The Wyss Scholars Program for the Conservation of the American West
Cohort #8 – 2014-2016

The Wyss Foundation is a private, charitable foundation dedicated to land conservation in the American West. The Wyss Scholars Program seeks to identify and nurture a new generation of leaders on western land conservation issues by providing financial support to students who are committed to careers focused on western conservation, either with a federal or state resource management agency or a non-profit conservation group working in the region. For the purposes of the program, the American West includes the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. It is expected that students will be seeking careers in these states, or in Washington, D.C. dealing with policy affecting these states. Qualifying employment includes federal or state agencies or a nonprofit organization with a mission to further land conservation in the states listed above.

Two or three Wyss Scholars will be selected each year on the basis of their leadership potential, commitment to furthering land conservation in the American West, commitment to pursuing a career in nonprofit or public-sector conservation, financial need and academic strength. While experience living or working in the west is preferred, all students interested in western lands and sustainability issues are encouraged to apply.

ELIGIBILITY

• All matriculated master’s degree candidates who entered SNRE during Fall 2014 and who will return Fall 2015. Two SNRE students will be selected in each Scholars cohort.

• Master’s degree candidates at the Ford School of Public Policy, Ross School of Business, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and the University of Michigan Law School who entered their programs during Fall 2014 (Public Policy, CAUB, or Business) or Fall 2013 or 2014 (Law). Up to three non-SNRE students will be selected in total over the five years of the program. Hence, each year, zero to one student will be selected.

Application Due Date: 9:00 AM Monday, November 3, 2014

Awards will include the following:

• Tuition support for the second term of the first year and both terms of the second year. The award will be up to half of the SNRE tuition for three terms depending on need.
• Stipend ($5,000) for a summer internship with a nonprofit or public-sector conservation organization dedicated to the American West;
• For Scholars who work for a non-profit organization or governmental agency devoted to furthering land conservation in the American West after graduation, a post-graduation award, payable in two installments over 24 months, and intended for use by the student to repay federal student loans incurred while obtaining their degree;
• Membership in the Wyss Scholars network (students and alumni from University of Michigan, Yale University, University of Montana, and Northern Arizona University)

For further information, please feel free to contact Diana Woodworth (dianaw@umich.edu) or Steve Yaffee (yaffee@umich.edu).
The application, selection and awards process:

An e-mail announcement is sent to all master’s students and faculty in September.

An information session is held to provide an overview of the program and answer questions about the application process. (This year it will take place from 1:00-2:00, on 17 October 2014 in room 2024 of the Dana Building). The faculty program coordinator, Steve Yaffee, will talk about the program.

Step 1: The following items must be completed and submitted as separate PDF e-mail attachments to Diana Woodworth, dianaw@umich.edu, by 9:00 AM on Monday, November 3, 2014.

- An essay (500 word limit) detailing your past, present, and future commitment to the field of U.S. American Western Conservation and how becoming a Wyss Scholar will enhance your career development in the conservation field.
- A résumé (1-2 pages maximum).
- An outline of your remaining course of study and the summer 2015 internship possibilities you are exploring (maximum of 1 page).
- A letter of recommendation concerning you as a future conservation leader.
  - SNRE students may refer us to a specific recommendation letter used for U-M admission or submit a more recent letter. An e-mail recommendation can be sent to dianaw@umich.edu but we also want a hard copy signed by the author.
  - Non-SNRE students either need to arrange with their Schools to forward a copy of an admission recommendation letter or need to arrange with a recommender to submit a letter directly to dianaw@umich.edu.
- We will add a copy of your University of Michigan transcript, and for SNRE students, we will add a copy of your undergraduate transcripts submitted during the admissions process. Non-SNRE students need to arrange for their UM School or undergraduate institutions to forward a copy of their undergraduate transcripts to dianaw@umich.edu.

Step 2: A subset of applicants will be scheduled for a half-hour interview during the second week of December. The interviews will be conducted by a committee of four: the Wyss Scholars Program faculty coordinator (Professor Steven Yaffee), a representative from the Wyss Foundation, a representative from the SNRE Office of Academic Programs, and one outside NGO leader from the Ann Arbor area.

Step 3: The interview committee will consider the students’ applications and interview results, and recommend finalists to the Foundation. Award decisions will be made by mid-January 2015. Students and advisors will be notified via e-mail shortly thereafter.

The Wyss Scholars Program for the Conservation of the American West is open to individuals regardless of race, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or gender. We encourage individuals from groups historically underrepresented in environmental conservation to apply.