



## APNEP – NC Sea Grant 2021 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 2021 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 area. 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 mesohaline and oligohaline SAV species.
- **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.
  - Determines the impact of emerging contaminants and micro-plastics to water quality.
- **Ecological Flows**
  - Identifies hydrologic conditions that support biotic integrity and habitat function.
- **Wetlands**
  - Assesses vulnerability of and impacts to coastal wetlands from factors associated with pollution, land conversion, or climate change.
  - Identifies structural and functional loss in coastal wetlands to inform and prioritize restoration.

Proposed work should be relatable to **both** APNEP’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan ([apnep.nc.gov/resources/publications-and-reports/ccmp](https://apnep.nc.gov/resources/publications-and-reports/ccmp)) and Sea Grant’s Strategic Plan ([go.ncsu.edu/Sea-Grant-Plan](https://go.ncsu.edu/Sea-Grant-Plan)), as well as commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by Sea Grant (<https://ncseagrant.ncsu.edu/about-us/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>) and APNEP (<https://apnep.nc.gov/documents/files/apnep-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-statement>). 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](http://apnep.org)) is hosted by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality ([deq.nc.gov](http://deq.nc.gov)) and is one of 28 National Estuary Programs supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ([epa.gov/nep](http://epa.gov/nep)). North Carolina Sea Grant ([ncseagrant.org](http://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](http://seagrant.noaa.gov)) supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

**Deadline: Friday October 29, 2021 at 5pm.**

### **Fellowship Overview:**

- One fellowship is anticipated for 2021, subject to sufficient funding and quality of the received applications.
- The fellowship will be issued for 13 months. All work should be completed within the first 12 months. The final month is reserved for preparation of the required final report (see reporting requirements below).
- The fellowship should be planned around a 1-3-22 start date.
- The fellowship amount is \$10,000.
- The fellowship will be distributed in the form of a student stipend, with funding dispersed in three installments over the course of the award period. The second and third installment will only be provided if acceptable progress is being made on the project (see reporting requirements below).

### **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. We **especially encourage 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 area ([apnep.nc.gov/resources/apnep-maps](http://apnep.nc.gov/resources/apnep-maps)).

### **Application Requirements:**

All applicants must include the following elements.

- A Research proposal (described below), limited to 4 pages.
- A current curriculum vitae (CV) for the student, limited to 2 pages per CV.
- A letter of support from her/his major professor.
- A data management plan, limited to 2 pages.



### **Research Proposal Format:**

The research proposal should be prepared in 12-point, Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Proposals must contain the items 1-7. The proposal should not exceed 4 pages.

1. **Title**, including student and major professor contact information.
2. **Background** of the project including rationale and problem statement, relevance to the focal area(s) listed above, the hypothesis being tested, and how it relates to APNEP and Sea Grant priorities, including our 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. Description of the **Outreach/Information Dissemination Plan** that will be used to share the results of the work to stakeholders.
7. A brief explanation for how the stipend money will be used in support of the project.

The proposal can contain a **Literature Cited** section if needed, which does not count toward the 4-page limit. 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 4-page limit.

### **Submission:**

Application materials must be received **by 5 p.m. on Friday Oct 29, 2021**. Applications will only be accepted through the eSeaGrant portal. This portal can be accessed at: [go.ncsu.edu/ncesg](http://go.ncsu.edu/ncesg). The portal will walk you through submitting all required elements of the application as described above. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted for any reason. The portal will automatically close at the deadline.

### **Review Process:**

The received applications will be assessed by a technical review panel. The review panel will be co-chaired by Dr. Tim Ellis of APNEP and Dr. John Fear of Sea Grant. Additional topical experts will be solicited for the panel as needed. Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria: 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.

### **Reporting Requirements:**

- A 6-month progress report is required. This progress report must be received and accepted prior to the second stipend installment being dispersed.
- A final report is required. The 13<sup>th</sup> month of the fellowship is reserved for the preparation of this report. The final stipend payment will not be dispersed until this final report is received.



- The fellow will also be asked to present their findings 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. This gives APNEP and Sea Grant staff, advisory boards, partners, and the public a chance to see the results of the project.

The 6-month progress reports should be submitted to Drs. Fear and Ellis via email. The final report will be submitted along with other required reporting metrics into eSeaGrant by the student. Dr. Ellis will assist the student in setting up the Lunchtime Discovery presentation. Dr. Fear will assist the student with the eSeaGrant reporting access in the 13<sup>th</sup> month. The winning student will have additional opportunities to disseminate their findings through engagement with the APNEP and Sea Grant's communication teams.

**Special Note Regarding COVID-19:**

Applicants are encouraged to consider submitting proposals that can accommodate any potential limitations to normal field- and lab-work capabilities due to COVID-19.

**Contact Information:**

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**Tim Ellis**, Ph.D., Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership ([tim.ellis@apnep.org](mailto:tim.ellis@apnep.org)).