

Ecosystem Management Research Internship
Up to 40 hours/week, \$3,300/month
Rolling Application, First Review Deadline April 6, 2026

Thurston Conservation District seeks a dynamic, creative, and critical thinker with interest in ecosystem policy, landscape restoration, and working lands conservation to participate in a long-term internship exploring the science and policy of ecosystem service quantification.

INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

Thurston Conservation District anticipates being able to provide an internship experience as part our ongoing project work in ecosystem conservation planning.

We are developing a strategy for adapting remote sensing data and field observations to track the status of ecosystem functions at a site, watershed, and county-wide scale. This work will be used to support the development and implementation of TCD programs and policies that aim to achieve a “net gain” in ecosystem functions over time through a mixture of voluntary stewardship and incentives. This project will include research into “best available science” and analysis of spatial data to evaluate ecosystem conditions, and development of a framework for assessing ecosystem condition and testing practical methods for collecting data to describe change over time.

We are seeking one or more graduate-level or senior undergraduate interns to participate in this project. This position will be able to accommodate hands-on training and mentorship and can be integrated with the timing and academic requirements of your school year or degree program. This opportunity is well suited to a graduate-level or experienced undergraduate with previous experiences in reviewing primary literature, GIS analysis, and field work in ecological sciences.

The intern will work in the TCD Habitat Team under the supervision of the Habitat Program Manager. You will be part of an interagency project team, helping with meeting coordination and facilitation, background and topical research, development of synoptic analyses and annotated bibliographies, and field testing of protocols. You will be positioned for co-authorship of a significant regional framework for ecosystem service quantification. This project is likely suitable as a springboard for a Master’s-level thesis or senior project.

Additional opportunities and duties may arise across Thurston Conservation District’s activities, including job shadowing with field technical assistance and the implementation of resource conservation and ecological restoration projects.

Details:

- This opportunity is available between June 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027. Precise start and stop days are negotiable—we are seeking an intern or a combination of interns that align well with our overall project schedule.
- Full time (40 hours/week) or part time (20 hours/week) commitments can be accommodated over the period of the internship—interns will ideally participate in the project over a multi-quarter contract with clear expectations around hours and availability.
- A stipend will be offered during the internship of up to \$3,300 per month.
- This position could be suitable for development or partial completion of a Master’s thesis or a senior project.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

- Must have dependable transportation to and from the Thurston Conservation District office

- Must be consistently available to complete internship work during business hours (Monday-Friday, 7am-5:30pm)
- Ability to walk over uneven ground or wade in wetland conditions in adverse weather at all times of year while carrying 20 pounds of field gear.
- Ability to interview and interact with community members as part of visits to private and public lands.
- Must be able to reliably get to and from TCD office (no mass transit is available to the TCD office).

DESIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Applicants with the following skills, knowledge, and abilities will be given preference. Of course, not all these abilities are expected, and the scope of the internships will be adapted to the capabilities of applicants:

- Senior or graduate-level standing, with a combination of coursework in public policy, ecosystem sciences, and GIS.
- Interest and ability to integrate this opportunity into their academic studies and make a substantive commitment to the project.
- Personal interest in ecosystem stewardship, ecosystem service quantification and markets, food production systems, and ecological ethics.
- Ability to be self-directed, organized, proactive and communicative in a fast-paced collaborative work environment where your peers are counting on you for deadlines.
- Ability to locate, read, and interpret peer-reviewed research literature.
- Have a valid driver's license and spend a high proportion of the internship residing in Thurston County (participating in field work is necessary).
- Strong independent writing skills, and the ability to develop large documents in MS Word using Styles, Sections, Headers & Footers, Track Changes, Tables of Content, and other advanced word processing features.
- Experience with prompt engineering and testing outputs from Large Language Models to support research or organizational tasks.
- Familiarity with ecosystem regulation including Critical Areas Regulation, Shoreline Management Act, and the Endangered Species Act.
- Familiarity with Pacific Northwest ecosystems including the ecology of streams, rivers, wetlands, anadromous fisheries and South Sound prairies.
- Competence with ESRI ArcGIS Pro, Excel and data management, and familiarity with Smartsheet and MediaWiki platforms.

TRAINING

All necessary training required to perform duties will be provided on the job.

Training may be provided in any of the preferred knowledge, skills and abilities described above. The intern will become part of the Thurston Conservation District community, and will have opportunities to shadow TCD staff, and explore professional development interests as part of their duties.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WORKSPACE

We encourage applications from individuals who have navigated limited access to educational or professional opportunities and are seeking to build on the possibilities that education provides.

Here at Thurston Conservation District our employees and the people we serve come from all walks of life. We strive to hire and work with great people from a wide variety of backgrounds. We believe in the importance of recognizing the value that each of us contributes to the success of the District's mission. Having a diverse workforce is the District's greatest resource of strength and knowledge. It is through the combination of talents and abilities that we can pursue finding effective ways to best serve our community. We are committed to

building a diverse and inclusive workplace for everyone. All employees, interns, and volunteers receive consideration without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status. Please let us know if you need accommodation to participate in the application process.

THURSTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT, a non-regulatory government agency, educates and assists the citizens of Thurston County in the management of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, inspiring voluntary, incentive-based conservation practices.

TO APPLY

Please submit your application electronically to job-applications@thurstoncd.com and please include **Ecosystem Management Research Intern – YOUR NAME** in the subject line. Please include the following in your application:

1. Resume - include relevant work, internship, volunteer, and academic experience.
2. Cover letter - include the duration and hours you are seeking, as well as intended academic integration.
3. Writing Sample – provide an independently produced sample of technical or scientific writing.

***We sincerely thank you for your interest in interning with the
Thurston Conservation District team!***