



Ecological and Environmental Research Guidelines for Tift Nature Preserve

Ecological research is an integral part of the mission of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (BSNS), but needs to be conducted in a manner that does not damage or degrade the natural resources of the preserve. Therefore, the following guidelines and restrictions are placed on the types and methods of research allowed on the preserve. These include:

Manipulative Studies

Research that removes, damages, or otherwise dramatically alters the existing native vegetation, reduces habitat for wildlife, increases the potential for the spread of invasive species, or otherwise negatively impacts the preserve will not be allowed. This guideline places more restrictions on areas such as the cattail marsh which has many native wetland species and good wildlife habitat. In contrast, there will be fewer restrictions in an area like the mounds that is mostly covered by low stature non-native vegetation (see attached map). Other areas of the preserve fall somewhere between these two extremes and approval of a research proposal will depend on current conditions and the nature of the research and methodology.

Species Introductions

Research that proposes to introduce non-native plants, vertebrates, invertebrates, or microorganisms to any terrestrial or aquatic community will not be allowed without a plan to contain the species or eradicate them upon completion of the project. Exceptions include USDA approved biological control agents. Introduced native species, such as for plant community restoration studies or species reintroductions, should be obtained from a source as close as possible and should be disease free. Native species proposed for introduction should also not be known to negatively impact existing native species or have a history of becoming invasive or otherwise problematic.

Voucher Specimens

To verify the results of research and enhance the collections at the Buffalo Museum of Science, voucher specimens should be collected whenever possible and submitted to BSNS. Specimens of plants and invertebrates are easily obtained and should be collected. With the exception of reptiles, amphibians, fish and small mammals, vertebrate species should not be collected. No species should be illegally taken for the sake of obtaining a voucher specimen. Photo vouchers can be used for species when obtaining an actual specimen is not appropriate and can improve acceptance of results for rare or difficult to identify species. Specimens should be prepared and preserved in a manner appropriate for the species and the following information should accompany all specimens: identification (including scientific and common names), collector's name, date of collection, location on preserve, and a description of collection technique, habitat, or other useful information. Contact Preserve staff for more details on collecting and preparing voucher specimens.



Access

Access to all parts of the preserve with vehicles or other large equipment may not be possible, or only seasonally accessible. Construction of roads and trails, excessive rutting from vehicles traveling on wet ground, or destruction of vegetation to access parts of the preserve or establish research plots will not be allowed. However, an extensive trail system already exists, a small all-terrain utility vehicle may be available for use, and after hours access to the preserve can be arranged to accommodate research needs. Tiff Nature Preserve is also open to the public and large areas of the preserve that are currently open to public access will not be closed for extended periods of time (weeks to months) to conduct research.

Aesthetics

Tiff Nature Preserve is a public place for research, education, and enjoyment of the environment. Therefore, research that negatively affects the aesthetics and the public's enjoyment of the preserve will not be approved. This includes projects that will permanently alter native vegetation, establish long-term research plots or structures in highly visible areas, or otherwise change the character of the preserve. Aesthetics is a highly subjective judgment and proposals will be reviewed on a case by case basis. It is likely that accommodations can be made for nearly all research proposals.

Permits

It is the responsibility of the researcher proposing a study to obtain all necessary state and federal permits. Research proposals without proper documentation of permits will not be approved. Permits are required for conducting research on state and federally listed species, banding birds, and may be needed for catching or trapping fish and game species. Other permit requirements depend on the species and the nature of the research. Pesticide Applicator Certification is required to apply herbicides or pesticides on property owned by the City of Buffalo. Colleges and universities should provide documentation that a research proposal was approved by the institution's Animal Care and Use Committee when applicable.

Liability

All research at Tiff Nature Preserve is conducted at your own risk. The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, or the Buffalo Museum of Science, is not responsible for any injury or bodily harm to researchers, students, field crew members, or volunteers while they are conducting research on the preserve. Nor are they responsible for any loss or damage to property or equipment that is used while conducting research.

FIND WHY.

1020 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211-1208

716.896.5200
sciencebuff.org





Proposal Process

A brief research proposal will be required for approval before research at Tifft Nature Preserve can commence. There is no annual deadline for research proposals, but they should be submitted well in advance of proposed start date for review by Buffalo Museum of Science staff. In general, 30 – 60 days should be sufficient for most proposals, but more time should be given for complex and logistically challenging research. There is no standard format for proposals, but they should include the information listed below. Research proposals receiving grant funding from agencies, foundations, or other sources will usually meet these requirements with few modifications.

- Research proposal title
- Name of principle investigator and collaborators along with contact information and affiliations
- Detailed, but concise, project description including background information, methodology, and expected results
- Map of preserve with areas of proposed research indicated (contact Tifft Nature Preserve to obtain a map)
- Length of study and access needs
- Special equipment access or logistical needs
- Staff time, equipment, or financial assistance requested
- Plan for sharing results with students, volunteers, or the general public and willingness to have research directly incorporated into educational programming

BSNS will not charge overhead for research conducted at Tifft Nature Preserve, but financial partnerships that support both research and the preserve are encouraged. Preserve staff are willing to assist in grant writing and obtaining research funding, especially when consulted early in the proposal process.

Upon completion of a research project, the BSNS will be provided with a hard or electronic copy, ideally both, of all research reports, thesis and dissertations, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other publications produced from data collected at the preserve.

Proposals should be submitted via email to the Preserve Steward, Zach Goodrich at zgoodrich@sciencebuff.org