**Overview**

Mentorships can be an important and influential relationship for both the mentor and mentee. They facilitate an intergenerational exchange of knowledge, connect people from different sectors in the environmental field, and create larger and stronger networks.

ELB’s mentorship program aims to connect a range of established professionals in the field of biodiversity in Ontario with ELB members, who may be looking to gain a specific set of skills and/or career advice. We hope that by facilitating these relationships, we empower younger generations to develop the skills they need and to maximize their potential to become leaders for biodiversity.

Mentorships may take various forms: in-person meetings, via correspondence (e.g., over email, telephone), social media, attending lectures, job shadowing, etc. It’s up to the two parties to decide how they want this relationship to unfold.

We facilitate mentoring relationships based on what mentees are looking for and what mentors are willing to offer. Potential mentees can browse our list of mentors, choose up to three candidate mentors that they think best suit them, and submit an application. Mentors will be forwarded these applications. They can decide whether they are able and willing to take on the mentee.

Both mentors and mentees will be asked for feedback so that we can continue to improve this program. Please note that this is a pilot year for ELB’s mentorship program and we hope to grow it in years to come. Any suggestions and constructive criticisms are welcome.

**As a mentor**

Being a mentor gives you a chance to build on your leadership skills and can provide the satisfaction of helping someone achieve their professional goals. It’s way to give back to your field and an opportunity to strengthen your network. It also provides insight and perspective from people entering your field today. The application to become a mentor can be found [here](ELB_Mentorship_Application%20-%20Mentor.docx)

Mentees are asked to fill out an application that indicates three mentors they would like to be paired with and why, as well as a one page cover letter describing themselves, what they hope to gain and potential career goals. The application will be sent to the mentors who are listed and mentors have an opportunity to comment, approve or reject the applicant. The choice is at your discretion and any constructive feedback you can provide will be passed along to the applicant.

At a minimum, we expect that mentors will:

* Initiate correspondence with the mentee (e.g., send an introductory email to the mentee) and respond fully
* Give career advice
* Assist with resumes, curriculum vitae, cover letters
* Provide a reference or recommendation, where mentors deem appropriate
* Share relevant opportunities that come up with mentees, where mentors deem appropriate. This can include job opportunities, training courses, or networking opportunities)

Any additional support, including financial costs incurred, is given at the discretion of the mentor. ELB and its members are not legally or financially responsible for any additional support mentors might provide.

Mentoring is expected to continue for at least six months, providing the mentee keeps up correspondence. We do encourage mentors to support mentees for as long as possible to follow and influence their careers.

All information exchanged between mentors and mentees is confidential. ELB does not give our members permission to give personal information (including contact information) to third parties without the mentor’s explicit permission. If you receive information that a mentee is being harassed in anyway or have any concern regarding ELB’s network, it is your responsibility to report that information to us to deal with as quickly as possible.

We cannot guarantee the demand for mentors at any one time. You have the right to refuse mentee applications at any point. You have the right to leave ELB’s mentorship program at any time. Please give written notice to the board.

**As a mentee**

Mentorships can help you make decisions about your career path and sharpen your focus. You may learn a specific set of skills and knowledge and can gain invaluable career advice. These relationships can provide insight and perspective into the experiences of well-established professionals in your field of interest.

Mentees are asked to fill out an [application](ELB_Mentorship_Application%20-%20Mentee.docx) indicating your top three choices for a mentor and why, as well as a one page cover letter describing yourself, what you hope to gain, and your potential career goals. Applications are distributed to the potential mentors for review and it is at their discretion to take you on as a mentee. Many factors may be considered and where possible we will pass on constructive feedback. Please remember that mentors are volunteering their time and it is important to respect that.

Expectations of a mentee:

* Be professional – Strike a balance between being formal, but not too formal. It can be as simple as proof reading your email correspondence, being on time and showing gratitude to demonstrate that you take the relationship seriously.
* Ask questions and continue the correspondence – Make sure your questions are clear and take initiative. If you want to know about opportunities, additional contacts, specifics about product (e.g., survey equipment, photography equipment, field equipment, training courses, etc), or if want a reference from them just ask.
* Be patient – Your mentor may have a busy schedule or spend a lot of time away from the computer and may not respond right away.
* Be committed – They have committed time to you and you should respect that and commit time to them as well.

Tips to foster a positive mentorship

* Make yourself stand out – it’s a competitive world and finding ways to make yourself stand out is important in gaining an edge in your field of choice.
* Ask for help with your resume – This is a simple and great starting point. It gives your mentor a chance to get to know you and learn about your experiences.
* Have an idea of what you are looking for in a mentor (e.g., species id skills, photography, resume/interview skills) – you may very well gain more than a specific skill or knowledge from your mentor, but having an idea of what you want (even if it might change later on) is a great starting point and gives you common ground with a mentor.

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