



# Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation

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## Mbarara University of Science and Technology

### Scholarships available for research with ITFC

Deadline June 10<sup>th</sup> 2010

ITFC encourages post graduate students to develop research projects around certain topics. ITFC has funding in 2010-2011 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as well as from USAID through the WCS led initiative 'WILD West'. All grants are considered on a competitive basis

In every case, we encourage a focus on the implications for conservation and protected area management in the Albertine Rift (Bwindi, Mgahinga, Rwenzori, Semuliki, Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls National Parks, and Echuya and other Forest Reserves). All studies should attempt to develop practical recommendations for action where these seem possible. All studies should aim to achieve an adequate standard for one or more peer-reviewed journal article.

**Note:** We welcome proposals and suggestions for additional studies but are unlikely to be able to offer assistance with funds. Those with their own funding may submit proposals for our consideration at any time.

### ***Under the WILD West project, we will fund projects on the following:***

1. The role of (a) **baboons** and (b) **rodents** as potential carriers of micro organisms, including pathogens, across the park boundary. (We expect two separate projects on this.)
2. A baseline study (status assessment) of **amphibian populations** of conservation significance in and around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. This study should include an assessment of the presence of *Chytrid* and *Saprolegnia* fungi along with other threats and can provide links to expert guidance.

***The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports Masters' research at ITFC around the following themes:***

***HUMAN POPULATION***

1. **Human population trends and reliance on natural resources** for livelihoods around the protected area(s). Ideally this would be related to location and proximity to the protected areas. Suggested data for study include emigration-immigration (who, where, when and why); historical movements of people in and out of the areas around the park; census data; aerial photographs; interviews.
2. The above may also be considered in the light of **land values and markets**: variation with proximity to the park and other factors, livelihoods and income.
3. **Fuel demand**. Current trends and future possibilities (wood, charcoal etc).

***BIOMASS and CARBON***

4. The **carbon content** in different vegetation types and locations. We would welcome basic inventories of **biomass** within protected areas and other sites. This could also be an assessment or improvement of various methods. These approaches are valuable for establishing a basis for buying and selling carbon.
5. Mapping of **carbon values (and potential loss)** across specific landscapes: forests, farms, swamps, drained swamps, high altitude peat lands.

***ALTITUDINAL ZONATION as a proxy for CLIMATE CHANGE***

6. Determining factors of **vegetation distribution** in Bwindi or Rwenzori.
7. Intensive survey of **high altitude specialist vegetation species** in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Echuya Forest Reserve – identification of vulnerable species.
8. The distribution of **plant characteristics** with altitude. E.g. can leaf form be used to predict vegetation-climate relationships in Bwindi (or elsewhere)?

## **VEGETATION ECOLOGY**

9. Monitoring **habitat recovery** (natural and assisted) in formerly encroached areas on the lower slopes of Mgahinga Gorilla National Park. This project would be largely based on a re-assessment of some plots established over a decade ago. Specific funds may become available to support this (depending on success of ongoing proposals)
10. There is also an opportunity to help re-measure **seven one-ha forest plots in Rabongo Forest** (in Murchison Falls National Park). This would be a good basis for assessing vegetation change over 18 years in this forest. ITFC would help supervise this project.
11. What are the long term implications of **invasive exotic plant species** in Semuliki National Park and what control measures are warranted?
12. An investigation of the distribution and impact of **parasitic plants** in the forest canopy of Bwindi.
13. Clarifying the ecological reasons why many areas of Bwindi are dominated by herbaceous vegetation. What determines the **tree-herb balance**?

## **ENTOMOLOGY**

14. The distribution of **mosquito species** and/or **black-flies** in the region. Where are the breeding sites and how are these influenced by site conditions and anthropogenic factors?
15. Ecological characterization of **Bwindi's endemic butterflies and their food plants** (distributions and implications).
16. **Plants and their pollinators** – which plants depend on which animals? Suggestions would include to examine the pollinator assemblages in the forests and the selected plant species that depend on them (this could focus on valued resource species and other plants such as gorilla food plants).
17. An investigation of **moths** and other **nocturnal insects** in BINP: an investigation of location, weather and seasonal influences.

Please contact us on [applications@itfc.org](mailto:applications@itfc.org)

You find guidelines for application on our website [www.itfc.org](http://www.itfc.org)