

Graduate Internship Opportunity

Summer 2025

PROJECT TITLE

Understanding Cortes Island Beliefs, Knowledge, and Preferences to Inform Local Climate Action

ORGANIZATION

Cortes Island Community Foundation – Climate Action Network

Project Overview

Cortes Island has historically faced challenges in implementing effective climate action initiatives. Recent efforts have focused on researching climate planning best practices, assessing local risks and impacts, and analyzing the Official Community Plan. This groundwork has equipped us with valuable insights into the unique climate vulnerabilities and opportunities within our community.

Our next stage will be to engage the community.

Project Description

What are the key needs, challenges, and opportunities within the Cortes Island community that must be addressed to inform the development of an effective climate mitigation and adaptation plan? How can insights gathered through community engagement shape the program's structure, delivery, and content to ensure its relevance and impact? What community preferences and priorities would generate maximum speed and longevity in community climate action?

Using survey and direct community engagement, we seek to understand how best to move forward with climate action.

This work will be valuable because:

- Action that leverages existing priorities will be better supported
- The process of identifying needs will generate awareness and understanding and momentum for climate action.
- Action without consent of the community is more likely to generate insurmountable opposition.

The project will be actionable in the Spring and Summer of 2025.

Scope of Work

Objectives:

1. Understand community perceptions, beliefs, knowledge on causes of and impacts from climate change and compare these with climate science, risk management and justice.
2. Assess community preferences in prioritizing climate actions – test possibilities for climate action to gauge response
3. Process and translate the outcome for public dispersal -- analyze the collected data to identify key themes, trends, and potential areas for intervention.

Methodology:

1. Review existing project background which includes best-practices in community consultation.
2. Stakeholder Mapping: Identify and engage with key stakeholders, including community organizations, local government representatives, Indigenous groups, and businesses.
3. Consultation and Survey Design: Develop consultation and survey instruments based on the literature review and stakeholder input.
4. Data Collection: Conduct community consultations and administer surveys using a variety of methods, including in-person, online, and phone.
5. Data Analysis: Analyze the collected data using qualitative and quantitative methods.
6. Report Preparation: Prepare a comprehensive report summarizing the findings, analysis, and recommendations.

Expected Outcomes:

- Established priorities and preferences for a community-driven climate resiliency plan
- Increased community awareness and understanding of climate change impacts and solutions.
- Enhanced community engagement and participation in climate resiliency planning.
- Strengthened collaboration and partnerships among community stakeholders.

Key Deliverables

1. A report outlining the project objectives, background, research findings, analysis and recommendations. The report will also have a publicly accessible in-depth summary, written in plain language.
2. A community presentation outlining the report would also be nice, time permitting.

Time Commitment

The project will be completed within 250 hours, with the following estimated timeline:

- Project Planning and Literature Review: 10 hours
- Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement: 30 hours
- Consultation and Survey Design: 60 hours
- Data Collection: 60 hours
- Data Analysis: 50 hours
- Report Preparation: 40 hours

This timeline is flexible and can be adjusted based on the specific needs and context of the community.

Preferred Skills & Background

- Demonstrated interest in sustainability w/ strong understanding of climate change, its urgency and justice issues
- Decent public speaking and presentation skills
- Ability to work independently and in a team
- Project management and organizational skills

- Familiarity with survey programs like survey monkey and associate basic data-analysis skills
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Coordinating meetings, scheduling, communication.

Skills that would be beneficial but not necessary:

- Data visualization skills
- 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
- Design and layout skills a bonus

Additional Information

Remote and In-Person Work: Some of this work can be done remotely and some would be best in person. We can arrange for local volunteers to do the in-person aspects of the work if needed.

Housing and Transportation Challenges: Housing and transportation on Cortes Island during the summer can be challenging. Flexibility in these areas is important, but we will do our best to leverage community resources to assist.

Costs and Support:

- Transportation costs from Victoria to Cortes Island and back (estimated at ~\$300) will be covered once.
- If you choose to work on Cortes Island from May to August, you will be responsible for room and board expenses as well as local transportation. We will provide support in finding these accommodations.
- For a predominantly remote project, local volunteers can assist with fieldwork and in-person consultations. You can also plan an in-person field visit to

maximize your time, during which we will cover room, board, and transportation for a stay of a few days to a week.

Flexibility and Community Support: There is flexibility in how this research is structured, and you'll be collaborating with a welcoming and supportive community team.

Program Information

Dates: May 1—August 15, 2025

Compensation: Scholars are paid approximately \$31.80/hr for 250 hours of work (based on UVic Research Assistant pay rate)

Application Deadline: January 31, 2025

Contact: Laurel Currie (sustainability-scholars@uvic.ca)

Visit our website to learn more about eligibility and application requirements.