**Call for Applications for Graduate Student Mentorships in the Applied Biodiversity Sciences Conservation Scholars Program**

**Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University**

**With support of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

**Integrating Energy Development and Policy with the Conservation of Resources and Communities**

**Objective**: Energy development and policy and associated impacts on terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity have become important components of the political process in Texas and the Gulf of Mexico. There is a need for students trained in decision making, conflict resolution, and the integration of natural and social sciences to better understand the application of scientific knowledge to policy matters and governance in relation to these processes. Often the best vehicle for gaining real world experience is through an internship in an agency, NGO, or private sector firm imbedded into the program of undergraduate education. The NSF funded Applied Biodiversity Science program at Texas A&M University has years of experience in integrating disciplines, internships, and problem solving in international conservation. We base our Conservation Scholars program on the development of a model with the same objectives, albeit focused on a different geography and a more focused conservation challenge. The NFWF Conservation Scholars program is built upon the integration of scientific disciplines (natural and social sciences), institutions and actors, and broader impacts to achieve conservation outcomes.

**Conservation Scholars**: We propose a two-tiered program to integrate the activities of undergraduates and graduates. The focus will be on both local issues related to the Gulf of Mexico ecosystems and energy development and on broader questions of the relationship between energy development, energy policy and their impacts on biodiversity and natural resources. This coming year the program will recruit 15 undergraduate scholars *during the Fall semester of 2016*. Each group of 5 undergraduate Conservation Scholars will work under the supervision of a graduate mentor assistant. We are soliciting applications now for **three graduate mentoring assistants** for the Fall and Spring, 2016-2017.

**Description**: ABS graduate students in good standing in the ABS Program are eligible for these three graduate fellowships. Students with approved learning plans with have priority to serve as “***mentor assistants***” rather than a teaching assistant to guide a small cohort of undergraduate interns as they develop their projects and internship proposals. This support will be for two academic semesters (tuition and fees), with health insurance and a $20,000 stipend. These will be competitively awarded. In addition, graduate mentor assistants will receive a travel allocation to allow them to assist the placement of undergraduate interns by visiting agencies and organizations throughout their year of appointment.

**To Apply**: Send via email your name, advisor’s name and academic department, a full CV and a letter of application with the following content. A) Describe your past present and future engagement in the ABS Program. B) Express the reason for your interest in the program and the skills you can bring that are relevant to the specific goals and objectives of the mentoring activities and the research and policy emphases of the program. Your faculty advisor should also send an email of note approving your application. Send all information **by July 1, 2016** to:

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