

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.

Project title: Research to develop an inventory of data sources to support land use planning for the Islands Trust

Project Background & Overview:

The Islands Trust is a special purpose government established in 1974 to preserve and protect over 450 Islands in the Salish Sea. Smaller islands are associated with 13 larger islands which are governed by their own elected Local Trust Committees (LTCs). These elected bodies oversee land use decision making. The sustainability of the islands is heavily influenced by these land use decisions.

Over past decades the Islands in the Islands Trust Area have been threatened by growth pressure increasing development and alteration of land leading to loss and fragmentation of habitat, declining species and biodiversity, and increased demand on limited freshwater resources. This has raised questions related to carrying capacity. Climate change impacts such as increased heavy storm events, drought, sea-level rise and resulting fires, floods, reduced access to potable water and loss and damage to the built environment coupled with the increasing age demographic and housing costs forcing younger people and families off the islands and raising concerns related to the sustainability of island ecosystems and human communities into the future.

The Islands Trust's primary tools for supporting sustainability and climate change adaptation are Official Community Plans and Land Use Bylaws. Each LTC has their own Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB). All of the OCP's and many of the LUBs are out of date. Historically individual LTC policies and regulations have been developed independent from each other although each must not be at variance or contrary to a regional Islands Trust Policy Statement. The Islands Trust is moving toward developing model processes to help facilitate more coordinated and efficient updates of OCPs and LUBs.

The OCP provides a legal framework for land use decisions that support the sustainability of the environment and the community. A first step in developing this framework is understanding

where a community is starting from and changes that will impact their future. How healthy is the ecosystem? How vulnerable are groundwater resources to climate change? Is existing housing stock addressing demand? What will be the impact of sea level rise? The OCP can require and encourage the development of regulations in the LUB. The LUB can be used to permit and prevent different approaches to land use.

Over the years the Islands Trust has been developing and collecting data on a variety of topics including groundwater vulnerability and ecosystem health. The Islands Trust is also aware that there are other sources of data being collected by other agencies that can help establish the baseline understanding of existing and predicted conditions that contribute to and/or threaten sustainability. Islands Trust Planners need to know what information is available and how to access and use it in order to effectively engage the community and elected officials in dialogue and decision making about their future.

Project description

This project focusses on identifying available and reliable data that can help Islands Trust communities understand where they are in terms of current ecosystem health, access to clean potable water, vulnerability to sea level rise, ability to provide affordable housing and other indicators of ecosystem and community health and sustainability. This baseline data will be used to inform updates to Official Community Plans (OCPs) and Land Use Bylaws (LUBs).

A first step in the project will involve reviewing the Islands Trust OCP evaluation to develop a list of the type of data that is relevant to OCP and LUB updates and develop a list of data needs. The Scholar will then work with Islands Trust planners and Islands Trust Conservatory staff to identify data that is available in house and how it has, or why it has not, been used in the past. Working with the Islands Trust Regional Planning Team, the Scholar will then identify how this data could be used to inform OCP and LUB updates and/or what might need to be done in order for the data to be useful to that process (For example: Are updates needed? Does the information need to be presented in a more accessible form?). Recommendations, and related rationale are to be included in a final report. This step may include (depending on student interest and availability) travel to the Islands Trust offices on Gabriola, Salt Spring and Victoria to meet with Islands Trust and Islands Trust Conservancy staff face to face.

The next step in the project will involve an environmental scan of online resources, and contacting federal, provincial and regional government staff, academics, researchers and First Nations organizations to identify data they are collecting that is relevant to Islands Trust communities and if it can be shared. Working with Islands Trust Staff to develop evaluation criteria, the Scholar will assess the relevancy of the data to the OCP and LUB review process and the accessibility and reliability of the data over time. Recommendations to the Islands Trust on which data sets to use including rationale and identification of data gaps are to be included in a final report.

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

As an appendix to the final report, the Scholar will produce a summarized list of recommended data sources which will include information on type and form of data, how to access it and information on reliability, ease of use and other information relevant to planners.

Scope of work:

- Review the Islands Trust OCP checklist to develop a list of data needed to inform OCP and LUB updates.
- identify data that is available in-house and how it has, or why it has not, been used in the past.
- Review available online resources and interview federal, provincial and regional government staff, academics, researchers and First Nations organizations to identify data they are collecting that is relevant to Islands Trust communities and if it can be shared.
- In consultation with Islands Trust Staff to develop evaluation criteria to assess the relevancy, accessibility and reliability of the data over time.
- Evaluate and rank data sources based on criteria developed.
- Produce a report highlighting recommendations to include in the appendix a summary list to be used by planners.

Deliverables

- A final report containing:
 - Recommendations on data sources to use to inform OCP and LUB updates to include rationale for recommendations and identification of data gap
 - Summarized list of data source recommendations that includes notes on form of data, how to access, reliability and ease of use
- A PowerPoint presentation to be delivered to Island Trust Planners and Elected Officials
- A final report (or executive summary) for the online Scholars Project Library

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15, 2023
- The Scholar is to complete approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.
- Remote work is supported. Office presence is encouraged. The Islands Trust has offices on Gabriola Island, Salt Spring Island and in Victoria. Circumstances permitting, we would like to invite the Scholar to attend our offices and possibly tour parts of the Islands Trust (travel funding will be provided). Student schedule will be considered in timing and organization.

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Statistical analysis
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated experience in working with data to inform policy development, an asset
- Familiarity with benchmarking methods and tools
- Understanding of the role of OCPs and LUBs in the land use planning process, an asset
- Experience in or familiarity with land use planning an asset

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

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 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>