

Research Guidelines for Ohio Preserves Owned by The Nature Conservancy

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and water they need to survive. The Nature Conservancy has long advocated, supported, and conducted basic, as well as practical, scientific research on Conservancy preserves for the following reasons:

1. Sound scientific information is essential to the management of Nature Conservancy preserves.
2. Nature Conservancy preserves provide unique opportunities for the study of rare species and ecosystems; and the natural conditions and processes that sustain biodiversity.

Proposal Requirements and Approval Procedure

1. The Nature Conservancy requires a brief written research proposal to be submitted for all studies conducted on its preserves. The proposals shall include the following information.
 - a. Title of Study
 - b. Investigator(s), with affiliation, address, and telephone number
 - c. Locations of study (e.g. preserve name and county)
 - d. Objectives of study
 - e. Need and justification for conducting study on the particular preserve
 - f. Schedule of work, including completion date
 - g. Methods
 - h. Expected conservation implications of the research
 - i. Publication objectives
2. The principal investigator should submit copies of the proposal to the Ohio Field Office and the local preserve office, where applicable, for review.
3. If collection of state or federally listed species is required for a study, the principal investigator is responsible for obtaining collecting permits from the appropriate state or federal agency.

General Guidelines for Research

1. Research projects generally should be non-invasive, with no long-term impacts on natural communities or populations. Absolutely no introduction of non-native species is permitted.
2. Negative impacts associated with conducting research on the preserves will be minimized by proper use of vehicles and equipment, and careful selection of study areas, schedules, and personnel.
3. Significant changes from the approved research project will require written approval.
4. Researchers working on a preserve will contact the preserve steward prior to each visit and will coordinate access through Conservancy staff.
5. The principal investigator will submit a research progress report annually to the Ohio Field Office by February 15 and will submit a final project report by the scheduled completion date. Researchers are encouraged to send reports in electronic format as e-mail attachments. When

available, three paper copies of subsequent publications, reports, etc., relating to the study shall be forwarded to the field office.

6. All equipment, materials, etc. will be removed from the field by the researcher in accordance with the scheduled project time table, unless other arrangements have been approved.

7. Researchers are expected to conduct their projects in accordance with the approved proposal. Researchers and Nature Conservancy personnel are expected to cooperate with each other and resolve minor problems that may develop.

8. Researchers should be prepared to educate others as to what, how and why they are conducting their research. They should also discuss conservation considerations in research results and when instructing students.

9. The Nature Conservancy shall be given proper credit in all published papers relating to research or studies conducted on Conservancy preserves. Conservancy staff should be given recognition and acknowledgement when appropriate, and should be considered for co-authorship in publications if applicable.

General Guidelines for Collection

1. All collecting of plants, animals, rocks, minerals, or parts thereof (living or dead) must be authorized in writing. The collections shall be used for scientific or educational purposes only, and shall not be used for commercial profit.

2. Researchers are expected to have knowledge of all regulations pertaining to the collection of plants or animals under study and must obtain any necessary state or federal permits prior to collection, in addition to the Nature Conservancy permit.

3. Researchers are expected to collect discriminately, taking only the amount necessary to complete the project. Where a voucher is appropriate, researchers should collect only a single individual. If a number of individuals must be collected, neither the survival nor reproductivity of the population should be threatened. Carefully consider the cumulative effect of research and teaching efforts on the population. If the preserve population is small (< 25 individuals), researchers can only photograph the organism for field documentation. Collecting rare animals or animals from very small populations is prohibited.

4. Researchers are expected to collect in a discreet manner, away from roads, trails, and developed areas unless specified. Minimize damage to the physical site by restoring soil and litter to original condition.

5. The Nature Conservancy expects researchers to care properly for collected specimens. Unless previously agreed to, use standard collecting techniques to ensure usability, preservability, or survivability if you plan to maintain live plants or animals. Follow standard specimen preservation and labeling methodologies. When finished with a collected specimen, deposit the specimen in a permanent public museum or in the exhibit, study, or type collections of scientific or educational institutions, and inform The Nature Conservancy of that location. The Conservancy reserves the right to designate the depository of all specimens.