungi, fish, insect populations)
		- Metadata or comparison studies using past research at PCCI
		- Data archiving of past research or collections
		- Social science of environmental best management practices implementation

and climate change communication

1. **Eligibility:**

The *Environment Research Grant* program is available to faculty, undergraduate students, and graduate students from Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Consortium member institutions (see list at <https://www.cedarcreekinstitute.org/research/>). All researchers must be 18 years or older at the start of the project. Applicants who are not citizens of the United States should contact the Institute before applying to make special arrangements.

1. **Grant Award and Payments:**

Budget requests should include the following (if applicable):

* Student support: Applicants can request $6,000 for each full-time undergraduate and graduate student with a maximum of two FTE student researchers per project.
* Project support and faculty stipend: Applicants can request up to $4,000 for research equipment, supplies, project-related travel, and faculty stipend. The faculty stipend is limited to a maximum of $3,000 within this budget line.
* The maximum amount that may be requested for a project with one FTE student researcher is $10,000, and two FTE student researchers is $16,000.

The faculty researcher may identify student researchers, or PCCI can help identify qualified student researchers. Faculty are encouraged to collaborate across the Consortium members institutions.

The announcement of the funded projects will be made by March 23, 2026.

Students will need to complete a weekly timesheet. Students will be paid biweekly based on the number of hours worked (up to 400 hours over 12 weeks). Housing and food service (breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday) is available from May 18 until August 7, 2026.

Students may be employed through PCCI or supported in part by the STEAM Ahead statewide program, administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) or subcontractor.

Faculty stipends will be paid in two lump sums, one during the summer and the second after the final report (with revisions) is approved by Institute staff. Equipment and travel reimbursements will be paid after the expenses are submitted to the Institute. All reports and payment requests are due by November 13, 2026, and will not be reimbursed after that date.

1. **Responsibilities and Reporting:**

All funded project participants will need to sign a grant agreement and return it to PCCI by April 3, 2026. The grant agreement signifies that the grantees accept the responsibility to complete the proposed project and agree to the terms and conditions of the grant. The dates or character of the programs may need to be adjusted based on unforeseen circumstances.

The following are required for all researchers:

1. Participate in an orientation meeting at the Institute on April 18, 2026.
2. Complete all program paperwork, including a background check.
3. Participate in summer research program activities, including weekly meetings and completing service hours. In addition, students will provide a progress presentation and report on June 25, 2026, and a verbal summary of their work to the general public at a Field Station Tour (July 16, 2026).
4. Present the results of their summer work at the Field Station’s End of Summer Celebration on August 5, 2026.
5. Submit a final report by October 15, 2026. These reports will be reviewed, and feedback will be provided to the researchers. Researchers will need to submit a revised report by November 13, 2026. Reports should also be distributed to any other organizations where the research took place. All documents and reports submitted to Pierce Cedar Creek Institute will become the property of PCCI to use and duplicate at PCCI's discretion.
6. Provide data obtained during the study, including spatial information, to PCCI. However, raw data from the project will not be made public without the authors' permission for two years after the completion of the project.
7. Participate in the program evaluation.

Researchers are strongly encouraged to present their results at professional or student research symposia or conferences. Grantees are also encouraged to submit their results for publication in scientific journals. Grantees are required to inform PCCI of any publications and presentations resulting from PCCI-supported research and to acknowledge Pierce Cedar Creek Institute's sponsorship at presentations or within publications.

**Application and Guidelines**

1. **Application**

Parties interested in applying must submit a pre-proposal. Pre-proposals will be accepted any time before January 12, 2026. This one- to two-page letter must outline the intention to submit a full proposal, with a brief description of the project, the questions it will address, and the data to be collected. PCCI staff will provide feedback on the pre-proposal within two weeks of receiving the pre-proposal to help applicants complete the full proposal.

The completed full application (including signed cover sheet, proposal, and attachments) is due by 10 pm EST, February 2, 2026. Up-to-date versions of the application are available at: <https://www.cedarcreekinstitute.org/research/>.

Pre-proposals and full proposals must be e-mailed as a Word or PDF file to Ellen Holste (eholste@cedarcreekinstitute.org). Please submit as few files as possible to reduce the possibility of misplacing parts of your application. The application should have 1-inch margins and be in 11- or 12-point font. The Introduction, Project Narrative, and References should utilize continuous line numbering to make review easier.

Applications must include:

* 1. A complete **Cover Sheet** (see below).
	2. One paragraph **synopsis** of the project written for the general public (200 words max).
	3. **Introduction** with Statement of Purpose/Problem/Significance and connection to the Institute's research purpose and priorities. (2 pages max)
	4. **Project Narrative** (4 pages max)
		1. Proposed methods/procedures of the work involved. Describe the division of labor between the faculty and student researchers. Include any equipment and lab space to be provided by the Institute.
		2. Provide information on the proposed statistical design and analysis.
		3. If applicable, describe procedures that will be used for handling hazardous materials, potentially infectious microorganisms, animals, etc.
		4. Include information on any required Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval, state or federal permits, or human subjects research. If any of these are required, a copy of the approval must be submitted to Pierce Cedar Creek Institute before the start of the on-site research activity.
		5. Dissemination plan for the presentation or publication of results.
		6. If applicable, include prior data if this is a continuation project.
	5. **References,** including sources used to prepare the proposal.
	6. **Timetable** for this project, including projected information on start and end dates and information on projected housing needs for researchers.
	7. **Budget table and narrative** summarizing and explaining any materials and supplies to be purchased and cost estimates. Travel to and from study sites may be requested. Include a description of any other confirmed or anticipated sources of support.
	8. Researchers' **resume** (students) and/or short CV/biosketch (faculty).
	9. Students must provide an unofficial **transcript** reflecting courses completed and grades received and a letter of recommendation from their faculty mentor.
	10. Documentation of permission or letters of support from any agencies or organizations involved with the research.

Any questions regarding the grants can be directed to Ellen Holste – Research and Community Engagement Manager, eholste@cedarcreekinstitute.org or 269-721-4170.

1. **Award Evaluation Criteria**

Available funds for projects are limited. The following factors will be considered in ranking projects and making award decisions for the *Environment Research Grant* program:

1. Clearly described background and justification of the research question.
2. Appropriate proposed methodology and analysis to address the proposed questions.
3. Project’s connection to the PCCI’s research purpose and funding priorities.
4. The project involves community, environmental, or artistic partnerships, support, and/or funding.
5. Researcher qualifications.
	1. The project adds to the student researchers’ academic and professional growth and development.
	2. The application demonstrates the likelihood that the researchers will complete the project.
6. Plans to disseminate the results.

Environment Research Grant Application - Cover Sheet

***Deadline****: February 2, 2026*

**College or University**:

# **Faculty researcher**

Name:       Department:

Address:

Phone:       E-mail:

Driver’s License State and Number (for background check)

Are you authorized to work in the US?

# **Student researcher 1**

# Name:

Local Address:

Permanent Address:

Phone:       E-mail:

Major:       Undergraduate/Graduate Student:

Anticipated graduation date:       Current GPA:

Driver’s License State and Number (for background check)

Are you authorized to work in the US?

**Student researcher 2**

# Name:

Local Address:

Permanent Address:

Phone:       E-mail:

Major:       Undergraduate/Graduate Student:

Anticipated graduation date:       Current GPA:

Driver’s License State and Number (for background check)

Are you authorized to work in the US?

## **Title of Research Project**:

1. **Dates of Project**:       to

**Approximate timeline for On-site Housing and Meal Support**

## **Does this proposal require approval from:**

[ ]  Human Research Review Committee

[ ]  Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

[ ]  Animal or Plant Collection Permits

## **Budget Summary**

a. Does the project have any additional funding? If so, please describe the funding source and amounts:

b. Students Stipend Request $

c. Faculty Researcher Stipend $

d. Project Support (Equipment, supplies, and project-related travel) $

 ***Total***  *$*

1. **Partner or supporting organizations** (if applicable)**.** Please include a contact name and phone number.

**Signatures** - By signing below, researchers confirm that all information provided is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. If awarded, grant researchers will follow the requirements of the program guidelines and commit sufficient time and effort to ensure the completion of the proposed work.

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 Faculty Researcher Date Student Researcher Date

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Student Researcher Date



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