

Ucross High Plains Stewardship Initiative at the Yale School of the Environment Western Resources Fellowship, Summer 2026

Fellowship Description

Ucross High Plains Stewardship Initiative's (UHPSI) *Western Resources Fellowship* provides students with a **financial award, logistical assistance, and mentorship to aid with research, an internship, or a project that will have a high impact on conservation, stewardship, or management of natural resources in the western US**, with the priority given to quality applicants working in the Rocky Mountains or High Plains.

This program supports undergraduates and graduate students completing a summer experience that will provide them with practical experience, leadership skills, and/or research experience that will prepare fellows for their future careers. **A financial award of up to \$9,000 will be granted to each fellow.** This fellowship is open to undergraduate and graduate students (professional or research degrees).

Fellowship Expectations and Deliverables

- Fellows will **complete a 10 -12-week summer experience** that will support conservation, land management or stewardship in the American West, taking the form of research, internship, or an applied project. Fellows will complete summer projects and tasks to the best of their ability and professionally.
- Fellows will **attend and actively participate in meetings every 2-3 weeks** during the summer (May- August). During meetings, students will learn what fellows are working on, trouble-shoot issues, set goals, and serve as peer-mentors to one another. Students should serve as sounding board for one another during their experience and provide feedback when requested.
- Fellows will be highlighted on the UHPSI website. Each fellow will have a project description page and bio on the site.
- Fellows will **present to the YSE community** about their experience during Jan/Feb 2027.

Required Deliverables

- Fellows author at least 2 blog posts to be shared on UHPSI website during May-August.
- Fellows create a concise 1-2-page handout that showcases major conservation takeaways from their experience that can be shared with a broad western conservation audience. Due at end of summer or during fall semester depending on project. Products will be shared on the website and more broadly. Handout will follow outline provided by UHPSI.

Application Evaluation

- A. Commitment** to conservation, land management or stewardship in the American West

- Student demonstrates an interest in conservation, land management or stewardship in the western United States through their direct involvement or participation in previous work, extracurricular activities, or previous schooling.

B. Benefit to career aspirations

- Students with career aspirations that will benefit directly from their summer experience are preferred.

C. Merit

- Students with higher merit as determined by course grades, extracurricular activities, and application organization and clarity are preferred.

D. Impact level of proposed work

- Student proposals will be evaluated as strong if they have potential for high impact on conservation of the western United States, more than those that will benefit a few people or acres. Impact may be defined as research or scholarly impact, raising awareness about an issue, increasing effectiveness of a conservation organization (government or non-government), or the potential to lead to improvements in management for land or water resources.

E. Feasibility of proposed work

- Student proposals will be evaluated as strong if they seem feasible (e.g., logistically, ecologically, socially, and economically). This will assess based on your submitted summer work proposal.

F. Financial need

- This is determined by the Financial Aid office and takes into account previously awarded funding from other sources and financial resources needed to complete summer experience. Applicants that are first-time WRF applicants may receive priority over applicants that participated in WRF prior.

Application Materials

Applications are due **March 15, 2026 by 11:59 PM** and should be submitted through the Yale Student Grants Database. Applications will be review by UHPSI program director and faculty director. However, faculty director will not review applications where the student is their advisee.

The Students Grants Database will require applicates to upload the following elements:

- Proposal that includes:
 - Personal statement (1-page maximum) outlining pertinent personal and professional interests and how fellowship participation will advance your career goals.
 - Proposal of work (4 pages maximum) that describes:

- Description of proposed summer experience work
- Goals for summer work
- Description of impact the project will have on conservation and stewardship
- Resume (3-page maximum) with contact info for 2 references (Yale or non-Yale).
- Yale Unofficial Transcripts.

Other information the Student Grant Database will require include:

- List academic adviser, contact at sponsor organization (if applicable), and/or names of any other advisers involved
- List of other summer funding sources and amounts and distinguishing which ones you have been awarded already and those that you have applied to or plan to apply to.
- Budget estimates that describe financial needs of your summer experience. For example, costs such as housing, research equipment, or travel (if permitted). Please be sure to include if your summer experience is paid and if housing is included by an organization.

For more information, please contact Michelle Downey (michelle.downey@yale.edu).