

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Fall 2020

The UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on funded sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the mentorship of a partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region.

Note: Projects must be completed remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) to learn [how the program works](#) and to [apply](#).
- Be sure to review the [application guide](#) to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at midnight on Sunday September 20, 2020.

Project: Evaluating current nature-based solutions projects in British Columbia through a community consultation lens

Sustainability Goal or Operations Plan objective

Climate Action: Addressing the gap in the social science literature for an evaluation of nature-based solutions implementation and effectiveness at the local community level in British Columbia. This will help inform future nature-based solutions projects provincially and nationally and is scalable to projects internationally.

Project description

Overview:

Youth4Nature is an entirely youth-led non-profit based in Vancouver, Canada, but globally focused. Our Ambassadors are aged 18-30 and based on six continents, and bring their own expertise in biodiversity and climate through academic backgrounds, on-the-ground research and project management, and policy-influencing at the local and international level.

We are a small team of dedicated young people who have access to an extensive network of scientists and policymakers at the international level. In the year since launching we have built a network of over 4000 youth leaders for nature and climate through knowledge-sharing, storytelling, and capacity building. We operate on the international scale, but the project founders are based in British Columbia and have a dedicated interest in nature-based solutions projects in the provincial context. This is a unique opportunity for us to work in collaboration with a Scholar to gather critical insight into the state of NBS at home, and use this to inform our advocacy at the federal and international level. We are expecting to work collaboratively and flexibly with the Scholar, and offer our national and international network as a tool for participation in the dialogue around nature-based solutions to our climate and biodiversity crises.

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Nature-based solutions (NBS) as defined by the IUCN are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, while providing co-benefits such as human well-being and biodiversity enhancement. These solutions can provide over ½ of all global climate solutions, based on a 2017 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences¹. In British Columbia, these projects are under-funded, under-evaluated, and typically specific to the planting of trees; this project would address this gap in the literature by first gathering case studies and then creating a framework by which NBS projects can be critiqued through hosting qualitative interviews with community leads.

Purpose of the Project:

The Scholar would create a reputable evaluation framework and conduct community interviews to guide the assessment of nature-based solutions projects from an ecological and social science perspective. This would help to inform broader NBS science both in North America and globally, and inform effective holistic management of these projects for policy-makers, managers, and stewards. This project would help to characterize the complexity of holistic management that to our best knowledge has not been evaluated in the British Columbia context.

Scope of Work:

- Conduct a scan to identify active or past nature-based solutions projects in British Columbia;
- Conduct ecological and social background research to build a foundation for evaluation;
- Identify the community leads within these projects and establish contact with them;
- Build a framework by which to evaluate the projects for social and ecological goals;
- Conduct three to five qualitative interviews with the community leads to assess project management and efficacy
- Create a summary report that identifies key projects in the province and evaluates them based on the prepared framework, as well as delivers recommendations for improvement at the community level

Deliverables

Note that a final deliverable (either a full report or, if the report contains confidential information, an executive summary) is required by the end of the program (March 12, 2021). The deliverable will be archived in the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.

The Scholar will deliver a final report containing a summary of their completed work complemented by a final presentation to key stakeholders. The report should include:

- A summary of current nature-based solutions projects in British Columbia including their location, timeline of the project, budget, scope of work, and community managers
- A summary of key projects in the province and evaluation based on the prepared framework, including recommendations for improvement at the community level

¹ Griscom, B.W., Adams, J., Ellis, P.W., et al. (2017). Natural climate solutions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences of the United States of America*, 114(44), 11645-11650. DOI:10.1073/pnas.1710465114

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- A policy review of the efficacy of current management systems and areas of potential improvement at the provincial and federal governance level
- A final report [or Executive Summary] for the UBC Sustainability Scholars online project library.

Time Commitment

The program runs for 22 weeks from October 19, 2020 to March 12, 2021, during which students work an average of 12 hours per week for a total of 250 hours.

- This project will take **250** hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between October 19, 2020 and March 12, 2021
- The Scholar is to complete the total hours over the given timeline, with the Scholar having flexible hours per week based on and their own schedule

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in nature-based solutions and biodiversity management
- Experience conducting stakeholder interviews and relationship building
- Familiarity with social science literature and qualitative interviews
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Project management and organizational skills
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Experience with policy evaluation and familiarity with provincial governance of resources
- Design and layout skills

Applications close **midnight Sunday September 20, 2020.**

Apply here: <http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarsapply>

Contact Karen Taylor at sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca if you have questions

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Useful Resources

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

Resume workshop for prospective Sustainability Scholars: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/resume-workshop-for-prospective-sustainability-scholars-tickets-117422877989>

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services>