



2025 Spring Internship on Supporting Working Waterfronts through Planning and Policy



URBAN HARBORS INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

I. Background

The National Working Waterfront Network (NWWN) is pleased to announce an **internship opportunity for graduate students from an academic institution in the United States during the winter/spring of 2025**. The student will be paid directly by the NWWN through our fiscal host organization, the Coastal States Stewardship Foundation. The internship project will be focused on applied research related to working waterfronts in the United States and provide students with an opportunity to address real-world needs of working waterfronts in a specific region. Further details about the opportunity follow.

II. Internship Description

This project will address the need for protecting water-dependent land uses. In Virginia, working waterfronts provide critical coastal access for people engaged in commercial and recreational fishing, seafood processing, boat building, repair and maintenance, aquaculture, port activities, and more. Rural coastal communities, like those in Gloucester County, Virginia have experienced an increased demand for non-water-dependent waterfront properties resulting in increased property values, and higher costs for traditional waterfront businesses. This has led to the loss of working waterfronts along the coast and poses long-term consequences to local economics, the environment, and maritime culture.

In the 1990s, Gloucester County revised zoning ordinances to control the type of growth in the area, which resulted in many working waterfront areas previously zoned for agriculture and rural uses, being zoned as residential, and thus the existing working waterfront uses from marinas to seafood processors became non-conforming. A non-conforming use is allowed to continue, and in some cases expand with certain criteria, but if the use ceases for more than two years, it loses its non-conforming status. Unfortunately, this issue of losing non-conforming status is happening more frequently as traditional working waterfront uses are lost due to people passing away and no one taking over. In addition, as new industries evolve from traditional working waterfronts, like habitat restoration, there are no areas for these uses to go. The loss of working waterfronts in Gloucester County constitutes a potential loss of jobs for fishers, seafood businesses, and the maritime and agriculture industries as well as a loss of the identity of the region.

The County's most recent Comprehensive Plan identified the need for a working waterfront overlay to protect existing working waterfronts. The goal of this project is to provide guidance and recommendations for a potential zoning overlay district that protects existing working waterfronts and allows new waterfront uses while considering other residential and recreational uses along the coast.

Objectives and intern duties: The intern will work directly with county staff, and independently to conduct research on issues and ordinances regarding working waterfronts in other rural and suburban coastal localities. As part of the research the intern would:

- Interview (virtually) owners and managers of various working waterfront properties, and neighbors to identify concerns, and challenges specifically related to zoning ordinances, in addition to other requirements (building codes, floodplain ordinances, environmental

regulations and constraints, water quality issues, etc.) that impact the ability to maintain, expand, or establish new working waterfronts in rural residential areas.

- Identify and conduct other forms of outreach such as developing a survey and/or assisting with a community meeting.

Through this research and working with county staff, the intern will develop a recommendation, or recommendations for a zoning ordinance or overlay for Gloucester County as well as a guide for other localities – especially rural and suburban localities that don't have industrial waterfronts – to address waterfront use conflicts through reasonable zoning ordinances or overlay districts. **This work will be conducted remotely in the intern's current state of residence, however, for applicants applying from/near Gloucester County, Virginia, there may be opportunity for a trip to the waterfront and/or to in-person meetings with industry stakeholders.**

Internship goals and opportunities: The goals of this internship are to provide real-world experience and education to a well-qualified graduate student regarding issues facing working waterfronts. **This internship will provide a graduate student with the opportunity to work directly with local governments, and other related stakeholders, while focusing on a nationally important issue of balancing land-uses along coasts and working waterfronts.** The intern will gain valuable experience in conducting applied-research through resource reviews, interviews, survey development and analysis, and community engagement, and understanding how zoning and regulations play a role in land-use and working waterfront development. Together, the County and the intern's methods of research and final recommendations could act as an important resource for other working waterfronts around the nation experiencing similar challenges.

III. Eligibility

All graduate students currently enrolled in a graduate program at a United States academic institution. Students from all majors are eligible to apply. The NWWN and UHI are dedicated to practicing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and allyship. We encourage applications from all backgrounds and are committed to allowing all interns to be comfortable in their identities and participate fully in their research.

IV. Skills and qualifications

All interns must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, strong organizational and time management skills, computer skills (Microsoft Office, Zoom, etc.), and the ability to work effectively in both independent and team-based work environments, interest in community building and engagement, interest/experience with problem-solving oriented and applied research tools, and willingness to learn from diverse audiences.

V. Internship Length Timeframe

Tentative dates for the internship run from mid-February through the end of May (dependent on the student's academic calendar). We anticipate that the internship will be up to 7.5/hours a week (flexible) for the duration of the internship, with each lasting approximately four months. **All of the internships have been designed to primarily be conducted remotely, but please read each description carefully for additional pertinent information.**

VI. Stipend

Interns will be compensated at the rate of \$25/hour.

VII. How to Apply

Please submit the following materials to apply for a Spring 2025 NWWN Applied Research Internship: a) Resume (1-2 pages), b) Cover Letter/State of Interest (1 page), and c) Recommendation letter from your faculty advisor.

Please combine all required materials into a single Microsoft Word document or PDF file, with file name: *LastName_FirstInitial_NWWN_Internship_SP25*

VIII. Submission and Due Date

Please send all application materials as an email attachment to Shannon Hogan, shannon.hogan@umb.edu by 6 pm, Eastern Time on February 10, 2025. Write “2025 NWWN Internship Application” in the email subject line.

Questions? Feel free to contact Shannon Hogan (email above), Urban Harbors Institute, UMass Boston, School for the Environment.