



WILLIAM & MARY INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATIVE CONSERVATION

2025 Request for Proposals: Applied Student-Led Conservation Research Projects

Overview: The [Institute for Integrative Conservation](#) (IIC) at William & Mary is seeking proposals from conservation partners (e.g., including but not limited to non-governmental organizations, government agencies, tribal governments, private corporations, Indigenous peoples & local communities) and faculty who work with external conservation partners for applied research projects that advance solutions to pressing conservation challenges. Applied research projects will be conducted by talented William & Mary undergraduate students with support from faculty with expertise in the field of research and will be done in close collaboration with conservation partners as part of the IIC's year-long [Conservation Research Program](#). The Program objectives are to (1) support conservation partners with applied research needed to advance their conservation outcomes and (2) help build the capacity of the next generation of conservation leaders (i.e., the undergraduates completing the work). Through the portfolio of collaborative student-led projects, we aim to cultivate long-term partnerships with conservation organizations and communities to advance integrative (i.e., bridging of disciplines, knowledge systems, and sectors) solutions to pressing conservation challenges.

Program Schedule: William & Mary students work alongside a conservation mentor from the partner organization and a faculty mentor to complete research deliverables defined by the conservation partners throughout the year-long program in 2025. Below is the Program schedule:

- **Spring 2025:** Students work with faculty mentors and conservation partners to co-design a project proposal, which will include the identification of project objectives, a literature review, a compilation of data, and a proposal that outlines the research approach.
- **Summer 2025:** Students receive a research stipend and travel support from the IIC to complete research full-time over the 10-week summer.
- **Fall 2025:** Students complete their analyses, finalize reports and deliverables, and communicate their findings to partners and other stakeholders.

Partner Commitment: We aim to bridge the research-action gap in conservation by partnering with organizations with aligned [values](#) to complete applied research that advances the organization's conservation objectives with minimal time commitment. To achieve this, we match students with faculty mentors who guide them through the research identified by conservation partners. To ensure projects meet the goals of the partner organization, we ask partners to commit to the following:

- 1.) Meet biweekly (largely online) with students throughout the program to ensure the project is applied and relevant to advancing conservation outcomes.
- 2.) If student travel is required, we ask partners to work with the IIC to help plan and host students to ensure that their travel is productive, aligns with William & Mary policies, and is safe.
- 3.) Support students with building leadership and professional skills needed to be effective in relevant aspects of conservation.

Characteristics of an Ideal Project: We hope to support partners with projects that meet a gap or expand the scope of their work, especially when it comes to exploring integrative dimensions of conservation challenges. Ideal projects (1) meet an applied need for conservation partners, (2) are feasible for an undergraduate student with faculty support to complete in a year, and (3) advance our collective understanding of how to advance effective conservation solutions. Review the caliber of past projects [here](#). *We accept applied project proposals that align with any discipline or applied subject, but we have found that W&M students and faculty are particularly interested in and have expertise in the following topics:*

- *Applications of GIS and remote sensing to advance conservation assessment, planning, and action*
- *Community engagement and the applications of participatory mapping in community-led conservation*
- *Applied social science and environmental justice research*
- *Biology, animal behavior, and landscape ecology*
- *Conservation entrepreneurship*
- *Applications of data science and Artificial Intelligence (e.g., machine learning) in conservation*

Partner Benefits: Partners will receive support from a W&M student and a faculty mentor who will complete an applied research project designed to meet the needs of your organization with a minimal time commitment. This includes the completion of deliverables identified by the partner, which may include a manuscript, technical report, organized database, education curriculum, interactive map, business models, marketing materials, etc. *The partner organization and faculty mentor will not receive any monetary compensation for participation in this program.*

Selection Process: The IIC will select up to fifteen projects in 2025. The project selection will be based on (1) the application of the research to conservation outcomes, (2) the contribution to current or future integrative conservation approaches, (3) the feasibility of the project (including the safety of the travel) given student capacity and the one-year timeframe, (4) alignment of the project with faculty research expertise, and (5) the partner's excitement for mentoring students and collaborating with the IIC.

Submit a brief project proposal for 2025: Interested partners should use the link below to submit a summary of the proposed research project by June 15, 2024. Partners will be notified By August 2024, the student applications will be advertised in fall 2024, and the Program will begin in January 2025. *Note: Project proposals do not need well-defined research questions, as students and faculty will work with you to co-design the focus of the project in the spring if your proposal is selected.*

To submit a project proposal, please complete the survey below with the following information:

- 1.) Your contact information and the name of the conservation organization
- 2.) A summary of the proposed project (~200 words)
- 3.) A brief explanation of how this project will advance your organization's conservation outcomes (~200 words)
- 4.) Project requirements (language requirements, skills needed, and travel requirements)

Submit your proposal here: https://wmsas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9KzkXeO4aTXN3PE

Due: June 15, 2024

Please feel free to reach out to Erica Garrouette, IIC's Research Program Manager, with questions or to discuss potential research projects (elgarrouette@wm.edu). Thank you for your interest in partnering with the IIC to advance conservation solutions.