



**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**

Rangeland Research Institute

RANGELAND RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Competitive Research Grant Program (2024)

Terms of Reference

The Rangeland Research Institute is inviting a limited number of proposals in 2024 to conduct innovative research addressing questions related to the sustainable management of rangelands at the [Mattheis Research Ranch](#) in southeastern Alberta. The vision of the RRI is to conduct leading edge research on a wide variety of issues pertinent to rangeland ecology and management, including, but not limited to: grassland ecology; wildlife conservation; land reclamation; forage production; grazing systems and cow-calf management; and the provisioning of ecological services (e.g. carbon sequestration, storage and protection of water quantity and quality). Proposals on production, environmental, and socio-economic aspects of rangeland management are welcomed. Preference will be given to projects that involve one or more of the above themes, support the work of graduate students (M.Sc. or Ph.D.), and leverage funding from other sources.

The Mattheis Ranch was generously donated to the University of Alberta in the fall of 2010 by alumni [Edwin and Ruth Mattheis](#). The ranch provides the physical infrastructure necessary to explore a wide variety of questions related to land use (such as grazing, water use, wildlife habitat management, and oil and gas extraction), as well as the management records and personally-held knowledge to facilitate human dimensions research. The 5,000 hectare ranch contains a diverse mix of vegetation, including loamy mixedgrass and sand grass dominated prairie, tame forages, coulee river breaks, and a host of riparian environments (including river floodplains, natural and overflow wetlands, and created wetlands maintained by Ducks Unlimited). The Mattheis Ranch also offers a functional field lab with internet communications and facilities for accommodating research field staff.

ELIGIBILITY, DEADLINES AND FUND ADMINISTRATION

Funding

The RRI will provide up to a maximum of \$50,000 in funding (\$30K in year 1 and \$20K year 2) per approved project, to be conducted between May 1, 2024 and April 30, 2026.

Eligibility

All continuing faculty members at the University of Alberta are eligible to apply. Projects may include collaborators from other institutions or agencies.

Deadlines

Applications must be received by 4:30 PM, Wednesday, February 14, 2024 and must include the required signatures (Principal Investigator, Department, and Faculty).

How to Apply

Submit one original and one electronic copy of the RRI Competitive Grants Application to:

Dr. Edward Bork, Director, Rangeland Research Institute
c/ o Lisa Raatz, RRI Program Coordinator
410 Agriculture/ Forestry Center
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2P5
E-mail: rri@ualberta.ca

Adjudication

Applications will be evaluated by a review committee, comprising the Director of the RRI, the Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences, and at least two additional arms-length members appointed by the Director of the RRI.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Scientific merit and innovation of the proposed research, including linkages to previous work conducted at the Mattheis Research Ranch, if applicable
- Justification of the proposed budget
- Training of graduate students (preferred) or other highly-qualified personnel
- Excellence of the applicant(s)
- Demonstrated scientific and extension publication relative to the topic area, including previous work conducted at Mattheis Research Ranch, if applicable
- Alignment of the research with the institute's vision and Strategic Plan ([RRI Strategic Plan](#))
- Effective leveraging of funds from other sources

NB: Appropriate ethics clearance must be received for research involving animal or human subjects before any grant awarded will be released.

BUDGET

The applicant must specify and justify all costs associated with the proposed project. For graduate student stipends and travel costs, please follow University of Alberta guidelines. The grant will not cover the cost of major equipment purchases (over \$2,000). Minor equipment may be requested in the budget. Grant awards are provided for the specific expenditures identified in an applicant's proposal and may not be used for other purposes. In the case of a substantial change in the expenditure plans, a written request explaining the need for the change must be submitted by the grant holder to the Director of the Rangeland Research Institute.

REPORTING

Successful applicants must submit a final research report to the Director of the Rangeland Research Institute within four months of the end date of the award (e.g. by August 31, 2026). For projects that span two years, an abbreviated report must also be submitted at the end of the first year of funding (e.g. April 30, 2025). Templates for interim and final reports will be provided by the RRI.

Following a project's completion, researchers will be asked to provide a Final Report which will include:

- A lay language summary of the rationale for and results of the study;
- Relevant background, literature, study problem and research objectives;
- Research methodology;
- Key research findings;
- Implications for researchers and practitioners;
- Communication and extension of results
 - listing and electronic copies of all extension materials (posters, presentations, technical/ popular press and scientific papers) arising from the research, including a list of future anticipated publications;
- Data and metadata associated with the project (RRI data repository); and
- A summary of expenses.

NB: Researchers supported by the Rangeland Research Institute are expected to share the data associated with their project(s) with the RRI, for the purpose of cataloguing all projects conducted at the Mattheis and Kinsella Ranches (long-term data associated with these Research Ranches), and identifying linkages between datasets that may emerge over time. Data will not be analyzed or published without the consent of the Primary Investigator who oversaw its collection.

- **All investigators overseeing research at the Mattheis or Kinsella Ranch must enter into a data-sharing agreement with the Rangeland Research Institute.** Additionally, both the ranch and the institute must be explicitly acknowledged in any publications or products derived from data that is collected from this property. Please contact the Lisa Raatz, Program Coordinator, for further details.
- **Suggested acknowledgement for housing, land use:**
 - Mattheis Ranch
We gratefully acknowledge the Rangeland Research Institute for providing funding, Mattheis Research Ranch for in-kind support and Edwin and Ruth Mattheis for their generous land donation to the University of Alberta.
 - Kinsella Ranch
We gratefully acknowledge the Rangeland Research Institute for providing funding and the Roy Berg Kinsella Research Ranch for in-kind support.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For clarification regarding eligibility or the application process, please contact:

Lisa Raatz
Program Coordinator
Rangeland Research Institute
Tel: 780-492-7531 | Email: raatz@ualberta.ca