



Marine Extension and
Georgia Sea Grant
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



2026 State Fellowship Program: Oyster Outreach Fellowship

(Call for Applications)

Host Organization Name: ECO, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant

Fellowship Position Title: Oyster Outreach Fellow

Fellowship location: Savannah, GA

Host/mentor name: Laura Solomon, co-mentors Christi Lambert and Mark Risse

Host/mentor email address: laura@tybeeoyster.com

Position overview:

Under the leadership of ECO, the Oyster Fellow will work alongside The Nature Conservancy and the UGA Shellfish Lab and Oyster Hatchery. The fellow will primarily focus on education and outreach to youth and priority stakeholders - related to oysters in Georgia's Coastal ecosystems and the Georgia Oyster Resiliency Initiative. The fellowship will also include significant community engagement throughout the coastal Georgia region.

The goal of this fellowship is to serve community partners and stakeholders of the Oyster Resiliency Initiative, potential growers, consumers, and members of the seafood industry, including restaurants, to ensure that knowledge translates into oyster restoration, sustainable growth and healthy coastal ecosystems. This fellowship will also show K-12 students that there are many job opportunities in our working waterfronts through exposure to oyster fisheries, restoration and resiliency work.

Major area of work #1: Wild Lease Programming & Spat Collector Initiative

Collaborate with ECO and The Nature Conservancy to design and pilot place-based educational programming on Tybee Oyster Company's wild lease at Pa Cooper Creek in support of the Georgia Oyster Resiliency Initiative. Support the development and coordination of a student-facing spat collector initiative in which students deploy and

monitor collectors to evaluate oyster recruitment, growth, and environmental conditions. Assist in guiding student data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and translate field-based experiences into meaningful classroom learning that connects oyster restoration, aquaculture, and coastal resilience. Assist in engaging and sharing information with education leaders in the northern, mid and southern coastal counties identified working with the Oyster Resiliency Initiative.

Major area of work #2: K–12 Education & Program Implementation

Support the delivery of ECO's existing school-based programming in partnership with educators across coastal Georgia. Work closely with the Program Coordinator to facilitate lessons, field experiences (e.g., shell bagging, hatchery visits, farm visits), and classroom integrations aligned with state standards. Assist with logistics, materials preparation, and student engagement to ensure high-quality, place-based learning experiences. Assist in the production of materials, the sharing of information and development of recommendations for replication for the Oyster Resiliency Initiative.

Major area of work #3: Oyster Restoration & Coastal Resilience

Support restoration efforts and community engagement initiatives led by The Nature Conservancy as part of the Georgia Oyster Resiliency Initiative. Participate in fieldwork, monitoring, events and outreach and stakeholder engagement activities that engage priority stakeholders, advance oyster reef restoration and promote ecological, economic, and community resilience. Contribute to stakeholder-driven efforts by engaging with partners and community members, while gaining experience in the ecological and conservation role of oysters in protecting and strengthening coastal environments.

About the Host Organization:

Launched in July 2024, ECO Georgia was founded by Laura Solomon, Chair of ECO and CEO of Tybee Oyster Company, and Katie Holliday, Vice-Chair of ECO and Leader in Residence at Tybee Island Maritime Academy. With their strong educational background and passion for oysters and the environment, Laura and Katie saw an opportunity to inspire educators to take a more active role in curriculum creation through ECO. Their goal is to help students connect with the unique coastal ecosystems in their own backyard.

ECO is dedicated to promoting sustainable oyster farming and fostering community engagement and advocacy for oysters in Georgia.

By collaborating with educators to empower students, increasing awareness and support

for our coastal ecosystems, and engaging the community and partner organizations, we aim to make a lasting impact on Georgia's pristine coastline.