

Overview: NERRS WATCH – A New England Climate Change Intern Program

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) is a network of protected areas established for long-term research, education and stewardship. This partnership program between NOAA and the coastal states protects more than one million acres of estuarine land and water that provides essential wildlife habitat; offers educational opportunities for students, teachers and the public; and serves as a living laboratory for scientists.

The objective of the NERRS WATCH (**W**atershed **A**ctions **T**o **C**limate **H**ealth) intern program is to provide a framework through which undergraduate students from diverse academic backgrounds may enhance their educational experience through practical assignments related to climate change.

Program participants will have an opportunity to work in a variety of coastal and estuarine settings at one or more of New England's National Estuarine Research Reserves as appropriate for their project design. Participating Reserves are located in Rhode Island (Narragansett Bay; www.nbnerr.org), Massachusetts (Waquoit Bay; www.waquoitbayreserve.org), New Hampshire (Great Bay; www.greatbay.org), and Maine (Wells; www.wellsreserve.org).

Position Description

Climate change investigations and outreach products are typically multi-disciplinary. For this reason, internship applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for individual or collaborative projects that bridge disciplines. Appropriate fields of study may include (but are not limited to): climate science, marine science, wildlife ecology, forestry, botany, conservation biology, environmental engineering, hydrology, geology, science education, environmental education, planning, natural resource science, journalism, public health, political science, environmental policy, economics, communications, marketing, and atmospheric science. Intern program projects will be designed by the applicants and therefore tailored to each intern's interests and qualifications; however all interns will be required to generate a science translation product appropriate for distribution to a broad audience (e.g., podcasts, posters, interpretive materials or signage, multimedia tools, models of climate processes, press releases, website/newsletter contents, brochures, etc.) as part of the program requirements.

Applicants will be required to submit a project proposal in accordance with NERRS WATCH intern program application guidelines. Interns may propose projects that are appropriate for a single or multiple Reserve sites. Interns may also elect to propose individual projects or projects suitable for a collaborative effort with interns located at other Reserves.

Intern projects should be designed to assist the NERRS in our efforts to meet one or more climate change strategic plan goals. The NERRS goals, which reflect the three themes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), are:

- 1) Contribute to scientific understanding of climate change and monitor ecosystem changes;
- 2) Assess climate change impacts on human and estuarine ecosystem communities, vulnerability of these communities, and their capacity for adaptation and mitigation;

- 3) Provide educational opportunities and training related to effects of climate change on human and estuarine systems to increase public awareness and foster behavior change.

A broad suite of projects would be considered appropriate for addressing these goals, such as those designed to:

- Investigate the impacts of climate change on water supplies, vegetation, wildlife, coastal processes, etc.;
- Monitor impacts of climate change on coastal habitats (grassland, salt marshes, freshwater wetlands, and forests);
- Build awareness and improve communication of climate change in New England;
- Build alliances to advocate for climate change solutions;
- Create and disseminate media material on the issue.

Applicants should be self-starters with good project management skills. Appropriate host Reserve staff will be available to serve as project mentors. Students may wish to conduct this project within the framework of an independent study program to earn college credit. Opportunities for sharing final project reports/products within the NERRS community and among NERRS program partners may be available in a variety of formats: conference presentations, posters, and/or other media.

Although the intern position is unpaid, a modest stipend and housing may be available. Interns should be able to work a minimum of 30 hours a week for 10 weeks. College students and recent graduates are encouraged to apply.

For more information please contact Donna Bains: Dbains@beld.net



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