



Office of Research, Innovation,
and Economic Impact
**INSTITUTE FOR A
SUSTAINABLE EARTH**
George Mason University®

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ISE Summer Highlights Edition

Networks Catalyst Teams in Action

Through our Network Catalyst Grants Program, the ISE supports the development of transdisciplinary faculty-led teams in applied research aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in order to accelerate transdisciplinary engagement on critical issues from an impact-driven, co-creative research perspective. Network Catalyst teams work with the Institute to forge new and sustained engagements, and/or evolve and activate existing partnerships with community-based organizations, NGOs, governments, the private sector, or other strategic partners working toward shared visions and actions. This summer, our 2024-2025 Network Catalyst Teams held workshops to bring together these different stakeholder groups around the themes of extreme heat and emergency preparedness. [Click here to read the workshop highlights prepared by team leads Dr. Hemant Purohit \(emergency preparedness\) and Dr. Luis Ortiz \(extreme heat\).](#)

For more information about the program, contact ISE Associate Director Dr. Julianna Gwyszcz (jgwyszcz@gmu.edu).

[Click Here to Read More](#)



2025 ISE Summer Sustainability Graduate Fellows: Partnering Grad Research Assistants (Fellows) with Organizations on the Front Lines of Sustainability Challenges

Our ISE Summer Graduate Sustainability Fellows just wrapped up another rewarding co-productive research experience with their external project partners. Co-sponsored by GMU's Graduate Division and the Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE), the 2025 Sustainability Summer Fellowships for Graduate Research Partnerships program provided financial support and professional development to doctoral students who worked with local to global partner organizations on applied research projects. This opportunity is designed to connect students with organizations making a positive impact on our world. [Click here](#) to learn more about the program, our partners, and phenomenal 2025 summer cohort of grad student fellows.

[Click Here to Read More](#)

Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress 2025

The Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE) team attended the 5th [Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress](#) in Chicago, co-organized by ISE partner [Future Earth](#), the [Belmont Forum](#), and hosted by the University of Illinois system. ISE has been leveraging strategic partnerships with Future Earth for years and also hosted scoping workshops for Belmont Forum funding opportunities in the past. This year, two new international collaborative research actions were launched at SRI2025: [Ocean 2](#) and [Resilience](#). These calls support international, transdisciplinary research teams.



Mason as a Living Lab

The [Institute for a Sustainable Earth](#) (ISE) and its partners – the [Patriot Green Fund](#) and [OSCAR](#) continued to support on-campus research projects within [Mason's Living Lab](#) program. In the 2025 seed grant program four new projects received awards to work on high impact sustainability topics. These new research and scholarship initiatives use the campuses' living learning environment, buildings, roadways, watercourses, and green spaces for experimentation and education to develop and advance sustainability education and research.

The 2025 seed grant awardees are the following:

- The **Living Lab Wetland Complex** project aims to initiate a long-term study of the ecological development of the accidental wetland ecosystem while establishing the larger wetland complex, including the compound for student research, scholarship, and nature observation.
- **SmartFlow Living Lab** supports innovation in stormwater management by integrating innovative technologies and state of the art sensors with experiential learning opportunities that focus on harmonizing infrastructure development with natural water flow.
- **NextGen Biodiversity Monitoring** relies on automated camera traps, audio recorders, eDNA sampling, drones, and satellites, as well as artificial intelligence to identify and monitor biodiversity on campus.
- **Patriot EcoEye** uses drone-based remote sensing technologies to monitor vegetation dynamics on campus.

Read more about all the Living Lab Projects and the teams implementing these ideas [here](#).

Events

What happens when science meets policy in a populist age?

Join leading international experts for a global workshop on Mon. Sept. 8th (9 am-noon ET) with in-person and Zoom participation options. Explore the role of civic science practices in shaping the future of evidence-informed policy.

[Click Here to Register](#)

COMMUNICATING SCIENCE *for* POLICY IN A POPULIST WORLD



Monday, September 8th
09:00 am – 12:00 pm (ET)

Fuse at Mason Square
3401 Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA

Registration required:
← Fuse or Zoom →



Student Opportunities

Undergraduate Minor in Climate Resilience and Adaptation (CRA Minor)

The mounting threat of climate impacts has created a need for an innovative workforce with the expertise to build community resilience. The newly developed undergraduate minor in Climate Resilience and Adaptation (CRA) at George Mason University will provide students with the skills to develop and implement real-world solutions for communities navigating one of the most pressing issues today. This program bridges climate science, policy processes, and practical adaptation strategies – giving students actionable knowledge to translate research into effective practice.

Climate resilience and adaptation is an interdisciplinary effort; therefore, the CRA minor is geared towards students studying within a wide range of subjects. Most George Mason students will be able to obtain the CRA minor by taking ten additional credits beyond their primary degree program, including two core courses and a topic-relevant practical experience. By exploring the complexities of climate change through diverse perspectives, students will gain the expertise needed to contribute meaningfully to local and global climate resilience efforts.

The CRA Minor was developed through George Mason University's National Science Foundation Accelerating Research Translation award and is co-hosted by the Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Earth Sciences and Department of Environmental Science and Policy in George Mason University's College of Science.

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



MINOR IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION

Why Choose the CRA Minor?

This transdisciplinary program bridges climate science, policy development and adaptation strategies, equipping you with practical skills to translate cutting-edge research into real-world community resilience solutions.

Designed for All Academic Paths

Open to any major with just ten additional credits beyond your primary degree—two core courses plus a hands-on practical experience.

Make a Meaningful Impact

Develop expertise to contribute to local and global climate resilience efforts and position yourself in a growing field.

Scan here to learn more!



<https://bit.ly/4jG9XyJ>

Interested in learning more about our public workshops and courses supported by the Institute for a Sustainable Earth and the Virginia Climate Center? [Click here](#) to receive registration information and updates about our offerings related to climate resilience.

[Click Here to for More Information](#)

Intern - Transmission Owner Policy Analyst, Dominion Energy

This internship role supports the efforts of the Transmission Owner Strategy group with its representation of Electric Transmission's (ET) business interests in the stakeholder and regulatory processes of Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). It provides an opportunity to learn about the PJM Interconnection and its wholesale electricity markets and will help Electric Transmission analyze and understand the RTO and FERC policy landscape pertaining to transmission expansion, operations, planning, and project execution.

[Click Here to for More Information](#)

In the News

- [For older adults, extreme heat can mean life or death](#)
- [CEHD and University Libraries are building a tool to improve navigating education research](#)
- [George Mason expands access to VAST semiconductor certificate program](#)
- [Bluetooth blues? George Mason turns a bug into a big win](#)

The Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE) aims to connect members of the Mason community with others across the Mason community—and with other communities, policy-makers, businesses and organizations—so that, together, we can more effectively address the world’s pressing sustainability and resilience challenges.

The ISE Newsletter provides up-to-date information on conferences, funding opportunities, and research pertaining to environmental science and sustainability. The biweekly newsletter aims to facilitate information sharing among researchers, practitioners, and relevant local, national, and international organization.



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