What is a Master’s Project?

Master’s Projects are interdisciplinary assessment, problem-solving or research projects conducted by a multi-disciplinary group of 4-6 Master’s degree students as the capstone requirement of their academic program at the University of Michigan’s School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS). Projects provide client organizations with insights into complex environmental issues and useful products, often at little or no cost, while providing students with a professional, team experience. These projects focus the substantial capabilities of SEAS students and faculty on real-world problems facing clients. Project ideas are developed by clients, faculty, and/or students.

How might this opportunity benefit your reserve, sector or NERRS?

A reserve, sector or the NERRS would be a fitting client for a SEAS Master’s Project. SEAS is a professional graduate program, with most students having 2-5 years of work experience before beginning their graduate studies. Students seek real-world opportunities to apply and hone the skills they’ve gained during their degree, demonstrate capabilities, and gain additional knowledge. Their interests span the array of issues and challenges of interest to reserves, including ecosystem management, ecosystem services, environmental education and outreach, collaborative resource management, coastal resiliency, and community adaptation to climate change.

Master’s Projects also provide reserves with an opportunity to train the next generation of coastal and estuarine management professionals by helping them build critical analytic and problem-solving skills. SEAS students are often awarded NOAA’s Coastal Management and Knauss Fellowships and transition into full-time positions with government agencies and NGOs. For example, students involved in the projects listed below now work for NOAA; U.S. EPA; NH Department of Environmental Services; WA Department of Ecology; CA Coastal Conservancy; San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission; National Oceanographic Partnership Program; USFWS; and, the Pew Charitable Trusts.
Examples of prior projects on topics of potential interest to NERRS:


“Climate Ready Great Lakes Training Modules.” April 2011, Client: NOAA Great Lakes Sea Grant Network

“Resilience of Oregon Coastal Communities in Response to External Stressors.” August 2016, Client: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

For more information:
To learn more, visit: http://seas.umich.edu/research/capstone
Prof. Julia Wondolleck is also available to discuss project ideas (juliaw@umich.edu)