

Graduate Internship Opportunity

Summer 2025

PROJECT TITLE

Coastal and Marine Climate Change in Kitasoo Xai'xais Territory

ORGANIZATION

Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation

Project Overview

There is some debate and research surrounding the potential role of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to contribute to marine conservation under climate change, since these tools were not initially designed to address climate change. The Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation is one of the Nations that is involved in proposing a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve (NMCAR) – a type of MPA – on the Central Coast of British Columbia. They have also declared their own Indigenous protected areas, including Gitdisdzu Lugyek (Kitasu Bay). Many areas considered for protection zoning under the proposed NMCAR, including Gitdisdzu Lugyek are culturally and ecologically significant. A key priority for the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation is protecting the diversity of species, populations, and communities, including the ability to adapt to climate change, while maintaining cultural connections and stewardship of places and species. Research that monitors the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems within the proposed NMCAR is supported by the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation as it aligns with their sustainability goals. The role of the Sustainability Scholar will be to help develop and pilot a plan for monitoring specific climate change related issues to be considered as part of their MPA management and monitoring.

Project Description

The Sustainability Scholar, working as the climate change research assistant for the Kitasoo Xai'xais will be under the direction of Christina Service, the Wildlife Biologist and Science Coordinator for the Kitasoo Xai'xais Stewardship Authority (KXSA), and supported by Natalie Ban in the Marine Ethnoecology research group at UVic. The Scholar will be responsible for reviewing existing monitoring methods already being done in the Kitasoo Xai'xais territory, identifying ways of monitoring (methods,

indicators) that are relevant for tracking the effects of climate change, piloting some methods and indicators not yet being collecting, and collating and analyzing data already being monitored. Under the guidance of KXSA, this role involves working closely with KXSA staff to implement their vision for climate change monitoring, likely including gathering the perspectives of hereditary chiefs and key community members and keeping KXSA and the community updated on the project. The scholar might also be asked to liaise with government agencies and external stakeholders. In addition to the ecological aspect of monitoring, there may be cultural and social elements important to consider as part of a more holistic way of monitoring climate change's effects. Understanding these elements might involve interviewing KXSA staff and key community members. Overall, the purpose of this role is to take all this information and propose ways of ongoing monitoring of the effects of climate change that can be incorporated into existing and proposed MPAs within Kitasoo Xai'xais territory. The long-term effects of climate change on sea-level rise, salmon survival, habitat, and wildlife ecology, among others, will be considered.

Scope of Work

Primary activities:

- Reviewing the existing monitoring already being done in Kitasoo Xai'xais territory.
- Identifying ways of monitoring (methods, indicators) that are relevant for tracking the effects of climate change.
- Piloting methods and indicators within MPAs for both ecological and social aspects.
- Collating and analyzing data already being monitored.
- Working closely with KXSA staff, hereditary chiefs, and key community members to understand what cultural and social elements are being affected by climate change.

Key questions:

- What is the Kitasoo Xai'xais vision for climate change monitoring?
- How do we incorporate this into existing and proposed MPAs within Kitasoo Xai'xais territory?

Key Deliverables

A report for KXSA that summarizes the project objectives, background, methods, analyses, key findings, and recommendations.

Time Commitment

- 250 hours
- Exact dates of the internship TBD

Preferred Skills & Background

- **Research & Analysis:** Strong research, writing, analytical, and GIS skills; familiarity with methodologies, surveys, and focus groups.
- **Engagement & Communication:** Experience in stakeholder and community engagement, facilitation, public speaking, and working with Indigenous partners.
- **Technical & Project Management:** Project management, organizational skills, and familiarity with WordPress, drafting, design, and financial modeling.
- **Specialized Knowledge:** Background in Natural Resource Management, marine interpretation, and data collection.
- **Other:** Criminal Record Check (expenses reimbursed).

Additional Preferences/Requirements

- Cultural competency and preference for Indigenous candidates.
- Boat handling experience is a plus.
- SCUBA diving certificate is a plus.
- Applicant must have a strong understanding of federal and provincial laws, acts, and regulations related to marine conservation and fisheries.
- Ability to collect, record and organize monitoring data and observations.
- Ability to relay findings effectively through reporting.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills including an understanding of intergenerational trauma and how that affects community members.
- Willingness to be mentored, trained and supervised, as required.
- Genuine respect for Kitasoo Xai'xais traditions, culture and protocols.
- Willingness to learn legislation pertaining to the Kitasoo Xai'xais Government.
- Ability to travel on own accord to Klemtu.
- Ability to provide own housing in Klemtu.

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.