

**Guidelines for Conducting Research at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest  
Under Reduced Operations Due to COVID-19**  
*revised February 17, 2021*

The following guidelines for conducting research at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest during 2021 are in place while USDA Forest Service facilities are closed to the public due to COVID-19. These guidelines will be updated as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

The guidelines have been developed, and will be updated, by the Hubbard Brook COVID-19 Task Force, consisting of representatives from the USDA Forest Service, the Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study, The Hubbard Brook LTER, the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (HBRF), and a member of the graduate student community. The guiding principles are to (1) insure the safety of staff, researchers, students and neighbors, as well as their families and communities; (2) abide by all local, state and federal COVID-19 orders and recommendations (the letter of the law and the *intent* of the laws); and (3) maintain, *as much as possible*, the continuity and integrity of critical research.

Critical research is defined as (1) ongoing long-term research and field experiments that will be significantly less valuable if temporarily discontinued, (2) ongoing long-term research and field experiments that will provide insights into the impact of a global pandemic on ecosystems and the services they provide to society; and (3) ongoing graduate student and post-doctoral research which, if interrupted, would create loss of critical data delaying graduation for a year or more.

If you wish to work at the site during 2021 and believe your research is critical, please fill out the [Critical Research Form here](#). Wait for confirmation of approval before you travel to Hubbard Brook. This information will be used to provide a safe environment for research based on the policies of the State of NH and the US Forest Service.

**What to know before going to Hubbard Brook:**

- Check with your home institution's guidelines for conducting field research.
- Check for updates to New Hampshire's Covid-19 Guidance <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>.
- Check for updates to New Hampshire's travel guidance <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/travel-guidance.pdf>
- Check for updates on road and gate access at Hubbard Brook, which follows policies set by the White Mountain National Forest.
- Fill out the [Critical Research form here](#) and wait for confirmation of approval before you travel to Hubbard Brook.
- Identify housing before you go, if needed. HBRF will be made available in accordance with state guidelines. Space is limited, and priority will be given to season-long rentals. Tenting is not currently permitted on HBRF property.

- Develop a personal safety plan before you leave (buddy system in the woods, safety phone checks on entering and leaving the forest, etc.).
- Plan to bring food and other personal items so as not to put strain on local businesses.

**What to know when you are at Hubbard Brook:**

- The Forest Service Headquarters Buildings are all closed to the public.
- There are currently no public rest room facilities available at Forest Service or HBRF sites.
- If you have an essential need to enter the USFS Headquarters buildings, please contact Ian Halm, and he can arrange for an escort, as per USDA policy guidance. [ian.halm@usda.gov](mailto:ian.halm@usda.gov) or 603 397 7966. No one is allowed in the buildings without an escort.
- Face masks are required if you do enter the building and on all Federal Lands.
- Do not expect Forest Service staff support when at the forest. Forest Service personnel are all teleworking, with the exception of Ian Halm, who is at the forest only on an as-needed basis.
- The main gate to the forest will be open when road conditions are suitable for wheeled vehicle access in the spring. The three research gates (Cant Dog, South Facing Watersheds, North Facing Watersheds) will be locked when the main gate is open. Combinations have been changed. You must have permission through the Essential Research Form to open these gates as strict sanitation procedures are required for touching locks, gates and research structures.
- Leave no trace. Pack out what you pack in!

**Required Protocols to Promote Social Distancing and Healthy Work Environments:**

- Stay home and do not work when sick.
- Avoid close contact, staying at least six feet away from others, and avoid working downwind of others.
- Maintain personal hygiene, including washing hands, using hand sanitizers/wipes, and avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces, and any surface that might be touched by others (e.g., gates, locks, research structures).
- Avoid sharing tools and equipment, when possible and safe. Wear gloves, if necessary.
- Do not share vehicles.
- Wear a face mask if working with others.