

## Summer 2023 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 on the Apply page to confirm your eligibility before applying.

**Applications close at midnight on Sunday January 29, 2023.**

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## Project title: Research to develop a strategic plan for the placement of new protected areas throughout British Columbia

### Project Background & Overview:

We are currently facing a biodiversity crisis caused by the cumulative impacts of human activities and climate change. Conserved areas are a growing tool in Canada to help safeguard present and future imperilled ecosystems and biodiversity. Currently Canada has a national goal of protecting 25% of its land by 2025 and 30% by 2030<sup>1</sup>. Placement of these protected areas is key in how effective they are at safeguarding present and future biodiversity. In order to best protect the rich and culturally important biodiversity in British Columbia, protected areas should be strategically placed in a wide range of biogeoclimatic zones and habitat types. Acquisition of land for protected areas also depends on the collaboration and agreement with local governments and municipalities. This agreement with local parties can be aided by engagement with communities and gaining their vocal support.

BC Nature is a federation of over 50 naturalist clubs across the province, with the majority involved in land stewardship, protection, and community engagement with nature. This network of clubs can provide important input for the identification of potential sites for protected areas and advocacy for their land acquisition. Therefore, BC Nature is seeking a UBC Sustainability Scholar to develop a strategy to help identify potential zones for protected areas and incorporates collaboration with BC naturalists clubs.

### Project description

The combination of stressors such as climate change and human development have led to a devastating loss in biodiversity and ecosystem stability. In an effort to protect remaining intact habitats, protected areas are being placed throughout Canada. The scholar will be in charge of investigating current placement of protected areas throughout BC and developing a strategic plan for placement of new protected areas to help cover the gaps in different Biogeoclimatic zones and habitat types. The strategic plan must be guided by the principle that placement of protected areas needs to consider ecological conservation goals and the actual feasibility of acquiring that location to become a protected area. As

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/conserved-areas.html>

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part of the process the scholar must engage with naturalist clubs for input and include future engagement materials with clubs and local municipalities as part of the strategy plan.

## **Project scope**

The project will start with a literature review researching current protected areas throughout BC, learning which key aspects are important when choosing an area to protect, and acquisition procedures for converting land to protected areas. In this literature review the scholar will need to identify at least 2 biogeoclimatic zones that require more protection. With the input from BC Nature staff the scholar will then choose one biogeoclimatic zone to focus a full strategic plan on. This strategic plan will need to include clear and specific recommendations for placement of protected areas in BC (including a methods section outlining how these recommendations were determined) and a small case study of how acquisition and implementation would be carried out for 1 area. Along with recommendations for placement, the student should reach out to naturalist clubs in their chosen zone for input and collaboration in a series of interviews. Based on these interviews the scholar will assess the best way to engage with clubs on this material and provide a guide for engagement with other naturalist clubs across BC for future work carried out by BC Nature. This strategic plan will inform BC Nature on how to best achieve national conservation goals of increasing protected areas.

Key questions for this work will include:

1. What already exists in the network of protected areas in BC?
2. What habitat types and regions are not protected enough?
3. How will community engagement inform this work?

Questions 1 and 2 should mostly be answered through the scholar's initial literature review using a wide variety of primary literature, and government and local municipality reports and data. Question 3 should be answered from conducting interviews with chosen naturalist clubs.

## **Deliverables**

- A literature review of current protected areas and implementation procedure.
- A brief summary of interviews conducted with naturalist clubs.
- A final report for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.
- A strategic plan, which includes:
  - Suggested placement of protected areas in 1 chosen biogeoclimatic zone
  - A small case study for implementation procedure of 1 specific area in the chosen zone
  - Guidelines for community engagement for future work in other Biogeoclimatic zones.

## **Time Commitment**

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15, 2023
- The Scholars is to complete their hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.

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## 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
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Community engagement experience
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Familiarity preparing feasibility studies
- Familiarity with BC biodiversity and biogeoclimatic zones

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 29, 2023**

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

Contact Karen Taylor at [sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca](mailto:sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca) if you have questions

## Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 23, 2023. [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>