

Virginia Chapter AFS - Junior Fisheries Biologist Program Purpose and Procedures

Statement of Program Intent

The goal of the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program is to provide practical field experience to students with interest in pursuing careers in fisheries science and aquatic resource management. Students are paired with a fisheries mentor from their local area to gain hands-on experience and to plan and execute a fisheries-related project. We are seeking motivated students that are available to participate full-time (32-40 hours per week) for at least 8 weeks during summer break. Students are provided with a scholarship, not to exceed \$3,000, to be paid in three equal installments over the term of their participation, with the final installment paid after successful completion of their project and submitting a project report. Application to the program is open to current 11th- and 12th-grade high school, community college, and four-year college students regardless of race, creed, sex, or economic background. Because a goal of the program is to increase diversity within the fisheries professions, groups underrepresented in our profession are especially encouraged to apply. Information for prospective mentors also may be found by following the link. Applications and supporting materials must be submitted to the Chapter's Past President as indicated on the Chapter website (<https://units.fisheries.org/va/officers/>) by the date listed on the Chapter's website: <https://units.fisheries.org/va/awards/jrfisheries/>.

Fisheries science is the study of marine, estuarine and freshwater fisheries, and includes assessing and monitoring fish and aquatic invertebrate populations for ecological and economic health, and to determine harvest rates, i.e., catching fish or aquatic invertebrates for commercial, recreational or subsistence purposes. Fisheries science includes many areas of research, such as studying aquatic populations, habitats, ecological health, biodiversity, physiology and toxicology, socioeconomics and fisheries management. Aquatic resources management refers to the process of minimizing adverse impacts on aquatic populations within their shared habitat through science-based practices in order to conserve the aquatic resource as a whole.

Overview of procedure

Members of the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society will establish connections with high schools, Virginia's 23 community colleges, and four-year colleges to identify prospective participants in this program. Additionally, some school districts have mentorship programs. In addition, the availability of this scholarship program will be publicized through the activities and outreach channels of the Chapter, including its website and social media communications.

Virginia Chapter members will attempt to partner prospective junior fisheries biologists with a nearby mentor, for example at a university or an agency such as the Virginia

Department of Wildlife Resources, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Forest Service and others. Applicants may apply to the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biology Program with or without having identified a prospective mentor. (1) If no mentor was identified, the Awards Committee will attempt to match a strong applicant with an opportunity that has been put forward by a prospective mentor. (2) If a prospective student and mentor have already connected with one another, the student would develop a proposal for a summer's work with the mentor and submit it as described below. Applications materials are presented below.

The successful applicant will be selected by the Executive and Awards Committees. *An application will be approved only if the mentor can demonstrate that the student is covered by liability insurance from the institution or agency at issue or through other means.* The student's stipend will be paid by the Chapter in monthly payments (to be determined based on \$1000 for full-time service), with payment of the last installment contingent upon receiving a final report. The final report would take the form of a brief scientific report, with introduction, methods, results, discussion, and literature citations, and would be subject to review by the mentor and revision by the student until it reaches a satisfactory state. Upon written approval by the student's mentor, the Treasurer of the Chapter would make the last payment.

Timeline

Ascertain that the Chapter has support for one or more scholars	September 30
Call for applications and nominations	November 30
Call for mentors	November 30
Students and mentors submit applications	January
Award committee considers applications	January – February
Announce award recipient(s) at Virginia Chapter annual business meeting	February – March
Student works with mentor through the summer	May - August
Working with mentor, student prepares and submits a report of the active learning experience	August 30

Overview of the application

Applicants must complete all required fields in all sections of the application of the application to be considered complete. Applicants who submit incomplete applications will not be considered for selection. Please contact VCAFS Awards Committee Chair (see info at end of application) with any questions about the online application or application process. All applicants will be notified about acceptance to the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biology Program.

Application for the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program Scholarship

Please contact VCAFS Awards Committee Chair (see info at end of application) with any questions about the application or application process. All applicants will be notified about acceptance to the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program.

Please note that you must make arrangements for: (1) high school (and community college) transcripts, (2) an Academic Letter of Recommendation, and (3) a Character Letter of Recommendation to be submitted in support of your application. Incomplete applications will not be successful. This form and all supporting materials must be submitted to the Chapter's Past President as indicated on the Chapter website (<https://units.fisheries.org/va/officers/>) by the date listed on the Chapter's website: <https://units.fisheries.org/va/awards/jrfisheries/>.

Section 1: Student Contact and General Information

First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

City:

Zip Code:

Phone:

Email:

Citizenship:

Gender (please check one):

Male

Female

Prefer not to disclose

Were you previously a Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program Scholar?

Yes

No

Students who have already served as a Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program student will not be accepted for a second summer, as it is the wish of the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society to provide this opportunity to the maximum number of students.

Ethnicity (check all that apply):

African-American, African-Caribbean

Alaska Native or American Indian

Asian or Pacific Islander

Caucasian/White

Hipanic, Hispanic-American or Latina

Other

Current grade in school:

11th grade

12th grade

Freshman at community college

Sophomore at community college

Freshman at four-year college

Sophomore at four-year college

Junior at four-year college

Date of Birth:

GPA:

High School (and community or four-year college) transcripts must be included in your application packet.

If a specific mentor recruited you or you contacted a potential mentor, please list his/her name and affiliation here:

What is your availability, in terms of dates or service?

What is your availability within that time period (e.g., all day, every day, restricted times)?

Do you have access to personal transportation?

Yes

Some of the time (explain: _____)

No

How did you hear about the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program (check all that apply)?

Flyer

Website

Web video

Through a teacher/counselor

Through a Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program mentor

Through someone in the fisheries field

Through a friend

Social media

Other:

Can we share your application with colleagues that may have other internships or scholarships?

Yes

No

Parent or Guardian Information:

Name:

Address (if different from applicant's address):

Phone:

E-mail:

High school, community college, or university information:

Name of Institution:

Address:

Phone:

Section 2: Statement of Interest

Directions: Explain in 800-1,000 words why you want to participate in the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program. Please tell us about your interests in this profession and your career goals. Describe your experiences in the biological sciences, the environment, and community service activities. Discuss any challenges you have overcome, are experiencing, or anticipate in pursuing your goals. If you have a mentor and project in mind, describe the plan.

3. Complete each of the following sentences.

At the end of the summer, my fisheries experience will have been successful if...

At the end of the summer, I will be disappointed in my fisheries experience if...

4. Describe a personal experience that introduced you to the world of fish, fisheries or aquatic sciences. If that experience encouraged you to get involved in these fields in some way, please describe your involvement.

5. Many deserving students apply to the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program each year. Please tell us why you should be one of the students selected this year?

6. What qualities would you like to see in your mentor during your term as a Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program scholar? Why are these qualities important to you?

Applicant Signature:

Date:

By signing, you confirm the information provided on this application is honest and accurate and you understand that applying to the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program does not guarantee you will be accepted into the Program.

Section 4: Letters of Recommendation

Directions: You must submit two academic Letters of Recommendation from a current or previous science, math, or English teacher with the application to the VCAFS Awards Committee Chair (address listed at end of applications). The reference letters should include a title page with the following information:

Academic Reference's Contact Information

First and Last Name:

Subject:

Name and Address of High School, Community College, or four-year college or university:

Email:

Phone:

Application for Mentorship of a Virginia Junior Fisheries Biology Scholar

Section 1: Mentor Contact and General Information

First Name:

Last Name:

Employment entity:

Address:

City:

Zip Code:

Phone:

Email:

Section 2: Description of Opportunity

Describe the opportunity you offer and the work to be performed? How will it provide the mentee with experiential learning and professional growth? How will the mentee's performance be assessed?

Location of work area if applicable:

Describe any qualifications needed:

Describe any constraints (e.g., mentee must provide own transportation, must be able to lift 50 lbs., etc.):

Have you previously mentored a Virginia Junior Fisheries Biology Program Scholar?

Yes. Describe the project and outcomes of previous mentor/mentee experiences.

No

Mentor Signature:

Date:

By signing, you confirm the information provided on this application is honest and accurate and you understand that applying to the Virginia Junior Fisheries Biologist Program does not guarantee you will be matched with a mentee.

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Or brad.fink@dwr.virginia.gov