



APNEP – NC Sea Grant 2020 Graduate Fellowship in Estuarine Research

Purpose

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP) and North Carolina Sea Grant (Sea Grant) are accepting applications for the 2020 Graduate Fellowship in Estuarine Research. The fellowship provides funding for graduate students based in North Carolina with an opportunity to conduct applied research within the North Carolina portion of the APNEP management boundary. Fellows must conduct hypothesis-based research that addresses one or more of the following broad focus areas:

- **Estuary Spatial Planning**
 - Advances North Carolina’s ability to manage existing and emerging commercial and recreational uses of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system to maximize benefits of ongoing coastal habitat and water quality protection and restoration efforts
- **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)**
 - Uses innovative approaches to describe the ecology of and quantify the ecosystem services provided by SAV
- **Coastal Water Quality**
 - Assesses nutrient and sediment loadings under varying conditions and the effects on water quality
 - Investigates the use of relative source tracking for nutrients and sediments
- **Ecological Flows**
 - Identifies hydrologic conditions that support biotic integrity and habitat function
- **Oyster Restoration**
 - Identifies environmental conditions that support natural and restored oyster reef productivity
 - Assesses changes in natural and restored oyster habitat

Proposed work should be relatable to **both** APNEP’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (apnep.nc.gov/resources/publications-and-reports/ccmp) and Sea Grant’s Strategic Plan (ncseagrant.ncsu.edu/about-us/our-vision/), as well as Sea Grant’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (<https://ncseagrant.ncsu.edu/about-us/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>). We **strongly encourage** proposals from graduate students at HBCUs and MSIs and/or from traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities, as well as from graduate students who can demonstrate



how their work and related outreach will benefit underserved and underrepresented communities.

APNEP (apnep.org) is hosted by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (deq.nc.gov) and is one of 28 National Estuary Programs supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (epa.gov/nep). North Carolina Sea Grant (ncseagrant.org) is an interinstitutional program within the University of North Carolina system and is part of the national Sea Grant Network (seagrant.noaa.gov) supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Fellowship Amount	\$10,000
Deadline	5 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 3, 2020
Number of Fellowships	One fellowship is anticipated for 2020, subject to sufficient funding and quality of the received applications.
Duration	The fellowship is for one year. Start date for fellowship activities is flexible but must be after Sept. 7, 2020. All work must be completed by Dec. 31, 2021 and applicants are encouraged develop their proposed tasks and timeline accordingly.
Eligibility	Only graduate students in good academic standing, attending an accredited North Carolina university or college are eligible to apply. Undergraduate students may not apply for funding, but we encourage research projects that include undergraduate participation, especially participation by students at HBCUs, MSIs, and/or in underserved and underrepresented communities . Proposed work must be conducted within the North Carolina portion of the APNEP management boundary (apnep.nc.gov/resources/apnep-maps).
Application	To apply, candidates must prepare a proposal. The proposal should be in 12-point, Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Proposals must contain the items 1-7. Items 1-6 must not exceed 4 pages. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Title, including student and major professor contact information.2. Description of the project including rationale, relevance to the focal area(s) listed above, the hypothesis being tested, and APNEP and Sea Grant priorities, including alignment with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.3. Materials and Methods.4. Clearly defined Tasks and a Timeline to complete the tasks.



5. Declaration of **Other Sponsored Support to be Received** for the overall project.
6. Brief description of the **Outreach/Information Dissemination Plan**.
7. A detailed **Budget including institutional signatures**. Faculty advisor support is not allowed. The research fellowship will be funded with state dollars which do not carry overhead charges. Match is not required. Budget cannot exceed \$10,000. Budget modifications may be required based on APNEP and NC Sea Grant fiscal review. The budget details do not count toward your four-page limit.

The proposal can contain a **Literature Cited** section if needed, which does not count toward the four-page limit.

Each applicant also should include a two-page **current curriculum vitae (CV)** as well as a **letter of support** from her/his major professor. Up to two additional letters of support from end-users and other appropriate parties may be included if they enhance the application. These additional elements are not counted toward the four-page limit.

Data Management Plan: In addition to the above application, to comply with NOAA's data and publication sharing directive for grants and contacts, version 3.0 (<https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php>), each applicant must develop and submit with their application a data management plan (DMP). The DMP does not count toward your page limit above. Please review the guidance document above and **Attachment A** to assist you in preparing your plan. Plans will be included as part of the proposal evaluation process. Plans should be no more than two pages and should include: descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. If your project is not expected to develop any environmental data, then your DMP may simply include the declaration: "This proposal is not expected to generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required." Additionally, upon award, APNEP staff will determine if an EPA Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) (epa.gov/quality) is required and if so, will work with the successful applicant to create one based on their Data Management Plan.

Special Note Regarding COVID-19: As higher-education and research institutions continue to establish their COVID-19 policies for conducting safe field and lab work, the impacts to performing traditional estuarine research are not yet fully understood. Applicants are encouraged to consider



proposals that can accommodate potential restrictions to normal field- and lab-work capabilities, including utilizing existing data for new or improved hypothesis testing.

- Submission** Application materials must be received **by 5 p.m. on Monday Aug. 3, 2020**. Applications will only be accepted through the eSeaGrant portal. This portal can be accessed at: go.ncsu.edu/ncesg. The portal will walk you through submitting all required elements of the proposal. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted for any reason. The portal will automatically close at the deadline.
- Review Process** The review panel will be co-chaired by Tim Ellis of APNEP and John Fear of Sea Grant, and may include other staff of the programs, and other topical experts. Criteria used to rank the proposal are: relevance to strategic priorities of both organizations; quality of the proposed science; thoughtfulness of outreach strategies; and adherence to the instructions provided in this request for proposals.
- Award Funding** The successful applicant will be notified by Aug. 31, 2020. Fellowship funds will be channeled through the fellow's major professor, who must agree to serve as principal investigator on the project.
- Products** Within 60 days of fellowship completion, the fellow is required to submit a final report to Fear and Ellis. Upon receiving the final report, the fellow will be asked to present their findings jointly to APNEP and Sea Grant staff, advisory boards, partners, and the public as part of the Lunchtime Discovery Series hosted by the North Carolina Office of Environmental Education and Public Affairs and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. The fellow also must agree to work with the Sea Grant communications team to translate the findings into an article for *Coastwatch* magazine and/or other products, and with APNEP on similar outreach activities. The fellow's major professor must agree to submit progress reports as requested via the eSeaGrant online reporting system.
- Contact Information** **John Fear**, Ph.D., North Carolina Sea Grant (jmfear@ncsu.edu).
Tim Ellis, Ph.D., Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (tim.ellis@apnep.org).