

# NATURENET SCIENCE FELLOWS SYLLABUS

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

While the Conservancy is committed to continuing to invest in its core cadre of natural scientists, we recognize that we must also harness the innovation, talent and potential of emerging conservation leaders from the fields of applied technology, engineering, chemistry, physics and other disciplines outside of the natural sciences. The NatureNet Science Fellows program goals are to bridge academic excellence and conservation practice to confront climate change, and to create a new generation of conservation leaders who combine the rigor of academic science with real-world application.

## PROGRAM GOALS

- Support innovative and impact-oriented conservation research;
- Invest in the talent potential of a new generation of climate change leaders; and
- Provide partner universities and fellows with access to real-world conservation issues.

## FELLOW EXPECTATIONS

### CONDUCT IMPACTFUL CONSERVATION SCIENCE

#### MEET REGULARLY WITH YOUR UNIVERSITY AND TNC MENTORS

Your mentors will help you to:

- Review original data and address data collection issues;
- Advise you of additional experiments to be performed or data to be collected;
- Assist with data analysis, interpretation and dissemination of results.

**NOTE ALL PARTIES SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN DETERMINING THE FREQUENCY OF CHECK-INS.**

#### CONSIDER THE CONSERVATION IMPACT OF YOUR WORK

- Identify relevant stakeholders and consider how they will use your work, when you should engage them in your work, and how you will be sure stakeholders have access to your work.
- Refine (with your mentors) your research to better address global conservation needs/issues. Work should align (at minimum) with TNC global priorities, but consider if project could fit into regional or local priorities and strategies. TNC Global Priorities include:
  - Action on climate change
  - Protecting water
  - Saving oceans
  - Conserving land
  - Transforming cities

#### DISSEMINATE YOUR RESEARCH

- **NOTIFY TNC PARTNERS OF ALL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS AND PROVIDE COPIES OF PUBLICATIONS**
- Develop communications plans with the TNC Science Communications team and be responsive to requests for information TNC published blog posts or donor communications. You may be asked to provide pictures, videos or other research outputs.
- Get feedback on manuscripts and presentation style critiques from your network.
- Consult with your mentors for opportunities to be a speaker or session chair at regional, national and international conferences.

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

### ATTEND THE ANNUAL ORIENTATION AND TRAINING MEETING

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#### INTRODUCTION TO SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Effective scientist-communicators who foster information-sharing and respect between science and the public are essential for true public communication of and engagement with science. Further, scientists are increasingly requested by their institutions and funding agencies to extend beyond the scientific community and communicate their research directly to public audiences, but traditional scientific training typically does not prepare scientists to be effective public communicators. Through presentations and hands-on exercises, you will learn why your involvement in public communication of science is valuable, how to connect with public audiences and develop targeted engagement strategies, tools for identifying strategic communication goals, how to handle interaction with audiences, and resources for communicating science and finding outreach opportunities. Fellows will also have the opportunity to practice presentations on video and get peer critique.

#### MEDIA TRAINING

Expanding on the science communication training, we will pursue the implementation of some of these lessons as they pertain to engaging policymakers. Training will include an overview of the science policy landscape, strategies for effective targeting of policy makers, and discussion of the role of the scientists in the policy process. Fellow will participate in mock briefings including giving a talk and fielding questions.

#### LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Being an effective leader and building a focused and motivated team is more than making all the decisions. Incorporating short lessons with exercises, group work, partner work, and case studies based on real-life scenarios of participants, you will learn that effective leader's set-up and maintain productive projects by establishing meaningful goals and providing useful feedback to team members. You will also receive training on resolving differences of opinion and accommodating multiple viewpoints in complex scientific discussions.

#### SCIENCE WRITING

Gifted scientists, and more importantly their research findings, may not receive the recognition they deserve if the full impact of their work is not well understood. This recognition extends to policymakers incorporating your data into new regulations, your conservation peers implementing or adapting your results, or even the advancement of your career as a science leader. Thus, getting your work published requires not only great science, but an exceptionally well-written manuscript that is accessible to multiple audiences. You will develop important skills required for clear, concise, and effective writing. This includes understanding the critical components of a clearly written manuscript, and being able to objectively evaluating your current skill level, determine strengths and weaknesses, and focus on improving your writing skills to achieve an accessible manuscript.

## BUILD A STRONG PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

### YOUR NETWORK STARTS HERE

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- NatureNet Program Director (Dawn O’Neal, [dawn.oneal@tnc.org](mailto:dawn.oneal@tnc.org)): Your go-to on questions about the NatureNet program, trainings (including travel), research fund appropriation, help connecting with TNC or University collaborators, mentors, officials. Annual Reports are due to Dawn 6 weeks prior to the date you started the program.
- TNC University Partnership Coordinator (Kassie Morton, [kassie.morton@tnc.org](mailto:kassie.morton@tnc.org)): Your Alumni Network coordinator.
- TNC Science Communication Team (Cara Byington, [cbyington@tnc.org](mailto:cbyington@tnc.org)): Publishing a paper? Giving a presentation? Got a new job? Cool stuff happening in your life? Cara wants to know so she can tell the world! Your “personal” marketing agent.
- TNC Mentor and University Mentor: Your mentors are your resource and advocate at their respective institutions and will help expose you culture and expectations. Connect with your mentors to:
  - Identify colleagues throughout their institutions that have complementary research interests and could provide additional mentoring or guidance.
  - Find ways to expose you to *their* professional networks such as introducing you to collaborators and involving you in community planning or working groups.
- NatureNet Fellows: A font of information on the NatureNet Fellowship, being a post-doc, and how your research can be more conservation focused. A great resource for collaboration!

### PURSUE COLLABORATIVE WORK

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- Collaborate with your mentors and other fellows on manuscripts and future proposals.
- Participate in other TNC activities: SNAPP proposals, the NatureWorks Everywhere youth program, events of the Office of the Chief Scientist, field visits, or All Science Conference.

### CAREER RESOURCES

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- **COMPLETE THE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SURVEY and review with your network so that they can help you achieve skills in which you are deficient.**
- Get feedback on your job search preparation, such as curriculum vitae (CV) development, drafting a research statement, practicing presentations, or rehearsing interviews from your network.
- NatureNet LinkedIn and Facebook Pages
  - Job postings
  - Information on professional development webinar trainings offered by TNC

## PROGRAM AND SELF-EVALUATIONS

Provide a brief summary, when requested by Program Director, on research progress, conservation and career development activities, and assessment of the fellowship.