Preferred skills for this project include: basic familiarity with ArcGIS software (introductory class or equivalent), attention to detail, and interest in environmental and/or geographic research methods. However, expertise in ArcGIS is not required as we hope to teach the intern new skills on the job and enhance their exposure and interest in environmental/geographic research.

Our project works to understand the relationships among people, communities, and forests in Baltimore over the past 100 years. The distribution of landscapes that seem like “nature” or “wilderness” are actually the result of complex social histories. By examining urban forest environmental history, we hope to gain a better understanding of historically-constituted mechanisms of racial and economic environmental inequalities. These insights will help contribute to local agency and non-profit goals for a more equitable future urban forest landscape for Baltimore City.

We are using several sources of historical aerial imagery to characterize change in the city’s forest patch cover over time (1926-27, 1937-38, 1952-53, 1964, and 1972). This analysis of forest patch change allows us to determine which forest patches have been relatively stable, persisting through time, and which are much more dynamic. The HACU intern will help to georectify and digitize land cover from 1952-53 aerial imagery of Baltimore and may assist with preliminary analysis of change in forest cover over time. There will be opportunities to gain a variety of experience by participating in other GIS projects and analyses as time allows, as our office has many research scientists conducting geographic social-ecological research.