

# 2020 Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowship

## What is it?

- A fellowship established to provide on-the-job education and training opportunities in coastal resource management and policy for postgraduate students.
- A two-year opportunity that offers a competitive salary, medical benefits, and relocation and travel expense reimbursement.
- A program that matches postgraduate students with state coastal resource agencies and nonprofit organizations to work on projects proposed by the hosts and selected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management.

## Who is eligible?

- Any student completing a master's or other advanced degree in natural resource management or environmental-related studies from an accredited U.S. university between January 1, 2019, and July 31, 2020. Students must also be U.S. citizens. Students from a broad range of environmental programs are encouraged to apply.
- Application packages are due to your local Sea Grant director by January 17, 2020.

## Where can you get information?

- Contact the Office's fellowship coordinator at [ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov)
- Visit the fellowship website at <http://www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship>
- Contact your local Sea Grant director at [www.seagrant.noaa.gov/About](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/About)

## Fellow Eligibility and Selection

### ELIGIBILITY

Any U.S. citizen who will complete a master's or other advanced degree program in natural resource management or environment-related studies at an accredited U.S. university between January 1, 2019, and July 31, 2020, is eligible to apply for the Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowships. Students from a broad range of environmental programs are encouraged to apply. Students who are not U.S. citizens or who attend non-U.S. institutions are not eligible. All applications must include the following items:

1. Resume or curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages using 12 pt. font).
2. Statement of the applicant's goals with emphasis on what the applicant expects from and can contribute to the fellowship experience (500 words or less).
3. Two letters of recommendation, including one from the applicant's principal professor. If no principal professor exists, the faculty member who is most familiar with the applicant's academic work may be substituted.
4. Unofficial copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.

## HOW TO APPLY

Application packages must be submitted to the Sea Grant program office in the state where you earned your degree by January 17, 2020. Each Sea Grant program office may select and forward up to four applications to the NOAA Office for Coastal Management for review. Applicants from states not served by a Sea Grant program office should contact the Office's fellowship coordinator for more information on submitting an application (contact information is below).

## SELECTION OF FINALISTS

From the nominations submitted by Sea Grant directors, 18 finalists will be selected by a selection panel. Final decisions will be made by March 13, 2020, and all applicants will be notified of the decision by the end of the following week.

## PLACEMENT OF FELLOWS

A workshop to match hosts with fellows will take place in Charleston, South Carolina, April 27 to May 1, 2020. Before the workshop begins, each of the 18 finalists will receive a packet of information detailing the fellowship projects, each of the host organizations, and the background of the area of assignment. No contact between prospective hosts and finalists should be made prior to the placement workshop.

The finalists will be brought to the workshop at the expense of the NOAA Office for Coastal Management for final interviews and placement. Each of the selected host organizations will send the fellow mentor to the placement workshop. The workshop will consist of program orientation, project presentations given by the hosts, finalist presentations, finalist and host interviews, and fellow matching. Of the 18 finalists selected in 2020, six will be placed with a state coastal program and three will be placed with a Digital Coast Partner.

## FELLOWSHIP PROJECTS

**Host Agency:** Association of State Floodplain Managers and Coastal States Organization

**Location:** Madison, Wisconsin

**Project Title:** Mitigating Multiple Loss Properties: Guidance and Training for Coastal Communities

**Project Goal:** Work nationally to support coastal communities to tackle one of the greatest challenges to reducing flood damages and costs in a changing climate — repeatedly flooded properties — through research, guidance development, and direct technical assistance.

**Host Agency:** California State Coastal Conservancy

**Location:** Oakland, California

**Project Title:** California State Coastal Conservancy's Wetland Recovery Project

**Project Goal:** Help implement, track, and evaluate a visionary regional plan to restore southern California's wetlands, the Regional Strategy 2018, as well as support a community-based wetland restoration grant program in order to increase coastal wetland resilience that benefits all people in California.

**Host Agency:** Delaware Coastal Programs

**Location:** Dover, Delaware

**Project Title:** A Roadmap to Protection: Understanding the Costs of Adaptation

**Project Goal:** Develop a decision-tree process for communities, homeowners, business owners, and land stewards to follow on actions they can undertake to mitigate flooding impacts from sea level rise and coastal storms; and provide outreach and education on the process.

**Host Agency:** Guam Coastal Management Program

**Location:** Hagatna, Guam

**Project Title:** Update the Draft Seashore Reserve Plan

**Project Goal:** Advance a sustainable and vibrant coast through marine planning and effective administration of natural resource-related laws, programs, and policies.

**Host Agency:** Maryland Chesapeake and Coastal Service

**Location:** Annapolis, Maryland

**Project Title:** Resilience and Public Recreational Lands in Maryland: Developing Strategies for On-the-ground Climate Adaptation

**Project Goal:** Identify and implement new technical guidance and on-the-ground climate adaptation best practices for several Maryland Department of Natural Resources land unit sites in order to assist land managers in ensuring the long-term resilience of our ecosystems, infrastructure, recreational uses, and public access.

**Host Agency:** National Estuarine Research Reserve Association at Narragansett Bay Research Reserve

**Location:** Prudence Island, Rhode Island

**Project Title:** Building Our National Capacity to Protect Coastal Wetland Migration Pathways: Assessing Stakeholder Needs and Creating Transferable Communications Tools

**Project Goal:** Characterize the needs for coastal wetland migration pathway information, identify preferred tools and communication approaches, and develop best available wetland pathway data and tools.

**Host Agency:** The Nature Conservancy

**Location:** Florida Keys, Florida

**Project Title:** Building Capacity to Use Existing Digital Coast Tools and Resources for Implementing Nature-Based Solutions after a Major Hurricane

**Project Goal:** Plan and implement nature-based solutions to reduce risk in two regions of the Southeast United States that have been recently impacted by hurricanes: the Florida Panhandle and the Carolinas Coastal Plain.

**Host Agency:** Texas Coastal Management Program

**Location:** Austin, Texas

**Project Title:** Implementation and Improvement of the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Program

**Project Goal:** Implement water quality management measures along the Texas coast through stakeholder engagement, data analysis and communication, and strategic programmatic review.

**Host Agency:** U.S. Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Program

**Location:** St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

**Project Title:** Updating the St. Thomas East End Reserves (STEER) Management Plan to Recover and Improve Coastal Resilience in the U.S. Virgin Islands

**Project Goal:** Produce an updated St. Thomas East End Reserves 5-year Management Plan through a transparent, inclusive, and fully informed process in order to provide managers and partners with a prioritized set of actions that protect the social and ecological communities of St. Thomas.

For more information on the 2020 state projects, please visit the fellowship website at:

[https://coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/grad\\_opportunities.html](https://coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/grad_opportunities.html)

For more information on the 2020 Digital Coast projects, please visit the fellowship website at:

<https://coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/digitalcoast.html>. Contact the fellowship coordinator at:

[ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** What degree program does someone need to complete to be eligible for the fellowship?

**Answer:** For the 2020 fellowship, applicants must complete a master's or other advanced degree by July 31, 2020, to be eligible. A broad range of degrees are applicable to the fellowship because the projects are new and different each year. Previous fellows have had degrees in environmental studies, natural resource management, marine affairs, marine science, geology, public affairs, and regional land management. The most important prerequisite is an interest in coastal issues.

**Question:** What criteria do the Sea Grant directors use when writing their letters of endorsement?

**Answer:** The Sea Grant directors evaluate applicants based on a face-to-face or phone interview. They look for applicants who have a strong professional interest in coastal management; have experience, through internships, extracurricular activities, or jobs, in coastal activities; and have a proven ability in interpersonal, oral, and written communication.

**Question:** What is the length of a fellowship project?

**Answer:** Fellowship projects are two years long. For instance, the 2020 fellowship will start in August 2020 and end in August 2022. Newly selected fellows are given the opportunity to visit their host organizations prior to the start of the fellowship to meet the staff at their host organization and to look for housing.

**Question:** Can the fellowship hosts nominate someone for a fellowship position?

**Answer:** Fellowship hosts cannot nominate anyone to be a fellow on their project. Hosts and fellows are selected independently of one another and then matched up through a mutual interview process. Contact between applicants and hosts is not allowed. Applicants are encouraged to read about the fellowship projects on the website or to contact current fellows and ask them questions about their position or experience.

**Question:** Does the place where applicants live or go to school determine what project they are eligible for?

**Answer:** Not at all. Applicants are eligible for any of the projects regardless of where they live or have studied.

**Question:** What is the salary for the Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowship?

**Answer:** The current salary is \$42,000 per year. In the second year of the fellowship, a locality pay factor may be added to the salary, depending on the location of the fellowship.

**Question:** How do fellows get paid?

**Answer:** All of the benefits, including salary, are administered by an outside contractor through a contract with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management.

**Question:** What other benefits, in addition to salary, are included as part of the fellowship?

**Answer:** Health insurance, worker's compensation, relocation reimbursement, and travel reimbursement.

**Question:** How much relocation reimbursement do fellows receive?

**Answer:** Fellows will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 to move to their fellowship location and up to \$1,000 to move at the end of the two-year fellowship. If relocation is not required or the fellowship is not completed, relocation reimbursement will not be provided.

**Question:** How much travel reimbursement do fellows receive?

**Answer:** Fellows will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 per year for professional development travel. A separate pot of money will be set aside for fellows to travel to specific meetings and conferences required by the fellowship program. Any travel related to their project will be reimbursed by the host.

**Question:** Do fellows have contact with one another during the fellowship?

**Answer:** The fellows see each other at three events throughout their fellowships. One is the fellows' meeting, which takes place in the summer of each odd year, and the other is a winter conference, which changes depending on the year. In even years, the fellows attend the Social Coast Forum, and in odd years they attend the Coastal GeoTools Conference.

**Question:** Where have previous fellows gone on to work?

**Answer:** Fifty-eight percent of fellows accepted positions with state government as their first post-fellowship job. Others accepted positions with the private sector (8 percent), the federal government (13 percent), nongovernmental organizations (8 percent), local governments (3 percent), academia (5 percent), and 5 percent went back to school.