



TREE FUND
Cultivating Innovation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2018 UTILITY ARBORIST RESEARCH FUND GRANTS

Applications Accepted: January 17 through March 15, 2018

Grant Value: \$10,000 to \$50,000 each

INTRODUCTION

Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund (TREE Fund) and Utility Arborist Association (UAA) established the Utility Arborist Research Fund (UARF) in 2010 to finance work with real importance and benefit to utility tree care professionals. In 2017, the UARF endowment reached its \$1.0 million activation goal, and first grants will be awarded in 2018. TREE Fund manages the UARF endowment and administers all research grants awarded, while UAA's Research Committee advises TREE Fund with respect to research priorities. Given the immense scope of annual utility arboriculture work on a global basis, if UARF-funded research can generate even a 1.0% reduction in tree-related outages, customer complaints, vegetation management complexity or emergency tree work, the financial, public relations, and worker safety returns on investment will be immense.

2018 FUNDING LEVELS AND PRIORITIES

A total of \$50,000 is available for award in 2018; the minimum award considered will be \$10,000, the maximum \$50,000, so that one to five grants may be awarded, subject to receipt of compliant applications. Work funded by UARF is expected to be completed within one to three years of award. The following topics have been identified by UAA and TREE Fund as areas of particular interest or emergent need; this list is not exhaustive, but is offered to provide perspective on the types of research questions UARF is intended to address:

- Developing cost effective processes for assessing the risk of failure to seemingly healthy trees;
- Assessing tree contact as it relates to wildfire ignition;
- Evaluating the inherent tree-related reliability of common types of energy delivery infrastructure;
- Assessing risks caused by crown asymmetry due to line clearance pruning;
- Comparing the costs, benefits, values, and hazards of different methods of right-of-way management for both power transmission lines and pipelines;

- Assessing wildlife and plant communities' response to various right-of-way management protocols, to include the development of a "portable" research protocol that would allow consistent evaluation of various vegetation management techniques across multiple sites.

TREE Fund does *not* fund the following types of projects, and will not accept applications for such work:

- Projects that are primarily municipal tree surveys or assessments;
- Tree planting programs;
- Studies of individual tree species for the primary purpose of agricultural or timber/forest planting yield;
- Commercial tree- or soil-related product testing primarily for the benefit of the company that manufactures the product.

RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

Before submitting a proposal, applicants must contact cooperating partners, including but not limited to (as applicable) State natural resource agency personnel, utility companies, federal biologists and resource managers, and relevant local landowners, to discuss the proposed project and ensure that the work can be conducted if funded (e.g., utility rights-of-way may be accessed, necessary samples can be collected, required permits can be obtained, staff safety training can be conducted and certified as required by the utility, etc.) Affirmation of support of partners must be provided with the application. All necessary state, federal, and local permits, as well as landowner permission, must be received and documented prior to project initiation. Note: A UARF-funded integrated vegetation management (IVM) project directed by Sonoma State University is currently underway on four Northern California utility rights-of-way controlled by Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E) and/or Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). These test plots may be available for new 2018 UARF research; for information about these locations and any required clearances from PG&E/SMUD, contact TREE Fund President and CEO J. Eric Smith at jesmith@treefund.org.

APPLICATION PROCESS

TREE Fund will accept applications only between January 17 and March 15, 2018. To apply, send an email containing a *brief* (no more than 100 words) description of your project title and concept to treefund@treefund.org. TREE Fund staff will confirm eligibility for consideration, and if your concept qualifies, will send you a numbered application form for your use.

Upon completion of this application form, you will save a Word version for your records, then create a PDF version of the completed document with title in the format "PI Surname, Grant Program, Application Number" (e.g. "Smith, UARF, #17-023"), and email it as an attachment to treefund@treefund.org with a PDF of PI and Co-PI (if applicable) CVs. Staff will confirm receipt of your application at that time.

In addition to contact and CV information for the PI, Co-PI(s), and any student assistants, applicants will need the following information to complete the form. **Note well that word**

count limits are firm and absolute. Exceeding word counts may result in your application being rejected before review. Applicants should compose their text in Word or related systems that allow counts to be confirmed before they are placed in the application form.

Project Description:

- **Overall Project Summary, Including Overarching Goals (400 Words Maximum):** A brief statement of the current issue/problem and its impact on arboriculture, urban forestry, and the professions that are involved with researching, planning, designing, growing, planting, managing and/or otherwise maintaining urban trees; and goals of the proposed research.
- **Description of Measurable Outputs/Outcomes (250 Words Maximum):** Include a list of the tangible outputs (publications, extension/outreach materials, posters, etc.) from this project and identify up to five measurable outcomes (real changes in day-to-day urban forest design or management) that are expected to result from work proposed.
- **Current Knowledge/Past Research in Project Area (1,000 Words Maximum, excluding in-text literature citations as described at the end of this section):** Description of what is known about the problem/project area and with reference to previous attempts to address it where appropriate; a review of literature and past experiences of the investigative team.
- **Project Work Plan (1,500 Words Maximum):** Clearly define the scope of the work to be performed, including hypotheses, design, methodology and analyses. Any anticipated proprietary elements of proposed research must be identified clearly in the initial application. Should applications fail to make such declarations, TREE Fund reserves the right to negotiate royalties from patents, sales, copyrights, or other commercial results of funded research.
- **Dissemination Plans (300 Words Maximum):** A brief description of activities and outlets used to share the results of this project. Be sure communications with both academic and practitioner communities are addressed.
- **Literature Cited:** It may be useful to refer reviewers to previous work published elsewhere. In such cases, cite appropriate works in your text in “Author(s), year” format (e.g. “Smith, 2014” or “Jones et.al., 2003”), then list citations alphabetically by first author’s last name.

Budget Elements, Including:

- Institutional Compensation, Stipends and Benefits
- Travel and Transportation
- Equipment (e.g. Vehicles, Growth Chambers, Etc.)
- Other Materials and Supplies (e.g. Paper, Ink, Etc.)
- Contract Labor (Consultants, Speakers, Etc.)
- Institutional Overhead (Maximum 10%)
- Other/Miscellaneous
- Cash or In-Kind Funding from Other Sources (Minimum 10%; unrecovered institutional overhead may be applied to meet this minimum)

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Staff will screen all applications for applicant eligibility, word counts, alignment with TREE Fund mission and UARF Charter, and compliance with minimum requirements, then forward compliant applications to the UARF Advisory Board, a subcommittee of TREE Fund's Research and Education Committee. Members of this committee will score your proposal as follows:

- Qualifications of the investigative team: 10 points
- Potential impact of the project: 25 points
- Approach: 35 points
- Dissemination plan: 10 points
- Feasibility: 15 points
- Discretionary: 5 points.
- **Total Maximum Possible Score: 100 points.**

TREE Fund does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability or national or ethnic origin. Current trustees of TREE Fund or any member of the family of any such trustee are ineligible to receive grants from TREE Fund.

AWARD PROCESS AND FUNDS DISTRIBUTION

Recommendations on grant awards will be presented by the Research and Education Committee to the TREE Fund Board of Trustees for approval in May 2018, and grant recipient(s) will be notified in writing within two weeks of Trustee approval. A Grant Agreement form that includes a payment and reporting schedule will be provided with award notification. It must be completed within two weeks of notification, and returned to TREE Fund with all required supporting documentation.

Applicants are *most strongly encouraged* to review the sample Grant Agreement form on TREE Fund's website with their employers' financial or grant management offices prior to submitting an application, to ensure that the Agreement forms can be signed expeditiously upon receipt. Potential difficulties with Agreement terms that are identified during the application process may be considered and negotiated more favorably than those presented after the grant award process.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

It is TREE Fund's and UAA's explicit desire that research findings eventually be freely and widely available to any and all parties who may benefit from the author's work. At the same time, TREE Fund and UAA recognize the importance of academic and professional journal publications and will work with grant recipients to ensure that findings are disseminated in a manner that is cognizant of all parties' schedules and needs. Recipients should inform TREE Fund when funded research findings are published or presented at conferences so that these accomplishments can be widely publicized. Recipients should also recognize the support provided by TREE Fund in their articles or presentations related to the funded project. Recipients are strongly encouraged to publish findings to relevant professional journals, i.e. *UAA Newslines, Arboriculture and Urban Forestry, Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Arboricultural Journal, Trees: Structure and Function, Journal*

of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology, Plant Pathology, Hortscience, Horticultural Science, Sustainable Development, Landscape and Urban Planning, Journal of Urban Health, Environment and Urbanization, Urban Ecosystems, etc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit TREE Fund's website at treefund.org for more information about this grant program and the organization at large, including an archive of past grant awards. Should you have additional questions not covered at the website, please contact TREE Fund Operations and Grants Manager Barbara Duke at bduke@treefund.org (preferred) or via phone at (630) 369-8300, x200.