

The Nature Conservancy Global Marine Initiative University of Rhode Island Student Research Award Program 2016

The Nature Conservancy at the University of Rhode Island announces a small grants program to support scholarly research by graduate students in collaboration with URI faculty sponsors in ocean and estuarine science and policy. Applicants may request two years of funding (a maximum of \$12,000 per year); however, approval for a second year is contingent upon progress and funding availability. Proposals should describe the development of tangible products (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, outreach materials such as white papers, popular articles, symposia or conference proceedings) that serve to advance the state of knowledge in one of the following topics of particular importance to The Nature Conservancy. This year's solicitation will focus on the following topics:

- *Restoration and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems*
- *The spatial extent and quantification of ecosystem services provided by existing and restored marine and coastal habitats..*

Research proposals can cover any biogeographic extent, from local to global systems. We are especially interested in proposals that will provide the TNC insights into effective methods for advancing the conservation and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems in geographies where we work, including RI and southern New England. For examples of conservation strategies that are currently employed by The Nature Conservancy, please visit (www.nature.org/marine).

Application Process: Awards are limited to graduate students with faculty mentors at the University of Rhode Island. To be considered, please submit an application containing all of the following information:

1. **Letter of application** (1 page maximum) by the student performing the research stating their interest in the project and qualifications to carry it out.
2. **Brief proposal** describing the scope of work and explicit description of the product(s) to be developed. Proposals must not exceed 4 pages, excluding references cited, the budget tables, and budget narrative (double spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins).
3. **Budget table and budget narrative** outlining anticipated expenses up to \$12,000/year. *Note: the budget should reflect direct costs only - indirect costs are not supported by this program.*
4. **Letter of support and sponsorship** by the student's major professor or faculty sponsor describing their interest and contribution to the research. The letter should indicate what additional resources are available to support the student's proposed research and should illustrate how the proposed research aligns with the direction of the sponsor's overall research program.
5. **Short Curriculum Vitae** (2 pages maximum) for the student and the major professor.

Deadline: Applications should be emailed to Edie Thomas, TNC RI Conservation Coordinator (ethomas@TNC.ORG) by **January 16, 2015**. As these are internal funds, proposals do **not** need to be reviewed and approved by the URI Research Office.

Proposal Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel consisting of representatives of the TNC Global Ocean Team, TNC Rhode Island Chapter, the URI Graduate School of Oceanography, the URI College of the Environment and Life Sciences, and the URI Coastal Institute. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Professionalism (10%) - All materials are neat and presented in a professional format, are properly referenced, and contain few or no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Scientific Rigor (30%) - The proposal raises questions that are scientifically based, and can be addressed using the scientific method or valid approaches for testing hypotheses and evaluating data. For synthesis-oriented proposals, the proposal must contain questions that are relevant and timely, and indicate the anticipated sources of information necessary to address the proposed questions.
- Conservation Impact (30%) - The proposal contains a clear and compelling link to management or science that supports conservation planning or action by TNC. The work addresses a current or perceived need in the field of conservation. There is clear articulation of the goals and final products of the project, and how the knowledge that is developed will advance TNC conservation activities.
- Budget (20%) - The budget is sufficiently detailed to allow reviewers to gauge its potential for supporting the proposed work. Requested funds should be allocated as needed among the following categories: Personnel (salary and fringe), Tuition and Fees, Travel, Supplies, Contractual Costs, Other. Match is not required, but other support can be shown on the budget if it helps to illustrate how these funds will enhance or fulfill a larger funding need. Indirect costs are not allowed.
- Relevance to other research underway at University of Rhode Island (10%) - The proposal demonstrates a clear link to and/or advances an existing line of research at the University.

Funds will be available on or about April 2, 2016.

For further information, see www.ci.uri.edu/projects/tncmarine or contact Rich Bell (Rich.Bell@TNC.ORG).