



M.Sc. Applied Science position:

Soil eDNA on Sable Island

Saint Mary's University, Halifax

Project Summary

Sable Island National Park Reserve is home to endemic and rare species, as well as an iconic population of introduced horses. Using large (0.5-1.3 ha) horse exclosures installed in 2021, we are testing how horses affect coastal dune ecosystems, in partnership with the Sable Island Institute, Parks Canada, and Dalhousie University.

Now accepting applications from qualified candidates for a 2-year fully funded M.Sc. position which will examine impacts of horses on soil biodiversity, with a focus on soil microbes. There is some flexibility to adapt the project to the student's interests, but we are especially interested in using eDNA to compare soil microbial communities before versus after the exclosures were installed, as well as between exclosures versus control plots. The student will be based in the [Conservation and Soil Ecology Laboratory](#) at Saint Mary's University and will be supervised by [Erin Cameron](#).

Program details

The program will begin in Spring or Fall 2024 and last for two years, with a minimum annual stipend of \$22,000. The M.Sc. stipend will be increased if the candidate is successful in securing additional scholarships or takes on an additional TA position.

The ideal candidate will:

- Hold a Bachelor's degree in Biology, Environmental Science, or a related discipline.
- Have experience conducting independent research and working collaboratively in field and laboratory conditions.
- Preference will be given to applicants with previous microbial ecology/metabarcoding experience

This position is open to Canadian and International students, however, tuition costs at SMU are higher for non-Canadian students hence, they would require additional funding of their own.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):

[Saint Mary's](#) is committed to an academic environment that is inclusive, equitable, and dedicated to embracing global perspectives. Our lab also runs a [book club](#) that

discusses books relating to EDI and ways to make SMU more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible.

How to apply

If you are interested in this position, please send a brief letter outlining your research experiences and interests, your CV, and an unofficial transcript to Erin Cameron (<mailto:erin.cameron@smu.ca>). We anticipate a starting date in Spring 2024 or Fall 2024. Applications are due **12 January 2024** but will be reviewed as they are received.