STUDENT EXPECTATIONS
RMBL EDUCATION PROGRAM 2026

Goal

The primary goal of this program is to help students become scientists through a mentored research experience and a cohort-based professional development program. Students will be given opportunities to learn what it means to do science and be a scientist. We expect students to be engaged, self-motivated, honest, and respectful of all program participants. The setting at a field station provides a full-time science immersion experience in the Rocky Mountains ecosystem; students should make the most of this opportunity by participating fully in program and community activities.

For 2026, students will participate in-person at RMBL onsite in Gothic, Colorado, following the RMBL health and safety protocols. If required by the protocols some of the program activities may be conducted with limited group sizes (for example, field trips in vans, seminars, networking, panels, workshops, and presentations). Field research and indoor laboratory activities will be in-person as long as they follow RMBL's health and safety protocols. Each lab group (Scientist Mentor + graduate students, research assistants, and students) has specific Health and Safety protocols in place. Students must follow the protocols for RMBL and their specific lab group. Students who need assistance with technology (loaner laptop, printing, Wi-Fi help, etc.) should contact the Program Coordinator.

Program Schedule Overview

*Program Schedule. (Draft- March 2026 version- **Some dates subject to updates and change!!*

The RMBL Education Program website provides updated, current information

Timeline (June 9-Aug 14, 2026)

June 9	Arrive RMBL, settle into cabin, meals at Dining Hall. Tours available. Meet other students, instructors, RMBL staff and your mentor.
June 10	All day: Program Orientation activities: AM facility tours, history tours, science tours, and general information for all students. Confirm technology, internet/platform/browser access, established preferred mentor and research group communications. Flora and fauna observations! Start scavenger hunt. PM Program Orientation: Learn about RMBL, variety of field research projects, Zen Ecology. Evening: ALL RMBL Community Orientation!
June 11	All day: Program Orientation activities: AM: Project Experimental Design, Pitches. 1-2:45 PM: Project Pitches! 3-5:15 PM RMBL Service Projects Evening: RMBL Scientific Seminar Sampler
June 12	Program Orientation activities: 8-12 AM: Getting started with research: mentors, project proposal, maps & data

	1-5 PM: Mentor-Mentee Research ½ Day. All Students and Scientist mentors meet, complete mentor compact, discuss field risks, lab and field safety protocols, animal or chemical training, initiate discussions of potential research projects, visit field sites.
Mon June 15	First day of Wildlife and Ecosystems Short Courses. If you're enrolled, you will meet in the Barclay classrooms. Plan for a full day. Courses meet ~2x/week; June 15-July 10. First day of Full time Independent Research. Students meet and work with their Mentors. Plan for a full day!
June 15-30	Proposal development, learn research skills and sites, initiate research activities.
June 26/29	Oral proposal presentations/brief feedback sessions for early Full-time IR students
June 29/30	Oral proposal presentations/brief feedback sessions for Short-Course+IR students
July 1	Written proposal/RMBL research application due for Full-time IR students
July 2/3	Written proposal/RMBL research application due for Short course+IR students
July 7/8	Peer Proposal review due.
July 30	Draft of Research Paper "Introduction and Methods" "Literature Cited"
August 3	Symposium I research presentations (only for early start students)
August 5/7	Drafts of final research paper project. Metadata forms due.
August 6&7	Symposium II research presentations
Aug. 11-13	Submit final written research paper, with maps and metadata, and approved by mentor. *Complete in-person check-out no later than 24 hours before you depart!*
Aug. 13	Final Day for in-person check-out (RMBL Office and Education Program)
Aug. 14	Travel Day- all students depart RMBL.

Weekly activities

Short courses meet the equivalent of 2 days per week until July 10.
Workshops and Discussions for Professional Development- Monday and Wednesday.
Mentor and lab group meetings.
Research activities (reading, proposal development, data collection & analysis, writing)

Summer expectations

- We expect you to conduct an independent research project, supervised by a scientist.
- You will participate in a Program Orientation and education program activities.
- You will discuss and present your proposed research project, both orally and in written form, as well as complete a Peer Review.
- You will attend Research Design, Statistics, and Scientific Communication Workshops.
- You will present your results at the end of the summer.
- You will write a paper in the scientific format describing your results.
- You will attend GPS and GIS workshops, produce a map of project field sites using GIS, and archive your datasets (metadata).
- You should plan to participate in the program an average of 40 hours/week, understanding that field research is NOT a M-F, 9-5 job and may require early, late, or weekend hours. You should make a schedule for your short-course activities (if you are taking a short course it will meet 2 days/week, June 15-Jul 10), the workshops & panels, reading scientific papers, developing the research question

and proposal, discussions with your mentor and research group, and field work, data acquisition, analysis, interpretations, and presentation.

- You should participate fully in the required components of the educational program. The student handbook provides a detailed list of required components. Participation will be evaluated mid-way through the summer and students not in compliance will work with the coordinator and their mentor to come up with a plan for meeting expectations, including regular check-ins.
- Students who miss a deadline must contact the coordinators (Rosemary Smith and Elsa Godtfredsen) within 24 hours with a written plan. Students who miss deadlines without communicating with the coordinators may have their stipend reduced, scholarship revoked, or grades/credits withheld.
- Students receiving RMBL scholarships or REU awards are required to maintain the equivalent of a 'B' average to keep their scholarships. Performance will be reviewed mid-summer.
- Health and Safety is a priority. Prevention and avoidance of unsafe conditions is expected from everyone at all times. Any activities that you participate in that are deemed to be unsafe may lead to dismissal from the project.
- Smoking/Alcohol/Restricted Drugs. It is the student's responsibility to comply with the Smoking/Alcohol/Restricted Drug policies. Violations will result in dismissal.
- Students should READ the RMBL Community Handbook for specific policies, behaviors, and information about the RMBL community and rules/expectations for all residents.
- Students are responsible for creating an equitable and welcoming work environment. Sexual harassment, discriminatory speech or actions will not be tolerated.
- Students are required to fill out and submit an online evaluation of the education program before leaving. Some students may be selected to participate in a focus group to provide feedback on the program to outside evaluators.
- Students receiving REU awards are required to submit demographic information to the National Science Foundation, which funds the awards.
- Students will receive a transcript when the Educational Program Final Checklist is completed. Note that transcripts come from the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL). RMBL is not an accredited institution. Check with your home institution to see if they will accept academic credit from RMBL for this program.

<u>Things you should know</u>

- The RMBL is a research facility but is also a community. Over 160 people live and work in or near Gothic during the summer. You will have the opportunity to socialize, explore outdoor pursuits, and contribute to this amazing RMBL community.
- You will learn how to work collaboratively as part of a scientific team, while at the same time being self-motivated to work independently on a project. While you will receive support from your mentor and the coordinator, it is largely up to you to make your project a success.
- We expect your mentor to meet with you every week throughout the summer. The schedule will be determined within each research group. Communication is key to success.
- Funds for research supplies will be provided to students/mentors for use within the research team. Research supplies can be broadly applied- it includes traditional lab equipment and materials as well as research-related gear (e.g. boots, rain gear, waders, packs) and sample processing fees. Questions about research supply funds should be directed to Dr. Jennie Reithel, Science Director.
- Students should make their own travel arrangements to/from RMBL. You should contact RMBL and your mentor about the dates you plan to be at the lab *before* making travel arrangements.

- Student requests for housing and meals will be accommodated to the extent possible.
- If you are having any problems or have concerns about your progress in the program, feel free to discuss them with your mentor or the Program Coordinators (Dr. Rosemary Smith and Elsa Godtfredsen), whoever is most appropriate. See 'Who to go to' below.
- Students may request feedback or guidance from Rosemary, Elsa, or Jennie Reithel at any time. Staff can give scientific feedback as well as guidance on time management skills, communication skills, and other soft skills.
- Students will not receive their transcript from RMBL until the Educational Program Final Checklist is completed.
- Students with REU awards will not receive their final paycheck until the Educational Program Final Checklist is completed.

Who to Go To:
All of the people below can also direct students to the appropriate RMBL staff member or to solve problems or resolve issues. For emergencies, call 911 from the RMBL office phone.

- Katie Harper and RMBL office staff (admin@rmbl.org) –Katie can assist with student logistics such as travel, housing, and meals, and scholarships/stipends. katie@rmbl.og.
- Dr. Rosemary Smith (rsmith@rmbl.org) and the Program Coordinator, Elsa Godtfredsen can assist with questions about mentor-student research groups, the education program schedule and requirements, as well as due dates. They are also available for statistics, writing, and other research-related help.
- Dr. Jennie Reithel is the Science Director (sd@rmbl.org). Jennie is onsite at RMBL June-August. She coordinates all RMBL research projects, including research supplies funds, research project impacts, choosing new research sites, mapping, permits, and research equipment use.
- Dr. Kaysee Arrowsmith teaches the Rocky Mountain Ecosystems course and is also a Mentor.
- Dr. Savannah Troy teaches the Rocky Mountain Wildlife course and is also a Mentor.

I have read and understood the expectations for students and agree to comply with them.

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Name Date