



California Sea Grant Host Application 2023

District 1 - 1656 Union Street, Eureka CA 95501



Agency Background

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages the state's highway system. Our transportation network maintains more than 15,000 miles to promote the regional flow of people and goods to support the economy, tourism, and everyday life in California. Caltrans strives to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.

Caltrans envisions a brighter future for all through a world-class transportation network that is socially and environmentally responsible. Caltrans is undertaking a major shift in focus and values by prioritizing multimodal transportation, climate action, environmental stewardship and sustainability, and equity and livability in all communities.

General Position Description

The Fellows will be supported by and work directly with the other current Caltrans Fellows and former Sea Grant Fellows. Caltrans emphasizes a healthy work-life balance. The District 1 location in Humboldt County offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in nature, nestled between the ocean, mountains, and ancient redwood forests.

A fellowship with Caltrans North Region Environmental provides an experiential learning opportunity with professionals in diverse areas of expertise, including biologists, engineers, project managers, archaeologists, and more. Working with the Environmental Engineering, Environmental Project Delivery, and Coastal Stewardship units, the Fellow will integrate into a team that provides career support and guidance to the Fellow as they refine their goals. Caltrans Sea Grant Fellows are treated as full staff members and are given responsibility, value, trust, and appreciation.

Each Fellow will directly contribute to the future development of California's critical infrastructure by minimizing the impacts and maximizing the environmental sustainability of Caltrans projects. Caltrans is committed to providing a positive fellowship experience and a beneficial career development opportunity, and therefore the specific projects undertaken will depend both upon the Fellow's interests and the department's needs. Past Sea Grant Fellows have contributed to the following tasks:

- Community Impact Assessments
- Wetland Delineations
- Mitigation and Monitoring Plans and Reports
- Drafted eDNA white paper
- CEQA-level watershed assessments for upcoming transportation projects
- Clean Water Act 401 Certifications
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Memo
- CEQA Categorical Exemption

Both Fellows will work on a broad range of tasks; specific differences are detailed below. Caltrans has a flexible telework schedule, with Fellows coming into the office up to two days per week.

Coastal Policy Fellow (1 position)

Supervisor: Lorna McFarlane, Senior Resource Specialist, Coastal Commission Liaison: (707) 672-3593/lorna.mcfarlane@dot.ca.gov

This fellow will work directly with Lorna to facilitate the development of Transportation and associated mitigation projects under the jurisdiction of the CA Coastal Commission. Additionally, the Fellow will

work on long term programmatic approaches and policy developments to streamline partnership between Caltrans and the Coastal Commission. Work is focused on all aspects of delivering projects in the Coastal Zone: coordination with the Coastal Commission, local governments, and the Humboldt Harbor District; drafting technical memos and researching Coastal policy; and collaborating with internal project team members.

Environmental Engineering and CEQA Fellow (1 position)

Supervisors: Amanda Haas, Water Quality Coordinator: (707) 296-5469/amanda.haas@dot.ca.gov
Cari Williams, Environmental Planner: (707) 298-1465/cari.williams@dot.ca.gov

This fellow will work directly with Amanda and Cari on 401 Water Quality certifications, CEQA technical memos, field work including wetland delineations and site visits to assess impacts of construction on water quality and aquatic resources, and coordination meetings with Regional Water Quality Control Boards. Opportunities may include conducting research to obtain regulatory approval of novel materials and methods for Caltrans projects and special permitting and coordination for fish passage projects.

Skills Learned for Both Positions

Caltrans offers tangible and transferrable skills that will develop your career, supplementing your education with fast-paced and hands-on work experience. By the end of your fellowship, you will:

- **Understand environmental regulations and their applications, including:**
 - California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - Clean Water Act
 - California Coastal Act
 - Federal Endangered Species Act
 - California Endangered Species Act
- **Gain project management and stakeholder collaboration experience**
- **Refine technical writing skills into specialized reporting formats**
- **Experience field work opportunities such as:**
 - Biological surveys for salmonids, listed birds, rare plant species, butterflies, & more
 - Create mitigation plans and site monitoring in support of environmental permitting requirements
 - Working with partners to test eelgrass mitigation feasibility studies
- **Directly collaborate on projects with other agencies, including:**
 - California Coastal Commission
 - California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - California State Parks
 - U.S. National Parks Service
 - State & Regional Water Resources Control Boards
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)
 - U.S. Forest Service

In addition, the Fellows will have access to Caltrans Environmental training and career development courses, and will be directly mentored by policy analysts, biologists, water quality specialists, environmental engineers, geologists, and other environmental experts.

Desired Qualifications

A successful Caltrans Sea Grant Fellow does not require specific experience or expertise, but rather a positive attitude, open mind, and willingness to learn and take on new challenges. Good time management, organization, listening & communication, and interpersonal skills will help fellows succeed in the fast-paced and team-oriented Caltrans work environment. The interdisciplinary and technical nature of Caltrans projects requires creative and analytical thinking, the ability to learn quickly, and a solutions-oriented approach.