

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.

Research Project Title: Developing a government relations and communications strategy to realize implementation of the Forest Carbon Economy Fund by the Government of Canada

Sustainability Goal or Operations Plan objective

Climate Action: Ecotrust Canada is building a program called the Forest Carbon Economy Fund, which would create a new mechanism for a federal government to drive investment into natural climate solutions across Canada. The potential and urgency for a Forest Carbon Economy Fund comes from Canada's 2020 policy shift to, for the first time, include forest carbon outcomes in our national carbon footprint reported to the Paris Agreement. This shift calls out for the creation of a mechanism that allows a federal government to procure for forest-based emissions reductions outcomes and drive resources into project development by rural, resource dependent and Indigenous communities. The opportunity to craft a program with real clout comes from the fact that if we do our job, the money spent by this program becomes an investment in productive natural assets that get Canada closer to its emissions targets, and lowers the costs that must be levied across the rest of the economy to achieve these goals. Ecotrust Canada is building these carbon, forestry, biodiversity and procurement tools, but we need YOU to help us craft the Government Relations strategy that will convince the federal government to enact a Forest Carbon Economy Fund.

Project Overview:

In January 2020, the government released "[Canada's Fourth Biennial Report on Climate Change](#)" to the United Nations, which for the first time includes the impact of human-caused forest carbon emissions in our official greenhouse gas (GHG) projections. Aligning Canada's national carbon accounts with international leading practices as well as upcoming international negotiations around Article 6 of the Paris Agreement make natural climate solutions an increasingly important policy opportunity for reducing GHGs and mitigating climate change. Ecotrust Canada is developing the Forest Carbon Economy

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Fund as a tool for the Canadian Government to procure forest carbon offsets that will enable carbon emissions reductions, helping Canada reach international commitments.

Timeliness of proposed work:

Canada is falling well behind when it comes to meeting our climate target of a 30% emissions reduction by 2030 – a reduction of 220 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year (tCO₂e/yr). Even optimistic projections predict only a 19% reduction. At the same time, Canada has made impressive commitments to protecting a quarter of the country's lands and waters, but urgent questions remain around how they intend to fund this protection, let alone manage the diverse values on these landscapes into the future.

The proposed Forest Carbon Economy Fund is a tool for such times, designed to assess the climate and biodiversity values of restoring, improving management on, and protecting landscapes. The “Forest Carbon Reporting Methodology” will enable assessment, reporting and verification audit of emissions reductions that can be applied to the National (Carbon) Inventory Report. As a result, the Government of Canada can receive real and valuable benefit from investing in nature by getting it closer to its Paris commitments, forgoing the need to invest in more expensive mitigation at home, or buying international credits overseas. Such a tool to generate value from conservation could also be deployed to fund maintenance and improvement of climate benefit provided by Canada's protected areas.

We have proposed the name “Forest Carbon Economy Fund” – highlighting the similarity to Canada's Low Carbon Economy Fund and the basket of values enabled by such investment. It is our hope that the Government of Canada will adopt this program, in the manner it best sees fit, to enable accelerated investment in conservation, restoration and improved management of forests across Canada.

Potential for significant impact

Research by the Canadian Forest Service (Lempriere et. al. 2017) found that 16.5 million tCO₂e per year could be abated through forest management actions for under \$50/tonne. If prices averaged 66% of maximum, this would enable an additional 165 million tonnes of accrued emissions reductions to 2030 from forests for about \$550 million per year. With the Federal government directly investing roughly that amount in emissions reductions through the Low Carbon Economy Challenge (and likely to receive significantly less bang for the buck), we see a strong rationale for development of the Forest Carbon Economy Fund to drive procurement and delivery of forest carbon emissions reductions. This will give governments an entirely new, cost effective, path for investment into sustainable, community-led, forest carbon management strategies across Canada.

Response to community need

Time and time again, we see governments making the majority of their climate investments in urban and suburban areas of Canada, often with a corporate partner. This leaves Indigenous, rural and resource based-communities out of the equation, despite having significant opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while concurrently benefiting from a wide range of social and environmental co-benefits. Community need for a Forest Carbon Economy Fund is immense – from Indigenous communities working to take back control of forest management on their traditional territories, to managers of new conservation areas in need of resources to manage fire and degradation concerns, to land managers with a dream to reforest and restore ecosystems across Canada.

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Nearly all landscape carbon project pathways have strong complementarity with biodiversity and Indigenous reconciliation objectives. By capturing and monetizing the climate impact of improved landscape management, a successfully deployed Forest Carbon Economy Fund will address community need and make progress towards engaging all Canadians in the climate fight.

Purpose of the Project

This project will support Ecotrust Canada's mission of implementing the Forest Carbon Economy Fund at the federal government in two ways: 1) by developing a government relations strategy to support implementation of the Forest Carbon Economy Fund and 2) by collecting stories of good practice natural climate solutions used in other jurisdictions to support communications and policy advocacy. The outcomes of the project will be aimed at communicating the multiple values of natural climate solutions for Canadians and society, and contribute to the implementation of a federal carbon offset procurement system focused on natural climate solutions.

The Forest Carbon Economy Fund program is concocting a new mechanism that aims to drive resources into improved forest and climate outcomes across Canada. It has lots of technical pieces – around the forest and carbon quantification, around biodiversity and community factors, and around how we put the carbon outcomes on Canada's national account so it's worth something to the government. All of these technical pieces are valuable, but this initiative won't make a lick of difference unless the Federal Government can be convinced to uptake and implement it.

The Forest Carbon Economy Fund is advancing a variety of avenues and angles for moving the concept forward with Environment and Climate Change Canada, elected officials, the civil society space and so on, but recognize the need to develop a cohesive strategy around how we intend to move the ball forward. It is for this work that we seek a Sustainability Scholar to take the reins in driving this forward.

Scope of Work:

- Conduct desktop research and interviews to better understand the factors for successful implementation of procurement programs by the federal government.
- Conduct interviews with natural climate solutions project developers to compile a communications and storytelling strategy, emphasizing biodiversity and local community value.
- Conduct a scan to identify other jurisdictions around the world that have implemented natural climate solutions projects, particularly of forest carbon, to compile good practice stories for communications and policy advocacy.
- Develop a proposed pathway for government relations and policy change through different tools such as SWOT, gap analysis, or key word trends.
- Prepare a final report with both a government relations strategy and communications/storytelling toolkit to support Ecotrust Canada's policy advocacy effort for deployment of the Forest Carbon Economy Fund by the federal government.

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](#).

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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 other natural climate solutions used in other jurisdictions, including carbon benefits, and added values such as biodiversity and livelihoods.
- Summary and analysis of interviews with stakeholders.
- A final report, containing a summary of completed work with recommendations, complemented by a final presentation to key stakeholders.
- 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 approximately 12 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Community engagement experience
- Demonstrated experience in climate work, government relations, and communications
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Project management and organizational skills
- Familiarity with policy analysis tools
- Comfortable conducting interviews via Zoom or other video calling platform

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

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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>