2026 Internship on Supporting Working Waterfronts through Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Planning

I. NWWN Internship Program

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 spring/summer of 2026.** 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

Background

This project will focus on resilience measures for working waterfronts in the Texas Coastal Bend Region. Working waterfronts in this region are critical to local economies through fishing, tourism, and marine trades. Increasing vulnerability from storm surge, sea level rise, chronic flooding, and deferred maintenance pose significant risk to the economic and cultural resilience of these communities. Resources for proactive planning or conducting vulnerability assessments are lacking.

Research Initiative & Team

This work will be advised by the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend Council of Governments under the Regional Resilience Partnership (RRP). The RRP provides training, technical support, and funding guidance to communities in the Coastal Bend, focusing on low-capacity and underserved communities. The project partners and intern will address the following research question: *How can small working waterfronts (publicly owned harbors) in the Texas Coastal Bend assess and prioritize resilience investments to protect water-dependent uses, economic vitality, and community identity under increasing climate stress?*

Research Objectives & Intern Duties

The intern will work directly with the Harte Research Institute and Coastal Bend Council of Governments to:

1. Inventory critical waterfront assets using GIS and local datasets
2. Conduct vulnerability assessments using tools such as GeoRED, NOAA's Coastal Adaptation Planning Guide, FEMA flood tools, and the Clean Texas Marina Checklist
3. Identify local and feasible resilience measures via in-person interviews and focus groups, and surveys with waterfront operators, municipal officials, and other stakeholders
4. Conduct cost-benefit and co-benefit analysis for adaptation options

Through this effort the project partners and intern will develop the following:

1. Final report on the outcomes of the vulnerability assessments and identified resilience measures including adaptation options. The format of the final report will be determined in collaboration with the project team but could include an ArcGIS StoryMap or written report.
2. One-page Clean Marina Resilience Checklist for operators
3. Webinar presentation of research methods and outcomes through NWWN and regional distribution

Internship Goals & Opportunities

The goals of this internship are to provide graduate-level workforce training and education in applied resilience planning for a well-qualified graduate student. **The graduate student will have the opportunity to work directly with local and regional governments, researchers, and other related stakeholders, while focusing on a nationally important issue of climate resilience for working waterfronts.** The intern will gain experience in community engagement through conducting interviews and survey development and analysis. Additionally, the intern will develop their skills in conducting vulnerability assessments using various resilience planning tools and GIS. Together, the RRP and intern's final report will provide an assessment of climate risks and adaptation pathways for small-coastal harbors in the Texas Coastal Bend region, with research methods that could be translated to other working waterfronts experiencing similar challenges.

III. Eligibility

All graduate students currently enrolled in a graduate program at United States universities within the Texas Coastal Bend region and in driving proximity to TAMU-CC. This internship will require both remote and in-person work including travel to interviews and focus group meetings, and thus access to a car is preferred. Students from majors focused on environmental science, coastal/marine science, coastal systems, natural hazards, etc. 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, 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, willingness to learn from diverse audiences. Additional skills preferred but not a requirement include experience working with ArcGIS Pro, knowledge of qualitative research methods, and experience conducting public surveys and interviews.

V. Internship Length Timeframe

Tentative dates for the internship run from the beginning of May through the end of August. The total paid time for work by an intern is 120 hours over the course of four months. This amounts to an average of 7.5/hours a week (flexible) for the duration of the internship.

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 2026 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_SP26*

VIII. Submission and Due Date

Please send all application materials as an email attachment to Shannon Hogan, shannon.hogan@umb.edu by Wednesday March 4th, 2026 by 6 pm, Eastern Time. Write "2026 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.