

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.

> 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: Research to support innovative approaches to intercultural climate engagement through an Indigenous lens

Project Background & Overview:

Our planet is in the midst of a climate crisis where the latest science calls for reducing global emissions by half within the next decade to avoid catastrophic climate change. In the wake of the past summer's deadly heatwave and unprecedented fires, coupled with more recent flooding events across British Columbia, public awareness of the climate crisis is growing rapidly. Environmental organizations, such as Sierra Club BC (SCBC), have a critical role to play in supporting individuals and communities to take action to address this crisis.

Western environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) have relied heavily on technical scientific descriptions of the crisis; and this framing has both shaped the nature of the actions undertaken, as well as determined who feels drawn to participate. As ENGOS seek to expand the numbers and diversity of those with whom they work, they must increase their organizational capacity to learn from and work with diverse knowledge systems, as well as tell different kinds of stories about the climate crisis and associated impacts.

Climate change is a ‘wicked problem’: its degrees of complexity demand solutions that not only transcend the dominant worldviews that created it but call upon a diverse collective with intersectional understandings in order to move forward actions.

Although Indigenous people contribute much less to the underlying causes of climate change, they are disproportionately affected. Similarly, people of colour, women of all races and ethnicities, and those living in poverty, also experience disproportionate impacts of climate change. As awareness of climate change impacts have increased, momentum has grown for stronger, more actively engaged, and self-aware, environmental, and social movements. A critical insight and perspective emerging from diverse Indigenous organizations and actors within their communities is seeing climate change not as a new phenomenon, but rather as a symptom and culmination of the damaging effects of settler colonialism. Such an example does not downplay the severity of the problem but rather sheds light on the systemic origins of the issue.

Mainstream ENGOs have a long history of ignoring the presence of Indigenous and diverse peoples in the areas that they are attempting to protect. These practices have resulted in a lack of diversity and inclusion in many organizations. For Mainstream sustainability practices and climate actions to be inclusive and diverse, ENGOs must centre Indigenous and diverse lenses. For several years, Sierra Club BC (SCBC) has been working to decolonize the organization’s efforts: this project is among those that are the direct result of this initiative. It is imperative that ENGOs work with Indigenous and other historically “*marginalized communities*”, in order to forward their environmental goals on a foundation of social and environmental justice. This project attempts to do just that.

Project description

ENGOs are beginning to reckon with past mistakes and strive for equity and inclusivity, to walk on that pathway they need tools to create meaningful and lasting organizational change. This project, which we are calling ***Firmly on the Pathway Together: YÁ ŁTE SĆA*** is an expansion of several connected initiatives. Initially ‘*Seeing Through*

Watchers’ Eyes’ (STWE) was started by kQwast’not ~ charlene george of the T’Souke First Nation, and Sierra Club BC Cultural Voice. STWE is a digital tool that guides participants through Coast Salish knowledges, bridging Western and Indigenous ways of knowing, and enhancing and interacting with the existing K12 curriculum.¹ The initiative was deeply collaborative, and many of the teaching materials have been integrated into district schools on Vancouver Island.

Inspired by STWE, the second project, *A Pathway Together*, was a joint endeavour between SCBC and the University of British Columbia (UBC) through the 2020-2021 Sustainability Scholars Program. It led to the production of a toolkit, including a digital ‘Prezi’ guide and print resources, to help bridge divides between the mainstream environmental movement from many Indigenous and diverse populations, and to decolonize action, and organizing on climate change and related issues.^{2,3,4}

¹ Seeing through Watchers’ Eyes: <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/watcherseyes/>

² Since its launch on SCBC’s website in April 2020, the APT resource page has been accessed by more than 3,000 unique viewers. <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/a-pathway-together/>

³ A Pathway Together -- Executive Summary:

<https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Final-A-Pathway-Together-Report-2021.docx.pdf> ⁴ A Pathway Together – Literature Review:

In 2022 two projects under UBC's Sustainability Scholars Program were completed. *A Pathway Forward: Consider How We Paddle Together* (CHWPT) and *Re-Storying Our Relationship: As We Journey On The Pathway* (ROR) were both successfully completed with a celebration following Coast Salish Protocol on UBC grounds. Collaborators including local nations, scholars and ENGO are in a variety of stages of implementing or working with the wealth of intercultural offerings both SCÁ engage with. ROR SCÁ produced bookmarkers offering voices communities of the Fraser River Estuary, seen in Appendix A of the literature review³. The posters⁴, lit review⁵ and rubric⁶ inviting critical self/systems reflection are the premise for this year's project to answer the complex interconnected question of Why Are The Relatives Leaving (WATRL).

The purpose of this project is to build on the SCÁ, identifying and creating innovative approaches to intercultural climate engagement ensuring the interconnected thinking is modeled. Secondary, adding to the body of scholarly work for Coast Salish pedagogy and research methodologies, modeled in STWE, APT, ROR and CHWPT. This includes generating reflection, analysis, tools and practices, encouraging organizations engagement with diverse communities that are guided by respectful Indigenous and intercultural approaches. It will build on existing resources to create a guide for bridging WTRAL which asks the current siloed lens of biodiversity to include an inclusive lens of multifaceted communities both human and non-human. Examples could include tools to help cultivate critical thinking bridging engagement towards deeper connections, personal responsibility, and awareness: the needed next steps for ENGOs/NGOs, universities and other post-secondary institutions.

Work will proceed grounded in both Participatory Action Research and Transformative Learning modalities, where specific output features and outcome trajectories remain emergent through the process of 'doing'. Fundamentally, the project will proceed in ways that follow Coast Salish protocols, while striving to be respectful to all Indigenous and diverse communities, as well as the non-Indigenous allies who will be reading and utilizing this work in their practices.

Project scope

Key research questions include:

How do we create opportunities for a genuine pathway together?

- How do we, in an authentic manner that is respectful of protocol, encourage collaboration?
- How do we create a bridge, or pathway across a bridge, connecting our intercultural languages?
- How do we centre the SCÁ ~work to the lands and waters?
- Why are the relatives leaving?

<https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/A-Pathway-Together-Project-Literature-Review.pdf>

³ Re-Storying Our Relationships literature review: <https://sustain.ubc.ca/about/resources/re-storying-our-relationship-we-journey-pathway>

⁴ Consider How We Paddle Together (CHWPT) posters: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tIEJOuaHUBMzeGpl2ZGOpfHLhLvwnuRA/view?usp=sharing>

⁵ CHWPT literature review: https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022-020_-Consider-How-We-Paddle-Together_-Plisic-2.pdf

⁶ CHWPT rubric inviting critical review for self and systems: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uPLwflDR6klfh7Qz4ak_2ZYavOdK9kkB/view

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Primary activities to be undertaken by the scholar include:

Conduct a short literature review on intercultural approaches to environmental advocacy and education.

- Work with kQwa'ste'not ~ charlene george to review the online tool STWE, APT, CHWPT, ROR; and create a short companion resource for ENGOs, demonstrating how the tool to bridge siloes with interconnected multifaceted lens.
- Conduct surveys and other outreach to identify innovative approaches to intercultural climate engagement used by other ENGOs.⁷
- Generate a draft resource for use by Sierra Club BC and other ENGOs that highlights the analysis of best practices for intercultural climate engagement and communication and highlights any existing models that are working well.
- Solicit feedback on the draft resource from diverse individual and community groups with whom SCBC has existing relationships and identify others willing to give feedback; incorporate this feedback into a final draft.
- Meet with SCBC to facilitate current and hoped for directions with WTRAL process.
- Support SCBC to develop an implementation plan for incorporating best practices and recommendations where useful and appropriate.
- Work with SCBC's communications team to make the resources available to other ENGOs and other interested parties.

Once selected, we would also like to invite the successful scholar into a conversation to co-develop a work plan that best connects their research interests and skills with SCBC's values, strategies and tactics.

Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A companion 'guide', tools, and resources for bridging understandings designed to support environmental organizations, academics, and other practitioners to draw on it as a tool for climate action based in Coast Salish knowledge and two-way seeing

Time Commitment

- This project will take 260 hours to complete: 250 hours to be allocated to the research, and 10 hours to be allocated to participating in meetings and collaboration opportunities with the rest of the FERC cohort
- This project must be completed between May 1 and August 15.
- The Scholar is to complete approximately 15-20 hours per week, and can work on their own schedule in agreement with mentor
- The Scholar will need to develop a schedule for regular meetings with their Mentor, and be available for occasional meetings with the Executive Director and other staff as relevant
- The Scholar must live in the lower mainland in order to be available to attend FERC meetings and events in person.

⁷All activities will be conducted in line with COVID public health guidelines and respectful of participant and community needs.

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:
 - a) Translating/bridging environmental and Indigenous thinking
 - b) Transferable collaboration skills
- We welcome all candidates to apply for this position. We especially encourage applicants who have strong knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and/or Indigenous cultural experience.

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>