

Oyster REEF (Restoration, Ecology, Economics, and Fisheries governance) Project in Florida's Big Bend

We are looking for three PhD students to join our team at the University of Florida studying oyster resources along Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast.

Oyster populations are critical components of coastal ecosystems and human communities throughout the Gulf of Mexico. In this region, oysters are also the focus of numerous large-scale restoration efforts to promote ecosystem services including shoreline protection and fish and wildlife habitat, an extant wild oyster fishery, and a growing aquaculture industry. Numerous management challenges exist, owing in part to anthropogenic and environmental perturbations as well as unique life history characteristics. Improved understanding of oyster ecological, management and market relationships is sought to inform research, restoration, and management policies. This project will have strong connections with state and federal management agencies, and offers an opportunity to integrate research and management to inform immediate policy needs regarding oyster fisheries, aquaculture, ecosystem services, and restoration.

Three separate student assistantships are available. Each position is intended to have a broad topical emphasis, though student formulation of specific research topics is desired. General research areas include:

- (1) Oyster ecology, restoration, and population dynamics
- (2) Oyster harvest/production management and governance
- (3) Oyster production market demand, characteristics and approaches

Opportunities for research topics are diverse but examples of potential areas of work include:

- Assessing oyster population responses to restoration
- Exploring potential management trade-offs between oyster ecosystem services
- Examining oyster reef resilience from oyster harvest
- Evaluating new management strategies for wild harvest
- Assessing management needs for effective governance of oyster aquaculture
- Evaluating production strategies for environmental and/or market potentials

Successful applicants will work to develop individual projects that together will contribute to a deeper, integrated/transdisciplinary understanding of oyster resources. Applicants are encouraged from multiple disciplines, including fisheries, ecology, biology, natural resources, decision science, human dimensions and economics. Preference will be given to students with strong demonstrated quantitative and writing skills (as demonstrated by publication in peer-reviewed literature), as well as those with interdisciplinary research experience. A competitive stipend, tuition waiver, and health insurance are all included in the packet. Students will be based at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida with much of the research focused in the "Big Bend" region of Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast with some projects centered near Cedar Key, Florida and the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.

Background information on a related restoration project of Lone Cabbage Reef is available [here](#) (<http://www.wec.ufl.edu/oysterproject/>). Students interested in joining this cohort should also review the lab pages of the individual faculty members including

Ed Camp <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/people/faculty/camp/>

Frank Asche <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/people/faculty/asche/>

Leslie Sturmer <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/people/faculty/sturmer/> and <http://shellfish.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Peter Frederick <http://www.wec.ufl.edu/faculty/frederickp/>

Bill Pine <http://www.wec.ufl.edu/faculty/pineb/> and lab page <https://goo.gl/wLVTD9>

Please provide CV and unofficial transcripts, as well as a cover letter describing which student position you are most interested in (if multiple, please provide order of preference), why this position is of interest, and how your skills and interests can contribute to the research team. Target start dates for enrollment are summer or fall semester 2018. Opportunities may exist for employment on the project prior to the start of the academic semester of admittance. Correspondence and any questions should be addressed to Dr. Ed Camp, University of Florida Program of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences: edvcamp@ufl.edu, (352) 273 3652. Please submit materials by February 23, 2018.