

The [Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation](https://smconservation.gmu.edu/nsf-reu) (SMSC) is seeking to fill 10 paid REU positions for Summer 2026 at our NSF-funded REU site "**Saving Endangered Species and Habitats: Next-generation Education, Research, and Training for Conservation Biologists.**" This 10-week REU, held from **June 1 to August 7, 2026**, will give undergraduate students an opportunity to conduct hands-on, full-time conservation research and gain career-ready skills to improve knowledge of and best management practices for threatened species with the goal of helping to alleviate the global extinction crisis. Students will work with mentors to develop an original inquiry-based research project within one of the following three focal areas: 1) assessing and monitoring species in the wild, 2) understanding species integrity and resilience to anthropogenic threats, and 3) improving captive management of threatened species.

As part of the application process, students will need to identify available projects they are interested in working on. A list of available projects and associated mentors can be found on our website at:

[smconservation.gmu.edu/nsf-reu](https://smconservation.gmu.edu/nsf-reu)

This is a fully funded, 10-week paid research experience. Candidates must be available and in residence for the entire 10-week period. All REU participants will receive a \$7,000 stipend, up to \$500 in travel support to/from the REU site, plus room and board at the residence and dining facilities of the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation (SMSC), located at the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute (NZCBI) in Front Royal, Virginia.

### **Who should apply?**

Undergraduate students who are very excited about a career in conservation, or interested in related disciplines, such as biology, ecology, genetics, physiology, animal behavior, endocrinology, anthropology, and environmental sciences, are encouraged to apply.

### **NSF-REU eligibility:**

To be eligible for this REU program, you must be **(1) at least 18 years old, (2) enrolled in an undergraduate degree program (part-time or full-time) leading to a bachelor's or associate degree, (3) a US citizen, US national, or permanent resident.**

### **When is the deadline to apply?**

The deadline to apply is **January 30, 2026.**

**Start preparing your application materials early!** This is a competitive program and only 10 students will be selected. Through the online application system (NSF-ETAP), students will need to submit a resume, unofficial transcripts for all college coursework, one letter of recommendation, and a one-page (single-spaced) personal essay, that describes your academic

and professional interests related to the discipline of conservation and what motivated you to pursue them, as well as your future goals and ambitions and how this REU experience would help you achieve those goals.

**Apply by following this link to the NSF application portal: <https://etap.nsf.gov/>.**

Create an account and enter *SMSC* in the search bar, or go directly to our program page: <https://etap.nsf.gov/award/7921/opportunity/11407>.

If you have specific questions, please contact the REU Faculty Program Director, Dr. Anneke DeLuycker at [adeluyck@gmu.edu](mailto:adeluyck@gmu.edu)