

## Hannam Lab Guidelines for Fieldwork Safety

Fieldwork activities at places on campus or off campus can expose students to significant risks to their health, safety or well-being, at locations and times outside the direct supervision of Dr. Hannam or SUNY Geneseo.

The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that before undertaking fieldwork:

- a) everyone is aware of their responsibilities;
- b) a risk assessment is carried out to identify potential hazards associated with fieldwork and to establish appropriate controls to eliminate or minimize such hazards; and
- c) all participants have an informed understanding of the associated risks and provide their consent to the means for dealing with such risks.

*All students in the Hannam Lab agree that all field work will be conducted in pairs.* One person in the pair or research group will be the “Team Leader” and will have the unique responsibilities listed below, all people in the pair or research group (including the Team Leader) will adhere to the “Team Member Responsibilities” listed below.

Only lab members, and approved volunteers authorized by Dr. Hannam may assist with fieldwork. **Friends, pets and children are prohibited from accompanying field teams. Please contact Dr. Hannam if you are requesting an exemption from this rule.**

### **Team Leader Responsibilities:**

- A) The Team Leader will keep a charged cellphone with them at all times when in the field.
- B) The Team Leader will maintain contact with Dr. Hannam or another Biology Department contact designated by Dr. Hannam. This involves, at a minimum a text message to Dr. Hannam (585)447-1419 when the pair/group departs for the field (with names of group members and the fieldsite), and a text message to Dr. Hannam when the pair/group returns to campus/the lab confirming that all individuals returned safely. If the pair/group is spending more than 3 hours in the field, the Team Leader will use a text message to confirm the safety of group members every 3 hours.
- C) In the case of any accident, illness or emergency in the field, the Team Leader will FIRST call 911, and as soon as possible, inform Dr. Hannam and/or the Biology Department contact of all accidents, illnesses or emergencies which occur in the field;

### **Team Member Responsibilities:**

Each member of the fieldwork pair/group is responsible for:

- A) acknowledging the risks of the particular field project;
- B) using the appropriate protective equipment provided and following the procedures established by the PI;
- C) working safely and in a manner to prevent harm to themselves or to others;
- D) reporting any identified hazards to the Team Leader or PI; and
- F) reporting all accidents, illness or emergencies to the Team Leader.

Before starting fieldwork, Team Members are should learn about potentially hazardous plants, animals, terrain and weather conditions in the areas where fieldwork is being conducted. This means an ability to identify plants like poison ivy, preparing allergy treatments such as an epi-pen if a member of the team has an allergy to hymenoptera. Spending time in the field in a place like Letchworth State Park (especially off-trail locations) may require additional training for safety for black bear encounters or for identifying timber rattle snakes.

Before departing for the field, Team Members must ensure the appropriate safety equipment, provisions and research equipment are ready, and check everything before you leave; the safety equipment and provisions may include:

- First aid kit and first aid manual

- Medications taken on a regular basis
- Allergy treatments as needed
- Sunscreen and hat
- Water and Field Snacks
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses/goggles, gloves, hard hat, work boots, etc.)
- Flashlight
- permits for any sample collection from respective agencies (i.e. DLNR, NFWS, etc.)
- permissions for entering private property.
- Use common sense (erring on the side of caution) in preparing your safety equipment and research equipment.

### **Local Environmental Hazards**

Fieldwork exposures can be hazardous. Some examples include:

Poisonous Plants - plants like "poison ivy" may contain a potent allergen that can cause a reaction after exposure. The allergen may spread by: contact with the plant itself, touching other objects which have touched a plant (tools, for example); touching other areas of the body after touching the plant.

To prevent exposure, learn to recognize and avoid the plant and wear clothing such as long pants and long-sleeved shirts. If you come in contact with these plants, wash clothes and skin with soap and water as soon as possible.

Exposure to the Elements - Sunburn is a common and easily preventable hazard. Chronic exposure to the sun can increase one's risk of skin cancer. People differ in their susceptibility to sun due to their skin pigmentation. Certain drugs, such as sulfonamide, oral antibiotics, certain diuretics, most tetracycline, barbiturates, and biotionol (ingredient in soaps and many first aid creams) can also increase susceptibility to the sun. To prevent sunburn, cover exposed skin and liberally apply sunblock creams. Wearing a long-sleeved shirt and hat will also provide protection from the sun.

Exposure to Arthropod Pests – Arthropods like ticks, mosquitos and deer flies can “bite” and cause a painful, itchy welt that can persist for a week or more, and/or serve as a vector for diseases such as Lyme Disease, West Nile Virus, and other emerging infections. These diseases can have long-lasting and debilitating effects, so behaving in ways to minimize your exposure to these pests is highly advisable, and may include: using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and long pants in the field, and doing a post-fieldwork “tick check”. If you have an allergy to hymenoptera, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have an epi-pen with you at all times when you are in the field and you know how to use it.

Before you Leave for Fieldwork:

- 1 - Make sure your pair/group has designated a Team Leader who has a fully charged cell phone with them.
- 2 - Check and double-check that your pair/group has all necessary safety equipment and field equipment, and that equipment has been checked to be in good operating conditions with extra fully charged batteries and necessary memory cards.
- 3 - The Team Leader sends a text to Dr. Hannam or the designated Biology Department contact with names of team members, time of departure, estimated time of return/next check-in, and field site destination.

During the Work Day:

- 1 - Fieldworkers should check in with Dr. Hannam regularly (as outlined in Team Leader instructions above), and should notify her of any changes in schedule or points of contact.
- 2 - After each day's work, the fieldworkers should notify Dr. Hannam or the Department of Biology contact when they return.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Please detach and return to Dr. Hannam (to be kept for her file):

I have read and fully understand the standard operating procedures for working in the field outlined in, “Hannam Lab Guidelines for Fieldwork Safety”. I agree to comply with these procedures at all times. Furthermore, I understand that if I endanger my own or a colleague's safety I may be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination of any further opportunities for research with Dr. Hannam or other faculty in the Biology Department.

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Name (printed)

email

cell phone#

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Signature

Date

Portions of this Fieldwork Safety Guide were adapted from the following sources:  
University of Hawaii at Manoa Fieldwork Safety Guide

Safety Protocol for Field Research Michigan Technological University School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science 2014