

Summer 2022 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

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.

- 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 January 30, 2022.

>> This is a Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative Project >>

The Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative (FERC) is focussed on advancing efforts to protect the Fraser River estuary in collaboration with key NGO and Indigenous partners. If you are interested in producing new knowledge and supporting Fraser estuary protection through scientific, technical, governance and policy innovations, the following project might be for you. Read on for more details.

Project title: Develop shoreline conservation and restoration strategies to retain Indigenous traditional foodlands

Project Background & Overview:

The Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at the UBC Farm is a research centre and local-to-global food hub working towards a more sustainable, food-secure future. Our work centres sustainable, climate-friendly practices on farmland and foodlands, including traditional Indigenous foodlands with an aim to food sovereignty for Indigenous communities.

The proposed project will address issues in the following areas:

- **Indigenous food sovereignty:** Recognize and support Indigenous self-reliance, self-determination and food sovereignty; support Indigenous community access to safe, affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate and reliable food sources and foodlands.
- **Community health and well-being:** Support health and well-being of Indigenous communities that depend on healthy estuary ecosystems in the Lower Mainland.
- **Indigenous traditional cultural practices:** Recognize and support Indigenous cultural practices in relation to foodlands care and stewardship, as well as food harvesting, preservation and preparation.
- **Climate action:** Help protect and restore estuary shoreline ecosystems in the face of climate-change related events such as on-shore flooding, sea-level rise and ocean acidification
- **Sustainable communities:** Help protect and restore local, sustainable food systems that in turn can nourish local communities.

Project description

In alignment with UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan and Provincial commitments to Reconciliation and UNDRIP, the project will seek to advance and support Indigenous food sovereignty as well as protect coastal and riparian areas which are considered sacred foodlands to Indigenous communities in the face of climate change and commercial development.

Drawing on the global food sovereignty movement as an innovative approach to achieving long term food security, the project will aim to advance Indigenous food sovereignty as a specific policy approach to addressing the underlying issues impacting Indigenous peoples and their ability to respond to their own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods.

Community mobilization and the maintenance of cultural harvesting strategies and practices provide a basis for forming and influencing "policy driven by practice".¹ Such policy can then also form the basis of a response to climate change to protect, restore and mitigate damage to the foodlands areas.

Indigenous food-related knowledge, values and wisdom have been built up over thousands of years. The Fraser River Estuary has served as traditional foodlands both terrestrial and aquatic for generations of Indigenous communities, and is increasingly under threat from climate change along the waterways and watersheds that feed into the estuary region.

Foodlands may be at risk of degrading or disappearing entirely unless traditional Indigenous knowledge on foods, land care and stewardship, harvesting practices, etc. can continue to be shared and passed along the generations of Indigenous community members.

By working with Indigenous knowledge keepers, the project aims to identify and map Indigenous traditional terrestrial foodlands in the estuary; develop shoreline conservation and restoration strategies to steward and retain traditional foodlands in response to climate change-related impacts in the region; and consider a policy framework to support Indigenous food sovereignty and foodlands retention.

Project scope

The Scholar will work with Indigenous knowledge-keepers to undertake the following:

- Identify traditional terrestrial foods that are located in, and supported by the estuary, both historically and at present; listen and learn about traditional land care and stewardship practices; document these practices in a form that is acceptable and beneficial to Indigenous communities.
- Survey and map the traditional terrestrial foodlands.
- Research restoration and reclamation strategies of traditional terrestrial foodlands; make prioritized Indigenous-informed recommendations for implementation of such restoration and reclamation.

¹ Indigenous Food Systems - <https://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/food-sovereignty>

- Identify and document risks posed to the foodlands by climate change; work with knowledge keepers to craft Indigenous-informed recommendations on how these risks can be mitigated.

All work will be done with permission from, engagement with and in consultation with Indigenous communities and knowledge keepers in the region on whose traditional ancestral and unceded territories the estuary is located.

Four key principles guide the present-day food sovereignty movement in Indigenous communities. These will inform and guide the work:

1. Sacred or divine sovereignty – Food is a gift from the Creator; in this respect the right to food is sacred and cannot be constrained or recalled by colonial laws, policies and institutions. Indigenous food sovereignty is fundamentally achieved by upholding our sacred responsibility to nurture healthy, interdependent relationships with the land, plants and animals that provide us with our food.
2. Participatory – Indigenous food sovereignty is fundamentally based on “action”, or the day to day practice of maintaining cultural harvesting strategies. To maintain Indigenous food sovereignty as a living reality for both present and future generations, continued participation in cultural harvesting strategies at all of the individual, family, community and regional levels is key.

Self-determination- The ability to respond to our own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods. The ability to make decisions over the amount and quality of food we hunt, fish, gather, grow and eat. Freedom from dependence on grocery stores or corporately controlled food production, distribution and consumption in industrialized economies. Policy – Indigenous food sovereignty attempts to reconcile Indigenous food and cultural values with colonial laws and policies and mainstream economic activities. Indigenous food sovereignty thereby provides a restorative framework for policy reform in forestry, fisheries, rangeland, environmental conservation, health, agriculture, and rural and community development.²

Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A final report for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.
- Recommendations on best practices and policy implementation based on Indigenous traditional knowledge to conserve and protect traditional terrestrial foodlands and stewardship practices in the Estuary in face of climate change

Time Commitment

- This position is for **270** hours of work.
- This project will be completed between May 2 and August 12, 2022
- The scholars will complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 19 to 22 hours per week for minimum of 270 hours over the period.
- Some weekend or evening work may be required.
- Meetings with Musqueam and Indigenous communities will be scheduled during the period

² Indigenous Food Systems - <https://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/food-sovereignty>

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated experience in Indigenous engagement
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Familiarity preparing feasibility studies
- Experience with field work outdoors; biodiversity monitoring and species identification
- Experience working with Indigenous communities is preferred
- willingness to listen to, learn from and be guided by Indigenous knowledge-keepers is essential
- Understanding and openness to the value of both Western and traditional ways of knowing.

Other details:

- The Scholar will be required to travel to estuary areas not easily accessed by public transit therefore the successful candidate will need to have:
- a valid BC driver's license and access to a car (reimbursed will be provided for mileage for special travel outside the local estuary area—details to be discussed with mentor in advance of incurring any costs.
- access to a phone and phone plan that accepts local and long-distance calls, and texting
- appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear for all weather

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 30, 2022**

Apply here: [Click here to apply](#)

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

Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 19. [Click here for details and to register.](#)

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.

<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>