Supplemental Guidance for the Return to Research for Field Research

In order to resume field research, all safety processes set forth by the University must be strictly followed. If a protocol requires modifications to address the safety procedures related to COVID-19 (i.e. adjustment in location, addition or removal of a procedure), an amendment must be submitted and be approved by the IACUC before the research can commence.

Below please find supplemental guidelines to be followed to promote a safe environment when conducting field research. Approval through the Return to Research process and strict adherence to all terms delineated in the Return to Research application form and guidance are to be followed. Documents required by these supplemental guidelines are to be included in the Return to Research application form as appendices.

- All relevant trainings and permissions (e.g., IACUC, first aid, trapping permits, consent from landowners, etc.) must be in place before initiating any travel to field sites.

- All researchers must screen for fever by thermometer (100 degrees or more) and symptoms of COVID-19 before entering or coming to campus. PIs should develop a method to document this step. Researchers with fever or any of the symptoms described above shall remain at home, report their illness to their PI, and contact their primary care provider.

- The PI is to provide the necessary and appropriate safety equipment and PPE to all research team members including but not limited to: disinfectant and sanitation supplies, gloves, face coverings, etc. If researchers are outside and maintain a distance of at least 6’ from each other, there is no need to wear face coverings.

- The PI is to prepare and provide a written Safety Plan with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including contingency plans in the event a research team member becomes symptomatic for COVID-19 in the field. This plan is to be communicated to each individual. The research team should follow local, regional and federal guidelines for isolation or quarantine should the need arise. The Safety Plan with SOPs is to include general hygiene, general disinfecting (i.e. shared equipment/gear use, vehicle steering wheel, handles, etc), proper use of PPE, lodging and shared space protocols (i.e. use of kitchens, bathrooms), food and supplies procurement protocols, emergency actions, training, social distancing, etc.

- The PI is to prepare a communications plan should any issues or emergencies arise. The plan is to include the nearest health clinic to the field location with phone numbers, hours of operation, etc. In addition, contact information of the research team members and their emergency contacts, and key University contacts (i.e. EH&S, OH&S, IACUC Chair, AV) are to be included in the plan. This plan is to be distributed to all research team members.

- All research team members are to have ample water/liquids and food for themselves in clearly labelled bottles and containers. No sharing of drinks or food is allowed.

- The PI is to maintain a daily log of project activities and personnel check in and check out schedule.
- Vehicles to be used to and from the field site, as well as those used on site can contain only one person per vehicle.

- If traveling long distances, stops should only be made for fuel and restrooms. Face coverings are to be worn when outside of the vehicle and hands are to be sanitized after these activities.

- Individuals must maintain social distancing of 6 feet separation to the maximum extent possible during research activities. If in an enclosed space (i.e. field indoor lab sites, lodging) only 1 person for every 200 sq. ft. is to be maintained. If safety protocols require closer contact, this must be articulated in the Return to Research application, along with protocols to mitigate risk of infection.