



NC Coastal Reserve – NC Sea Grant 2023 NC Coastal Research Fellowship Request for Proposals

Purpose

The North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve (Coastal Reserve) and North Carolina Sea Grant are accepting applications for the 2023 North Carolina Coastal Research Fellowship. This \$10,000 fellowship provides North Carolina-based graduate students with an opportunity to conduct research within one or more of the 10 sites that constitute the Coastal Reserve. Using the reserve sites as a research platform, fellows must conduct question-based research that addresses coastal management issues in one or more of the following broad focus areas (in no order of importance):

- **Sediment dynamics and influences on shoreline position, habitat type, and quality.**
- **Sources and impacts of emerging contaminants, plastics, and marine debris.**
- **Impacts of invasive species on coastal ecosystems.**
- **Habitat restoration practices and/or shoreline stabilization approaches.**
- **Effects of water quality on Reserve flora, fauna, and/or habitats.**
- **Wetland carbon stocks and soil and flora properties driving spatial variability.**
- **Influences on maritime forest habitat distribution, changes, and health.**
- **Application of innovative technologies to enhance research and monitoring in coastal systems.**

Proposed work should relate to:

- An identified goal/s in one (or more) of the Coastal Reserve management plans (deq.nc.gov/reserve-management-plans);
- North Carolina Sea Grant's Strategic Plan (go.ncsu.edu/Sea-Grant-Plan);
- Sea Grant's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (go.ncsu.edu/DEI);
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's mission (<https://deq.nc.gov/about/history-of-deq>) and commitment to environmental justice (deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice-0).

We **strongly encourage** proposals from graduate students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Minority Serving Institutions, 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.

The Coastal Reserve is a program of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management in the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (www.nccoastalreserve.net). North Carolina Sea Grant is a multi-campus program within the University of North Carolina system and is part of the national Sea Grant Network (www.ncseagrant.org).



Deadline: Friday, March 17, 2023, at 5 p.m. ET.

Fellowship Overview

- One fellowship is anticipated for 2023, subject to sufficient funding and quality of the received applications.
- The fellowship will be 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 the reporting requirements below.)
- The fellowship starts May 1, 2023.
- The fellowship is \$10,000 in the form of a direct stipend to the student in three installments over the course of the award period. The second and third installments depend on acceptable project progress. (See the reporting requirements below.)
- A research permit from the Coastal Reserve is necessary before research can begin. The fellow must obtain all additional state and federal permits required for conducting the research.
- We expect to issue award decisions on or near April 14, 2023.

Eligibility

Only graduate students in good academic standing, attending an accredited North Carolina university or college, are eligible to apply. First year graduate students that have not yet started coursework are not eligible to apply.

Undergraduate students may not apply for funding, but we encourage research projects that include undergraduate participation.

Research must be conducted within the boundaries of at least one of the 10 sites that make up the Coastal Reserve (<https://deq.nc.gov/reserve-sites>). The Reserve is especially interested in projects that include work at one or more of the state sites (Kitty Hawk Woods, Buxton Woods, Buckridge, Permuda Island, Bald Head Woods, and Bird Island Reserves).

International students are eligible to apply, but funding for an international fellow would require an alternate process that will take longer to implement. As such project's led by international applicants will have a delayed start date.

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 applicant, limited to 2 pages.
- A letter of support from the student's 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, and not exceed 4 pages. Proposals must contain the following:

1. **Title**, with contact information for the student and major professor/advisor.
2. **Description** of the project, including: *rationale*, *relevance* of the project to the coastal management focal area(s) listed above, *research question*, and *alignment* with the program interests (as noted above) of the Coastal Reserve and North Carolina Sea Grant.
3. **Materials and Methods**, with clear explanations of the project's intended methods, including anticipated statistical analyses (if needed).
4. Clearly defined **Tasks** and a **Timeline** to complete them.
5. Declaration of **Other Sponsored Support to be Received** for the overall project.
6. A description of your **Outreach/Dissemination Plan**. How do you plan to share the results of this work to a broad and diverse set of stakeholders?
7. A brief explanation of the planned use for the stipend money in support of the project.

The proposal also may contain a **Literature Cited** section, if needed, as well as up to 2 letters of support from end-users and other appropriate parties. These optional elements do not count toward the 4-page limit.

Submission

All application materials are due by 5 p.m. Eastern time on Friday March 17, 2023.

Applications will only be accepted through the eSeaGrant portal at go.ncsu.edu/ncesg. The portal will walk you through submitting all required elements of the application. We are unable to accept incomplete or late applications for any reason. **The portal automatically closes at the deadline.**

Review Process

A technical review panel will assess the fellowship applications. The Coastal Reserve research coordinator and the Sea Grant deputy director will co-chair the panel. Additional topical experts will provide expertise for the panel as needed.

Proposals will be assessed based on relevance to the focus areas (above), strategic priorities of both organizations, quality of the proposed science, thoughtfulness of the outreach plan, and adherence to the instructions above.



Reporting Requirements

- A 6-month progress report, received and accepted prior to the disbursement of the stipend's second installment.
- A final report is required. The 13th month of the fellowship is reserved for the preparation of this report. The final stipend payment will not be disbursed until this final report is received.
- The winning student will also have additional opportunities to disseminate the project's findings through engagement and product development with Coastal Reserve and North Carolina Sea Grant communication experts.

The fellow will submit the 6-month progress report to John Fear by email (below) and the final report (along with other required reporting metrics) through the eSeaGrant portal. (Fear will assist the student with the eSeaGrant reporting access in the 13th month.) The fellow's major professor/advisor must agree to ensure the student meets all reporting requirements.

Contact Information

John Fear, deputy director, North Carolina Sea Grant, jmfear@ncsu.edu.