

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.

Topic: Best practices research to inform transboundary collaboration to support watershed health in the Boundary Bay Basin

Project Background & Overview

The Boundary Bay Basin is a significant part of the Semiahmoo First Nation's traditional territory and holds great value to the Nation as an important area for harvesting and other cultural practices. However, cumulative effects from urban development, agriculture, and industrial activities in the basin have threatened the water quality, the health of the watershed, and closed shellfish harvesting practices on both sides of the border. The international border between the U.S. and Canada along the 49th parallel divides the traditional territory of the Semiahmoo First Nation and has increased the complexity of jurisdictional authority over the lands and waters in the basin. The basin straddles the Canada-USA border and requires international efforts to improve water quality and sustainably manage the area.

Boundary Bay is a critical section of BC's rare coastline habitat, recognized locally, nationally, and internationally. These intertidal salt marshes, mudflats, and open water marine habitats comprise Canada's top-rated, globally significant, Important Bird Area, are "protected" through

BC's Wildlife Management Area designation, and have been named a "Wetland of International Importance" as part of the Fraser River Delta Ramsar site.

The Basin was once a significant food source for the Semiahmoo First Nation. However, since the closure of the fishery in the 1960s and the arrest of Semiahmoo First Nation members in the 1990s for illegal harvesting, this essential cultural practice has been halted. Across the border in Drayton Harbor, a part of Whatcom County, there have been substantial efforts to enhance water quality and mitigate contamination of the freshwater and marine environment. In 2012, the [Whatcom Clean Waters Program](#) was formed working with a number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and governments to prevent fecal bacteria pollution of the harbour. This program has been successful in [reducing contamination](#) of the harbour and has since [re-opened](#) the shellfish harvest as of 2017.

Restoring water quality on the Canadian side of the border is essential to ensuring the appropriate protection of this important marine and terrestrial ecosystem and, importantly, allow for important cultural practices to be restored which can allow Semiahmoo First Nation members to connect back with the lands and waters.

The Shared Waters Alliance (SWA) was established in 1999 as a collaborative inter-governmental and community-driven initiative to address bacteriological contamination on both sides of the border. The SWA is run by a core team comprised of representatives from [Semiahmoo First Nation](#), [A Rocha Canada](#), [Birds Canada](#), [Friends of Semiahmoo Bay](#), and [Little Campbell Watershed Society](#), with administrative, strategic, and facilitation support from the [Fraser Basin Council](#). A primary driver for the formation of this working group was the shellfish harvesting closures on both sides of the border due to bacteriological contamination. In 2018, efforts were made to re-engage and re-initiate the Shared Waters Alliance, following the pattern of the [Whatcom County Clean Water Program](#) to identify and address contamination sources on the Canadian side of Boundary Bay. Shared Waters has expanded its scope to reflect emerging concerns, such as nonpoint source pollution and ecosystem management while still maintaining its historical focus on shellfish harvest for Semiahmoo First Nation. More information on the SWA's work can be found [here](#) and in this [short video](#).

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to develop a summary of best practices and key recommendations for the Shared Waters Alliance and Semiahmoo First Nation to enhance transboundary collaboration to address watershed health in the Boundary Bay Basin. Recommendations and best practices will be identified through a desktop literature review and a series of semi-structured interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and leaders from three to four successful examples which could include the [Maliseet Nation Conservation Council's](#) work on fisheries restoration, the [Salmon Beyond Borders Campaign](#) between Southeast Alaska and Northwest B.C., among others. Interview participants, policy, and literature reviewed will be directly related to transboundary collaboration in the Atlantic and Boundary Bay regions focusing on three to four examples. These regions encompass the U.S. and Canadian

international border to work to restore water quality, watershed health, and food sovereignty for Indigenous Nations.

This research project will work in partnership with the SWA and Semiahmoo First Nation. The SWA requires more information and research that can help with their international efforts to restore the traditional harvest of the intertidal areas of Boundary Bay. The final report will seek to offer recommendations that can enhance collaboration and inform policy to further efforts to restore traditional harvest.

Proposed Research Questions

1. What are the perceived barriers to collaboration between the members of the Shared Waters Alliance and organizations in Drayton Harbor/Whatcom County?
2. What efforts have been made on transboundary actions involving the Maliseet peoples and colonial governments in Maine and New Brunswick to increase food sovereignty and/or watershed health?
3. What are the best practices and keys to sustainable collaboration that facilitated the success of transboundary efforts in Southeast Alaska and Northwest B.C.?
4. From these 2-3 examples of other transboundary initiatives, what lessons learned could be applied in the Boundary Bay Basin to enhance watershed health through collaboration on either side of the border?

Project Scope

1. Literature review of successful, closely-related examples of Indigenous/non-Indigenous transboundary collaboration between
 - a. The Maliseet Peoples and the colonial governments of New Brunswick, Canada, the U.S., and Maine;
 - b. The Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and governments involved in fisheries recovery in Southeast Alaska and Northwest B.C.
 - c. Other relevant examples of transboundary collaboration that involve Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and governments.
2. Policy and literature review to understand and outline challenges and policy barriers to collaboration in the Boundary Bay Basin between the Shared Waters Alliance, Local Governments, and organizations in Whatcom County.
3. Develop and execute a series of interviews (via online), in partnership with members of the Shared Water Alliance and Semiahmoo First Nation, with relevant experts, stakeholders, and leaders both Indigenous and non-Indigenous in Maliseet traditional territory and Southeast Alaska/Northwest B.C. as well as any other exemplary transboundary collaboration initiatives.
4. Based on findings from the literature review and series of semi-structured interviews, produce a set of recommendations on best practices and suitable approaches for Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders and organizations in the Boundary Bay Basin to collaborate to enhance water quality and restore traditional harvesting practices.

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The scholar will have access to previous policy-related research completed in the Boundary Bay Basin that outlines relevant policies and legislation as it relates to the mission and objectives of the Shared Waters Alliance and their work to enhance overall watershed health in the Basin.

Deliverables

- A final report for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library
- A final report with an executive summary for policymakers summarizing the research findings and key recommendations.
- A 10-minute presentation halfway through the research to the Shared Waters Alliance to seek guidance and feedback.
- A 15 to 20 minute presentation to the Shared Waters Alliance, members of the Semiahmoo First Nation, and key stakeholders.

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 to August 15, 2023
- The Scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.
- The Scholar must live in the lower mainland to be available to attend FERC meetings and events in person.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Experience designing and conducting interview/qualitative research, particularly with Indigenous communities, an asset
- Familiarity developing research ethics applications, an asset
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- We welcome all candidates to apply for this position. We especially encourage applicants who have lived experience and/or strong knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and/or Indigenous culture.

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

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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>