



Spatial planning for Climate Change: Land Use for Conservation, Agriculture, and Energy (SPARCLE)

Summer 2026

Project Background

In 2021, the University of California Santa Barbara ([UCSB](#)) and Conservation International ([CI](#)) launched the Arnhold UC Santa Barbara-Conservation International Climate Solutions Collaborative to unify their demonstrated expertise and networks to conduct cutting-edge applied research to yield tangible, progressive solutions, and propel the careers of emerging environmental professionals. This partnership includes several applied collaborative research projects aimed at pushing the boundaries on resilient ocean and land conservation. The Collaborative has also created the Arnhold Environmental Fellows program—a powerful opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in collaborative research projects and receive mentorship from experts in the fields of environmental and ecological science.

Climate-driven shifts in both species ranges and in the spatial configuration of threats to biodiversity will affect the success of conservation. In this project, “Spatial planning for Climate Change: Land Use for Conservation, Agriculture, and Energy (SPARCLE)”, UCSB and CI will further advance the science of spatial planning for projected ecosystem responses to climate change. We are looking for students to support a project investigating how changes in climate and habitat suitability affect human-wildlife conflict in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA), and how these patterns might be mediated by wildlife corridors. The project works closely with the University of Namibia and Namibia’s Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, and research outputs aim to inform the ongoing management of wildlife corridors and conservation initiatives in the region.

We are currently seeking highly 1-2 motivated undergraduate student fellows to support this human-wildlife conflict project for the duration of Summer quarter. These students will work closely with Dr. Evan Patrick, in collaboration with Bren faculty Ashley Larsen, CI and international collaborators, and graduate student researchers to produce impactful research.

Responsibilities

During this opportunity and depending on the project, the Fellows will gain experience working on an applied research project and may be responsible for the following activities:

- Gather and synthesize peer-reviewed literature
- Find and manage spatial data related to land use/land cover, agriculture, climate, biodiversity, human-wildlife conflict, species movement
- Develop and execute reproducible code for spatial and statistical analyses
- Contribute to presentations and reports

Desired Skills and Experience

- Coursework and/or experience with ecology/conservation
- Experience reviewing and synthesizing peer-reviewed literature
- Experience with or interest in learning GIS
- Experience or interest in learning R and/or Google Earth Engine
- Attention to detail
- Prior research experience

Fellow Selection Criteria

Students will be selected as Arnhold Environmental Fellows based on the following criteria:

- Excellence in environmental and ecological science and research
- Interest, skills, and experience related to the project responsibilities described above
- Registered UCSB undergraduate student in good academic standing

All Fellows are expected to participate in bi-weekly professional development events throughout the summer, including a 5-minute flash talk presentation about your project, and other program-related events.

How to Apply

Apply for this position via Handshake with either the: a) job number – 11030432; b) job title – Spatial planning for Climate Change: Land Use for Conservation, Agriculture, and Energy (SPARCLE); or c) employer – Marine Science Institute. In your application package, please include the following:

1. Your resume including relevant coursework
2. A short cover letter (no longer than one page) that includes information on (a) your interest in human-wildlife conflict and conservation planning, (b) any relevant work or volunteer experience that relates to the desired skills and experience outlined above, and (c) availability for either a part-time or full-time summer fellowship.

For questions, please contact: Jennifer Bone (jebone@ucsb.edu). The Arnhold Environmental Undergraduate Fellow will be paid \$20/hour and will work for 12 weeks from their start date in late June.

Application Deadline: May 22th, 2026