

Graduate Internship Opportunity

SUMMER 2026

Project Title

Benchmarking Shoreline Resilience: A Cross-Municipal Review of Shoreline Protection Policies in the Capital Region

Organization

Peninsula Streams Society

About the Opportunity – Sustainability Scholars Program Info

These 250-hour internships are offered in partnership with community organizations and provide UVic graduate students from any discipline with opportunities to gain applied sustainability research experience. Scholars work under the guidance of a partner mentor and contribute to projects with real community impact.

The 2026 pay rate is approximately \$34.72/hour. To apply, visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) and review the application guide to confirm eligibility and required materials. Applications close at 11:59 pm PT on Sunday, February 1, 2026. Questions? Contact Laurel Currie: sustainability-scholars@uvic.ca.

Project Background

Shorelines in the Capital Regional District (CRD) are under increasing pressure from **urban development, climate change, and habitat degradation**. Hard infrastructure approaches to shoreline protection, such as seawalls and riprap, have historically prioritized property protection over ecological function, often resulting in **loss of habitat, reduced biodiversity, and decreased natural resilience**. Municipal policies governing shoreline management vary widely, creating inconsistencies in protection standards and opportunities for nature-based solutions. Peninsula Streams Society has long worked to restore and protect local waterways and shorelines through **science-based and community-driven approaches**, including habitat restoration, water quality monitoring, and stakeholder engagement. This project builds on that foundation by evaluating municipal policy frameworks, benchmarking their effectiveness, and identifying **gaps and opportunities for nature-based, climate-resilient shoreline management**. The project also aligns with regional, provincial, and national strategies related to climate adaptation and coastal stewardship, providing actionable guidance to support resilient shoreline governance in the CRD.

Project Overview

The project aims to evaluate and compare municipal shoreline protection policies in the Capital Regional District to identify gaps, strengths, and opportunities for nature-based, climate-resilient management. Key objectives:

1. Develop a standardized assessment framework using tools such as the **Green Bylaws Toolkit** to rate municipal policies on shoreline protection, habitat conservation, and climate adaptation.
2. Conduct a cross-municipal comparison to benchmark policy effectiveness and consistency across the region.
3. Identify actionable recommendations for improving municipal policies and integrating sustainable, nature-based approaches.

Project scope

Main Activities:

- **Literature and Policy Review:** Gather and review municipal bylaws, policies, and planning documents related to shoreline protection across the Capital Regional District.
- **Framework Development:** Adapt existing resources, such as the **Green Bylaws Toolkit**, to create a standardized evaluation tool for comparing municipal policies.
- **Policy Assessment:** Apply the framework to rate and benchmark each municipality's approach to shoreline management, habitat protection, and climate resilience.
- **Data Analysis and Synthesis:** Identify trends, gaps, and best practices across municipalities.
- **Reporting and Recommendations:** Prepare a final report summarizing findings and actionable policy recommendations.

Research Questions:

- How do municipal shoreline protection policies vary across the Capital Regional District?
- To what extent do policies incorporate **nature-based, climate-resilient approaches**?
- What gaps or inconsistencies exist that limit effective shoreline protection?
- Which municipal practices can serve as **models or best practices** for other jurisdictions?
- How can findings inform **policy development, advocacy, and community engagement** for sustainable shoreline management?

Deliverables

The primary deliverable for this project will be a comprehensive report, to be completed by August 15, that summarizes the project objectives, methodology, findings, analysis, and actionable recommendations. The report should include:

- A comparative assessment of municipal shoreline protection policies across the Capital Regional District.

- A standardized evaluation framework that can be applied to future policy reviews or adapted for other regions.
- Identification of best practices, gaps, and opportunities for enhancing nature-based, climate-resilient shoreline management.
- Recommendations for municipal policy improvements, stewardship initiatives, and advocacy strategies.

Time commitment + Timeline

- The project be approximately 250 hours between **May 1** and **August 15, 2026**.
- **May 1–May 15:** Orientation, literature and policy review, and development of the evaluation framework.
- **May 16–June 15:** Data collection, including gathering municipal bylaws, policies, and related documents including conducting interviews with stakeholders.
- **June 16–July 15:** Policy assessment and benchmarking across municipalities; preliminary analysis of findings.
- **July 16–August 5:** Synthesis of results, drafting report sections, and formulating recommendations.
- **August 6–August 15:** Final report preparation, review, and submission; archiving deliverable in the UVic Library Online Archive.
- Work hours can be flexible and scheduled to accommodate other commitments, provided the project milestones and final submission deadline are met.

Required / Preferred Skills + Experience

- 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
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Familiarity with benchmarking methods and tools
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys

Additional Information

The ideal Scholar for this project will have a strong interest in **environmental policy, coastal management, and sustainability**, with academic background in **environmental science, ecology, environmental planning, or a related field**. Candidates should demonstrate **strong research and analytical skills**, including the ability to review policy documents, synthesize information, and develop comparative frameworks. Attention to detail, critical thinking, and effective written communication are essential, as the Scholar will produce a report intended for municipal staff, stewardship organizations, and community stakeholders.

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Scholar will work closely with Peninsula Streams Society staff, receiving mentorship through regular check-ins, guidance on research methods, and feedback on report development. This project offers an opportunity to contribute directly to regional shoreline resilience, policy evaluation, and sustainable coastal stewardship.

Additional Project Requirements

The project is primarily research and policy-focused and can be completed remotely, with occasional local meetings in the Greater Victoria area. Access to a computer, internet, and standard office software is required. Local travel may be needed for meetings; any associated costs will be covered by Peninsula Streams Society.