University of Montana COVID-19 Guidelines for Off-campus Field Research

The Office of Research and Creative Scholarship (ORCS) proposes the following guidelines, dynamically updated with changing conditions, for off-campus field studies conducted by University of Montana researchers.

- **NOTE:** At any point restrictions may require discontinuation of any and all field research projects. Before travel the PI should check current restrictions and guidelines as provided by the CDC, county/city, and the Governor’s office of Montana and any other state where the field work is conducted, and the external funding agency.

- **AS OF 3/30/20,** the Governor has declared that anyone entering the state of Montana (including residents) must undergo a 14-day quarantine. This affects all UM field projects with out-of-state travel.

Specific Considerations for Off-Campus Field Work

I. Prior to Travel:

A) All relevant trainings and permissions (e.g., IACUC, first aid, trapping permits, consent from landowners, Institutional Review Board, etc.) must be in place before initiating any travel to field sites.

B) Masks: The PI should provide appropriate masks to be used by the field crew. The type of mask appropriate to the project (from fitted N95 masks to simple cloth masks) will depend on local and national guidelines, and on the closeness of interaction and potential contagion within the field crew and between the field crew and others.

C) Before departure, each person going to the field should fill in the Medical Screening Form and should read this document. The form is also signed by the supervisor (PI). The signed Medical Screening Form must be kept on file by the PI.

D) Before departure, the field crew supervisor should review with the PI a written contingency plan in case someone becomes symptomatic for COVID-19. At a minimum, it should include the following:

- nearest clinic to the field location that will run COVID tests, with phone #s, hours of operation, etc.
- reliable means of communicating this to PI/ UM (InReach, etc.), with phone #s, etc.
- plan if the clinic refuses to run tests on a person that is not feeling well (this is fairly common right now). This would probably include isolation and a call to the PI
- ability to isolate the field crew with food and water, if they become symptomatic and cannot return to Missoula, for periods up to 14 days
- back-up plan to "evacuate" field crew in the event that they test positive or become debilitated and are unable to care for themselves
- basic first aid kit with things like Tylenol for fevers
- Communicate this document to each individual and make it easily accessible.

E) Field crews should follow local, regional and federal guidelines for quarantines (e.g. as noted above, a 14-day quarantine is currently required for anyone returning from out of state back to Montana). Quarantines are not currently required following in-state field work, but may be imposed if the PI believes necessary.

II. Vehicles:
To reduce contagion, no passengers allowed in vehicles. Only the driver. As conditions improve this may be relaxed to allow passengers in large vehicles and/or wearing masks.

III. Lodging During Field Research

*Every effort should be made to provide individual living arrangements for field researchers.*

A) The PI is responsible for providing all necessary disinfectant and sanitation supplies including gloves, masks, cleaners, etc.

B) Social spacing (>6 feet) must be enforced at all times during field research. This includes sleeping arrangements, cooking arrangements, and other activities. Other precautions include:

- **General Hygiene:** Wash hands often. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Cover all sneezes/coughs with a tissue or with your shirt sleeve. Wear protective gloves (latex, nitrile, or rubber) whenever using furniture, cookware, equipment, or vehicles shared among team members.

- **General disinfecting guidelines:** Use disinfectant wipes on surfaces used by multiple team members. As a substitute: a spray bottle diluted household bleach solution (4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water) or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. **Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.**

- **Sleeping:** everyone will have their own personal sleeping space.

- **Cooking:** When first entering the kitchen, wash hands with soap for >20 seconds. Sterilize cooking surfaces (while wearing rubber or plastic gloves) as part of kitchen cleanup. Wash dishes in hot soapy water and rinse in diluted bleach.

- **Bathrooms:** Take all personal items (towels, hand towels, shampoo/conditioner) with you and leave them in your personal space. Do not leave them in the bathroom.

IV Conducting Field Research:

A) To allow for epidemiological tracking in case a crew member becomes ill, crews will record the date, time, place of contact, name, and, where possible, contact information for any people they interact with at <10 feet separation (e.g. a landowner, agency staff member, etc.). A copy of this should be retained by the crew leader with another copy given to the PI.

B) Every day each crew member must self-assess their health and fill in the “**Employee 12-Hour Check-in Form,**” measuring their own temperature and recording any potential symptoms of COVID-19. This form must be turned in to the PI at the end of the hitch.

C) At all times maintain spatial separation, and enforce crew members wearing appropriate masks (see IB above).

C) Shared gear (e.g. binoculars, GPS units) must be disinfected before handing over to someone else.