

Summer 2024 Internship Opportunity

TITLE

Working for Watersheds Roadmap Development Research Project

Organization

Watersheds BC

Project Background & Overview

The Sustainability Scholar would undertake research focusing on workforce development in the watershed sector. Watersheds BC and partners like the BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative are at the forefront of the watershed security conversation in BC, and would facilitate a high level of access to leaders in the freshwater community to support this research and analysis.

Watersheds are essential to resilience in a time of climate change. They manage excess water during heavy rain periods and release it during dry times. This resilience to drought provides clean drinking water, food security, fish and wildlife habitat, and critical support for wildfire response. At the same time, BC needs to build a thriving watershed sector that attracts workers, from a high school graduate's first job in wetland restoration to a heavy equipment operator decommissioning a logging road, to an Indigenous Guardian managing water quality data on a new data portal. These jobs – and many more in the watershed sector – have never been more important given the combinations of decades of watershed degradation and climate impacts. This project will contribute to growing and developing the watershed sector in BC.

This project builds on the [Working for Watersheds Report](#) (2021) and [Working For Watersheds Sector Roadmap](#) (2023).

Project Description

Watersheds BC and MakeWay Foundation are actively engaged in partnerships to advance the watershed sector and achieve the vision of a thriving and regenerative economy in the next decade. The purpose of the SSP project is to identify ways to develop a workforce that is well positioned to provide employment and economic activities across BC, and produce reports and materials on this topic. This is valuable work because there is both a critical need and a vital opportunity to protect our watersheds, which are essential to human health, security, prosperity, and reconciliation, and act as natural protectors against the climate crisis.

The project work conducted by a Sustainability Scholar will be actionable immediately, as Watersheds BC is actively collaborating across sectors and jurisdictions to drive solutions in this area. This is an exciting opportunity for a student seeking real-world experience at the confluence of research, water, economics, climate change, and Indigenous issues.

Project Scope

Landscape analysis to identify and elucidate trends, opportunities, and gaps in the watershed workforce in BC, including research on existing relevant government employment programs such as employment transition programs, e.g. CleanBC. Activities may include labour market research, key informant and group interviews, development of recruitment strategies to communicate career opportunities, etc.

Research questions may include:

- What are the environmental, social, and economic conditions facing individuals seeking jobs in watershed security? For organizations seeking to hire for those positions?
- What barriers and opportunities exist for First Nations and Indigenous people who want to enter the watershed workforce? How can developing a stronger watershed workforce advance UNDRIP?
- What actions need to be taken by government to develop a thriving skills training ecosystem to support existing and transitioning jobs?
- What role do training organizations, schools (secondary and post-secondary), and non-profit organizations have in building a thriving watershed workforce in BC? Professional and labour associations?

Deliverables

1. Complete a report based on research questions above, including interviews and analysis; length TBD.
2. Present findings to key partners; forum TBD.
3. Identifying recommendations for outreach, engagement, and products to communicate to a variety of target audiences (to complement research findings); scope TBD.

Time Commitment

May – Scoping, landscape scan, setting up interviews, desktop research

June – Interviews, continued research, First Draft of Report

July * – Interviews, continued research, knowledge translation tools TBD, Second Draft of Report, presentation to Watersheds BC/partners

August 15 – Final Draft of Report and Final presentation to team and partners

*Possible travel to a site visit/youth gathering with work – funding dependent.

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
- Statistical analysis
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Experience with financial modelling and analysis
- Design and layout skills

Additional Information

Given the intersections of the project with Indigenous watershed work, we would love to support a student who identifies as First Nations or Indigenous or someone with lived experience relevant to the project.

There could be many disciplines that would be a fit: Public Administration, Environmental Studies, Business/Economics, Law, Biology, and others.

Additional Project Requirements

Travel to site visit may be possible in Summer 2024. No special equipment is anticipated.

UVic Sustainability Scholars Program

All current UVic graduate students are invited to apply to work on an impactful sustainability research project. Sustainability Scholars Program internships are designed and mentored by partner organizations and paid at a rate of \$30.87 per hour (after deductions) for 250 hours from May 1 to Aug 15. Explore details on our [website](#) and review eligibility criteria before applying.

Application Deadline: January 31, 2024

Contact Laurel Currie with any questions: sustainability-scholars@uvic.ca.
