



Bald Head Island Conservancy

Pat and Dick Johnston Graduate Fellowship in Coastal Sustainability

Fellowship Details

The Bald Head Island Conservancy (BHIC) is now accepting applications for the 2023 Pat and Dick Johnston Graduate Fellowship in Coastal Sustainability. The Fellowship provides support for a graduate student to pursue a coastal sustainability project in collaboration with BHIC staff and the emerging Center for Coastal Sustainability (<https://bhic.org/conservation/coastal-sustainability/>). Projects should be directly related to the sustainability of Bald Head Island and other southeastern US barrier islands. The Conservancy currently has ongoing scientific research and monitoring projects related to the salt marsh, maritime forest, freshwater aquifer, and dune system as well as sea turtle conservation, avian ecology, white-tailed deer population dynamics, and invasive species. Additionally, the Smith Island Land Trust (SILT) on Bald Head Island owns more than 60 properties that have been set aside for land preservation including properties along the marsh, in the maritime forest, and among the dunes. Topics of special interest for the Johnston Coastal Sustainability Fellowship include landscape and geospatial ecology, land preservation, habitat restoration ecology, coastal processes/engineering, coastal management, sustainability practices, climate change impacts, and resource economics. We recommend that potential applicants discuss project ideas with Conservancy staff prior to applying. In addition to collaboration with Conservancy staff, it is expected that the Fellow will give a public presentation on the results of the project at the Annual Coastal Sustainability Symposium in April 2024 and provide a 2-page final summary report within 3 months of the funding period ending.

About the Bald Head Island Conservancy

The Bald Head Island Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1983 on Bald Head Island, North Carolina. Our mission statement is “We Discover, Learn, Conserve, and Preserve”, and in pursuit of this mission, we conduct barrier island conservation science and research activities and lead a variety of environmental education programs for visitors, scouts, and local schools. Our science and research work falls under three major categories: Environmental Services Contract work for the Village of BHI; 39-year Sea Turtle Protection Program; and collaborative research focusing on barrier island sustainability science and conservation biology. The Smith Island Land Trust is a separate 501(c)3 organization that essentially serves as the Conservancy’s preservation arm. The Conservancy’s campus has 4 primary buildings including the Barrier Island Study Center with laboratory and office spaces, Fleming Education Building with exhibits and dedicated classroom space, Turtle Central gift shop, and a dormitory to house interns and visiting scientists/educators. Visit bhic.org to learn more.

Fellowship Funds

Total Award = \$20,000

Funding Period = June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024 unless an extension is approved by the BHI Conservancy. Funds can be used for stipend, tuition, materials, and travel costs. Distribution of

fellowship funds will be subject to an agreement between the Fellow's university and the Conservancy's finance team. Institutional indirect costs and equipment purchases >\$500 are not eligible through this award. The Conservancy will hold \$1000 in escrow until the final project report has been submitted. Funds to support travel to a professional conference to present project results may be used within 6 months of the Fellowship's end date pending approval.

Eligibility Requirements

Must be enrolled in an M.S. or Ph.D. program at an accredited university and have completed year 1 of the graduate program when the fellowship begins in summer 2023.

Required Application Materials

1. Project Description (3-page limit in 12-point font and 1-inch margins not incl. references)-
 - a. background of related graduate thesis
 - b. need for proposed project and objective(s)
 - c. research questions & hypotheses
 - d. materials/methods and plans for working on BHI
 - e. project timeline
 - f. how working on BHI and/or with BHIC staff is important to the thesis
 - g. if/how the project might incorporate environmental education/outreach
2. Project Budget (not included in page limit for Project Description) including how funds will support student stipend, tuition, materials, and/or travel fees.
3. Letter of Support from Graduate Advisor
4. Current CV

Review Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- Relevance of project to Bald Head Island Conservancy research priorities
- Potential scientific impact of project
- Broader impacts of project, including management implications, education/outreach
- Project feasibility and appropriateness of budget
- Quality and clarity of proposal as written
- Academic qualifications of applicant

Review Process

Application Due Date:	February 1, 2023
Finalists Notification Date:	March 1, 2023
Fellow Selection Notification	March 15, 2023
Funding Period:	June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024

How to Submit Application

Applications should be submitted as a single pdf to Executive Director Dr. Chris Shank at shank@bhic.org. Finalists will be interviewed by the selection panel in early March 2023.