

NOAA Office for Coastal Management | 2020 California Sea Grant Fellowship Host

Position Description:

Part of NOAA's National Ocean Service, the Office for Coastal Management's (OCM) mission is to ensure healthy coastal ecosystems, resilient coastal communities, and vibrant and sustainable coastal economies. OCM is organized regionally to address coastal issues at a local level, and provides nationally authoritative data, locally relevant tools, targeted and tailored training, and technical assistance supported by subject-matter expertise. We believe in the power of partnerships, bringing together the collective strengths of agencies and organizations to address the needs of coastal managers and coastal communities.

OCM's West Coast Region covers Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California, with staff in each of these states except Alaska. The fellow will be working in the West Coast office based in Oakland. While the fellow will focus their work on coastal California, they will have opportunities for interactions with staff nationally, across the West Coast Region, and in other regions.

The West Coast office is currently working closely with numerous partners at the local, state, and federal levels on various initiatives to move the needle on California's coastal resilience goals. The fellow will have countless opportunities to engage with professionals from diverse affiliations. In addition to interactions with the three sister coastal agencies and the three California-based NERRs, the fellow will lead and support projects that actively partner with federal agencies including FEMA, USGS, USEPA, and other arms of NOAA, and state agencies such as Office of Planning and Research, Ocean Protection Council, the Office of Emergency Services and more.

Working with OCM will provide the fellow with the flexibility to pursue achievements on multiple diverse projects. Specifically, the fellow will work on (1) developing and implementing a community prototype project with the six federal agencies of the Federal Partnership for Coastal Resilience in California, and (2) an effort focused on exploring the intersection of nature-based infrastructure and the adaptation of coastal roads.

Federal Partnership for Coastal Resilience in California: OCM is working closely with six federal agencies in the Federal Partnership for Coastal Resilience in California (partnership). Participating agencies are the regional offices of NOAA OCM, FEMA, USGS, USEPA, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Economic Development Administration (EDA). Together we co-created the partnership with the goal of helping California coastal communities achieve their resilience vision by matching community needs with federal resources. The partnership is still in the early stages of defining approaches for how we will accomplish our goal. We would like to work on a "community prototype" where we assist a specific community(s) in finding federal resources and applying these resources to address their resilience challenges. The fellow will work on developing and implementing this prototype project with the partnership and with state and local agency champions. The fellow will have the opportunity to help shape what the prototype involves, and coordinate the federal agencies for implementation.

Adaptation of coastal roads: The fellow will lead efforts for a knowledge exchange and collection of case studies on climate change adaptation solutions involving transportation (ie, local roads), nature-based infrastructure, and reconnection of water pathways. This nascent effort is part of the

NOAA San Francisco Bay and Outer Coast Sentinel Site Cooperative, a cohort comprised of OCM, San Francisco Bay NERR, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, and BCDC. The Cooperative recognizes the importance, timeliness, and information gaps associated with the challenges of transportation adaptation and the nexus with and opportunities for nature-based solutions. The fellow will be a key member of the team that helps develop and implement the project. The fellow's support may involve establishing a statewide community of practice, organizing an information exchange workshop, developing and sharing case studies from across California, working to tie to federal resources and guidance and identifying state policy conflicts and areas of opportunity.

The fellow may choose to pursue additional projects based on their interests and level of effort required, including, for example, efforts to increase NOAA's focus on social equity and environmental justice. Some tasks will be self-guided, other tasks will be performed in close coordination with OCM staff and as part of the West Coast team. Through their work, the fellow will gain familiarity with the field of coastal management's evolving landscape of professionals, issues, challenges, and approaches.

The fellow will be a part of a small and close-knit, dynamic office. Growth in skills can be expected through practical experience with process design and facilitation, project management, coordination of multiple partners, and participation (as desired) in formal training opportunities OCM will deliver to partners throughout the year in CA, including on the topics of risk communication, green infrastructure, and adaptation planning.

Additional background:

OCM administers place-based programs through long-term statutorily established partnerships with coastal state agencies, including the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program, National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Program, and Coral Reef Conservation Program. The agencies in California's federally-recognized CZM program are the California Coastal Commission, State Coastal Conservancy, and San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). California's NERRs are the San Francisco Bay, Elkhorn Slough, and Tijuana River NERRs. Through these programs, NOAA and partners collaboratively address local, state, regional, and national management, conservation, science, and education priorities.

OCM's work in California is aimed at supporting the state's existing and emerging challenges in coastal resource management issues including resilience. In particular, planning for and adapting to coastal hazards and climate change-related coastal impacts, including sea level rise and flooding, tsunamis, severe storms, and shoreline change. We focus on educating coastal practitioners and state and local agencies about the value of nature-based solutions as adaptation approaches with multiple benefits. We train coastal professionals on the adaptation planning process, risk communication, and green infrastructure for resilience. We help our audiences apply social science tools and learn to facilitate collaborative meetings. Beyond providing data, we help users understand and make decisions with it. OCM also works closely with other federal partners to align services and product development efforts, and to communicate about and improve state and local access to federal resources (including funding). Based on interest, the fellow may play a role in several of these activities.