# Research Projects Policy 2024 | Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin (UT) is a 284-acre public botanic garden and UT Field Station dedicated to increasing the sustainable use and conservation of native plants and landscapes through education and research. The Center welcomes opportunities to work with internal and external researchers on projects that advance its mission; however, because the Center site is a place for public education and display, conducting research on this site has special requirements.

# Use of Wildflower Center Resources:

Before the start of a new project, researchers will correspond and work with **Dr. Sean Griffin**: the Director of Science & Conservation, and **Alex Ciongoli**: the Science & Conservation Lab Manager. They can be reached via email at research@wildflower.org for all research project inquiries and scheduling needs.

Projects that are large in scope, cause disturbance, need ongoing land management, or use Center assets may require the creation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA will enumerate each party’s responsibilities and include a budget to reimburse the Center for use of its assets. Such assets include, but are not limited to, water use, other utilities, fuel use, and maintenance by Center staff. In some instances, MOAs must be signed by The University of Texas at Austin Business Contracts Office.

Research that utilizes the Center's facilities must acknowledge the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center as a location of research, must acknowledge any staff support in all publications and reports, and must send a reprint or copy of said publications / reports to theDirector of Science & Conservation. It is also requested that researchers present research performed and their associated findings to Center staff and constituents.

# Guidelines for Researchers:

1. UT and External Principal Investigators --- Investigators from across the University of Texas at Austin and other recognized academic and non-academic institutions are welcome to apply to do research at the Center.
2. Personnel --- As part of the initial application, researchers must provide names of all personnel who will need access to Center facilities and identify the tasks to be performed by each person. Note that all personnel are individually required to log in and out through the **Center’s Volgistic database** (<https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?ap=1624849039>) for each site visit.
3. Building Access --- Research Building lab space and some lab equipment is available to researchers upon request. Requests for lab access must be included in the site-use application.
4. Travel to and Movement on Site --- Parking and trail routes for researchers to move between buildings and field plots are to be discussed with the Director of Science & Conservation and the Science & Conservation Lab Manager. Note that options for passage across the site may be limited given the needs of the public display activities of the Center.
5. Notification of Expected Site Visit --- ***All Center site visit requests must be submitted at least 14 days in advance via email to*** ***research@wildflower.org*** ***.*** Note that the Center has active programming for education and land management, and this programming may limit researchers’ ability to access Research and Natural Areas.
6. Sign In/Out --- Researchers who request site access must establish an account through the **Center’s Volgistic database** (<https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?ap=1624849039>). In addition, researchers must sign in/out for every visit to the Center when they perform research (<https://www.wildflower.org/volunteer>). Lastly, all researchers should possess hard copies of site use application and permit.
7. Maintenance -­‐ During initial research discussions and/or site visits, researchers plus the Director of Science & Conservation and the Science & Conservation Lab Manager will identify aspects of research site maintenance that are the responsibility of the researcher and that are the responsibility of the Center. In general, the researcher is responsible for the majority of maintenance activities. When maintenance support is requested from the Center, the researcher will provision funds to compensate staff time, equipment wear and tear, and supplies.
8. Site Remediation -­‐ Researchers are responsible for remediation of any damage to or alteration of Center grounds caused by construction or operation of the test site. Examples include altered hydrology, infrastructure damage, and interference with Center research, education, maintenance, and visitor activities. Researchers and Center staff must agree on an exit strategy for researchers at the close of their project outlining how the site will be returned to its original condition or to an agreed upon state. This includes removal of equipment and, where necessary, site re-vegetation.
9. Tools and Small Equipment -­‐ Researchers are expected to operate independently and must provide all tools and equipment required for installation, operation, and maintenance of test sites. Under limited circumstances Center tools may be loaned to researchers. Researchers must obtain permission from the appropriate Center manager or director prior to use. Tools must be maintained in good repair, cleaned, and returned to the Pole Barn for storage every day. Center tools may not be retained at the test site overnight. Equipment privileges are contingent upon continued responsible and appropriate use and may be revoked.
10. Large Equipment -­‐ Outside researchers do not have permission to use the Center's large equipment (tractor, roller packer, mules, workhorse, golf cart). Rare exceptions can be made if agreed to by the Center's Director of Land Management and the following requirements are met:
* Driver undergoes both UT required training and on‐site training in the use and safety of the equipment.
* Researcher must sign a liability waiver.
* Researcher is financially responsible for repair of damage done to equipment during use.
* Researcher is responsible for fuel costs.
* Equipment privileges are contingent upon continued responsible and appropriate use.
1. Chemicals and Toxic Substances --- Use of all chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers etc.) must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Land Management before application. Researchers are responsible for following recommended safety protocols, including abiding by OSHA personal protective equipment standards and responsible chemical disposal.
	* All herbicide treatment must be through individual plant treatment rather than broadcast herbicide treatment. Herbicides must be RTU (ready to use).
	* Depending on the substance and scope of the project, the Center may require Center staff to conduct application.
	* All chemicals and toxic substances must be labeled and accompanied by a Safety Data Sheet.
	* The Director of Science & Conservation, the Science & Conservation Lab Manager, the Director of Land Management, and any other Departments relevant to a given project (e.g. Horticulture, Arboretum etc.) must be notified of application and the re-entry period prior to use of any chemical within the natural lands or gardens.
2. Introduction of Animals and Plants --- The Center is committed to maintaining a natural landscape and displaying only plants native to Texas. Therefore, any introduction of animal or plant material from locations off-site must be conducted with extreme care. Known invasive species are not permitted, and proposed use of any organism or biological material from off-site must be identified on the Site Use application and reviewed by Center staff. Study and introduction of certain, non-local organisms may be allowed on a case-by-case basis, provided that measures are taken to prevent escape and spread.
3. Research Involving Human Subjects --- One of the great strengths of the Center is interaction with the public and emphasis on environmental education. The Center welcomes research on science literacy, informal education, public perception, outreach, and community engagement. Any research with human subjects requires IRB approval from the University of Texas at Austin as well as the researcher’s home institution. Researchers may request a letter of support from the Director of Science & Conservation during the IRB approval process.
4. Site Appearance and Safety -­‐ The Center is a display garden and research center that is open to the public. Test sites must be safe for the public and neat in appearance.
* Tools must be stored every day. Trash must be removed from site every day.
* Chemicals may never be left unattended on site and must be properly stored in the Pole Barn or other secure area.
* Compostable material, such as pulled weeds or trimmings, must be moved to the compost pile within two days of generation.
* During construction, materials may be stored temporarily on site with provisions to keep the area safe for the public.
* Materials that cannot be used within 1 month of placement on site must be moved to an appropriate long-term storage location determined by Center staff.
* If a long-term storage solution cannot be found, the materials must be removed from the Center grounds. Debris generated during construction activities must be removed from the site within 1 month.
* When designing interpretive materials, researchers will work with Center Education and communication staff to ensure that materials reflect the overall interpretive plan.
1. Emergency Contact and First Aid --- In emergency situations, follow communication protocols:
* 911, University Police Department (512-471-4441), Wildflower Center Staff
* Location of First Aid Kits (Administration, Arboretum Restrooms, Family Garden Restrooms, Little House, Store)
* AED/First Aid Kit (Great Hall)

**Site Use Request Form 2024**

Please complete **all sections** of the form below 14 days or more before the project start date and return to Sean Griffin and Alex Ciongoli via email at research@wildflower.org . **Incomplete Site Use Form Requests with unanswered questions will be denied.**

1. Name and Title of Researcher:
2. University Affiliation:
3. Email:
4. Address:
5. Mobile Phone:
6. Project Title:
7. Project Description:
	1. (~1 page including background, justification, data to be collected, and summary of protocols. Can be attached to the end of this document):
8. Project Location:
	1. (please be specific and include a map if possible):
9. Expected project start date:
10. Expected project end date:
11. Expected number of total site visits:
12. List of all project personnel and tasks performed by each person:
13. Special requirements or notes (if any):

**I agree to the conditions set forth in the above Research Projects Policy on site use for external projects at the LBJWC. Additionally, I agree to the following:**

1. I will provide an annual report summary, and such information may be used on the field station website and other reports
2. I will provide a copy of data collected on habitats and wild-living organisms (other than cultures or manipulations) as soon as the study is complete
3. I will remove everything associated with the experiment on its termination, restore disturbed areas, and return all keys
4. I will acknowledge the field station in all publications and reports that utilize the facilities, and send a copy to the Director of Science and Conservation
5. When submitting UT grant proposals, I will include the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower on the PRF that goes to OSP in the section "ORU to receive credit for Proposal/Award."
6. I agree that UT has no liability for damage or injury to my person or property and I have signed the Release and Indemnification Agreement
7. I agree to abide by all UT policies (including prohibitions on alcohol, tobacco and misconduct), to follow the site User Handbook guidelines and instructions given by UT supervisory personnel

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_