

## Nature's Valley Trust – Internship Opportunity (2023 – 2024)

### Natures Valley Trust

The Nature's Valley Trust is a small community driven NPO working at the cutting edge of integrated conservation in South Africa. We operate in four main arenas, namely Conservation, Environmental Education, Community Engagement and Research. We take a holistic view of people and the environment and use our four programmes to help shape how people live, how they view the world around them, and how they as individuals can contribute to conserving the natural world. Nestled in the magnificent Garden Route, and situated in world renowned Nature's Valley, we are a passionate group of conservationists that aim to make a practical difference with the work we do.

### What to Expect

Our internships are usually connected to specific projects, for example research into the impact of human activity on local shorebirds. This means the activities you take part in and working hours will depend largely on the internship available, though they're likely to be long and a degree of flexibility will be required. You'll certainly be helping out with our regular events though such as bird-ringing, flower walks, fish surveys and/or holiday programmes. We'll also give you the opportunity to take ownership of your own mini-project depending on your expertise and interests and we'll talk you through the options available when you arrive.

A typical week will be structured to allow certain days to focus on certain activities. Weeks are broken down into:

- Research day
  - On research days you will head out into the field with staff and work with them to collect valuable data in several ecosystems: coastal, estuarine, forest, fynbos, and urban.
- Training day
  - Training days will involve a staff member taking a deep dive into their field of expertise. These days will be both theoretical and practical.
- Community service day
  - Community service day will take you out into the surrounding communities of Plettenberg Bay. Here you will be involved in clean-ups, the establishment of vegetable gardens and assisting with community needs. Project days will allow you to focus on a specific project that aligns with your educational needs. Under the mentorship of staff, you will take responsibility for this project from the development phase. There are a range of topics you can choose from that can be catered for your main interests.
- Project focus day
- Fun day

## **Current Programmes to Experience**

### ***Tsitsikamma Fynbos Programme***

Projects will include a wider range of ecological research studies covering pollination, seed dispersal, fire dynamics and more. These project results will inform the development of, freely available, environmental education and community awareness resources.

### ***Rivers and Estuary programme – Groot River Estuary Project***

The first component of this project is monthly water quality sampling; inspecting various water quality parameters to ensure a healthy system for all who depend on its functioning. Secondly, we conduct monthly CWACs (coordinated waterbird counts) for monitoring of waterbird utilisation of the estuary and River. The CWACs form part of a larger citizen science project monitoring the health of water bodies across the country, through avian activity.

Salt River Project is in the early phases of its development with endless opportunities to be immersed in thought-provoking ecological and social research. This project will feature an ecosystem-wide approach, monitoring the systems from source to sea, with emphasis on the biodiversity that inhabits it and the anthropogenic impact on the river and estuary. The Salt River is, interestingly, home to a unique assemblage of macro-invertebrates, a significant number new to science.

### ***Forest programme***

A newly launched programme is currently in its developmental stages. These initial projects will focus on keystone species monitoring, which includes the Bush Pig, various bird species and Cape Leopard (in partnership with the Cape Leopard Trust). We will also look at the impacts of tourists and hiking trails on bird activity. As the projects gain traction, the team wish to expand the programme to include an added variety of fascinating projects.

### ***Coastal Programme (#ShareTheShores)***

The white-fronted plover (WFPL) breeding success project monitors the breeding success of the WFPL – a declining beach-breeding species. The project involves surveying four local beaches for WFPL activity and nests as well as newly hatched chicks; monitoring eggs, adults and chicks over time; banding individuals for ease of monitoring; and on our experimental beaches implementing simple interventions and creating public awareness. This project runs from August until the end of March with peak nesting activity from November to January.

### ***Adopt-a-Beach Education Programme***

A flagship environmental education programme, that has been running for over a decade. This programme takes learners out of the classroom and onto the beach to learn about beach formation and the various aspects of beaches as a component of the coastal ecosystem. In partnership with The Two Ocean's Aquarium, learners also do online learning, working towards accreditation in Marine biology.

### ***Birding Connect Education Programme***

This focuses on a small group of learners from participating schools who have a keen interest in birds. In partnerships with Birdlife Plettenberg Bay, NVT teaches learners to ID birds by sight and call, use binoculars and field guides, explore different bird habitats and about their role in the ecosystem

as a whole. The programme also has a skill development component where we focus on communication skills, photography and the use of virtual technology.

### ***Community Engagement Programme***

This programme aims to raise awareness around the importance of the environment, and how to use it sustainably. The programme has included events, such as community greening, clean-ups and recycling drive along with various workshops on a myriad of topics, from alien vegetation identification and control to sustainable fishing practices.

### **Reporting to the Director or Project Manager will:**

- Select and conduct a research project relative to issues pertaining to operations of the Nature's Valley Trust.
- Develop highly appropriate and context driven research and materials for selected programmes.
- Work with local stakeholders, communities, and schools.
- Monitor and evaluate project progress and programme impact.
- Assist with fundraising and stakeholder support.
- Performs other duties, which are deemed by management to be an integral part of the job.

### **Shared Duties (with all staff)**

- Marketing and communication: contribute to and compile monthly snippets with the team towards social media and newsletter publications.
- Develop and publish articles and impact stories, both internally & externally.

### **Requirements:**

We are preferably looking for people who have or are studying towards a qualification in fields such as zoology, ecology, ornithology, conservation biology, environmental science, nature conservation, wildlife/natural resource/integrated coastal zone management, environmental education, social studies, etc. However, this is not essential. Trustworthiness, integrity, dedication, and a sense of responsibility are essential as is a keen interest in community-based conservation.

- The position requires good interpersonal skills, analytical thinking, report-writing problem-solving, planning, and organisational skills.
- Strong initiative and imagination in the redevelopment and creation of programmes.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong time management skills.
- Ability to work independently as well as to collaborate and contribute as an integral part of a small team.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point).
- Language: English

**Applications:** Please send your CV and a letter of motivation to [\*\*info@naturesvalleytrust.co.za\*\*](mailto:info@naturesvalleytrust.co.za)