Tips for applying to the RMBL Research Program

1) **Don't count yourself out before you apply!!** Previous research experience in field biology is not required, in fact, we are looking for a range of students--- some who have limited or no research opportunities on their home campus but are excited to try, and others who have a start in research but want to become more independent. We even accept students who have already earned a degree but are looking for an intensive field research experience. In your application, be sure to stress why RMBL would be a great opportunity for you to try something that might be unavailable to you (for example, there are no research opportunities on your campus, you've missed out on research experiences, you have never visited or studied a mountain ecosystem) or would extend your research skills (you want to gain experience working on a specific scientific question, project, technique, model, or system).

   *Note: The RMBL program differs from some other undergraduate research programs in that we have 40 student participants who have different sources of financial support. 10 students receive REU awards, 20-25 receive full or partial RMBL scholarships, and 5-10 find financial support from other sources (internships or college funds, personal funds). We receive about 250 applications for the 40 spots. Priority for the 10 REU awards will be students who attend community college, are first-generation college students, or have high financial need. RMBL scholarships are awarded primarily to students with strong applications and who have high financial need.

2) **Learn about the RMBL program**, the types of research projects that students conduct, and the education program expectations. Browse the **Student** tab on the RMBL website (www.rmbl.org).
   a) Why? You want to submit a focused application that demonstrates how you expect to thrive in and contribute to the program at RMBL.
   b) In your application, it is helpful if you describe projects that you are interested in, and why (do you like bees? Plant ecology? Animal behavior? GIS models? Evolution? Soil microbes? Streams?)

3) **Describe your unique traits and abilities that will contribute to your success.** Provide concise answers to the personal questions that ask about your goals, skills, and experiences, including how you meet new situations and challenges. You do not have to draw only from biology experiences! You should provide examples that demonstrate motivation, scientific curiosity, ethical practices, respect for others, flexibility, and perseverance.
   a) Why? Successful students are expected to commit to a full-time effort, often as part of a diverse team, during the 10-week experience to generate insights into a research question. Strong academics are critical, but there are many other attitudes and skills that you can bring to a project.
   b) In your application, describe any positive experiences in learning, teaching, & leading- favorite projects, lab experiments, field trips, volunteer experiences, jobs, etc. Describe the type of work environment or type of project that keeps you going even when the going gets tough.

4) **Have a conversation with the people who are writing you a letter of recommendation.**
   a) Why? The RMBL letter of recommendation form asks them about how ready you are for field biology research and your motivation to attend RMBL- make sure that they can answer these questions!
   b) It is a good idea to share your application materials with the people writing your letters.

5) **Read and follow the directions on the application.** Be sure to check the accuracy of your contact information, proof your responses, complete all the requested sections, complete the Financial Aid section if you want to be considered for support, notify your references, and upload your transcript, If you have questions, contact Dr. Rosemary Smith via email- RSmith@rmbl.org. I am happy to help you with the application process.