



OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Wade Crowfoot | Secretary for Natural Resources | Council Chair
Jared Blumenfeld | Secretary for Environmental Protection
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Ben Allen | State Senator
Mark Stone | State Assemblymember
Michael Brown | Public Member
Jordan Diamond | Public Member

Sea Grant Host Application 2023

Two Fellowships available at the Ocean Protection Council

- 1. Host location and contact information:** Ocean Protection Council
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
- 2. Fellowship Supervisor:**
- Jenn Eckerle, OPC Deputy Director
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- Justine Kimball, Senior Climate Change Program Manager
justine.kimball@resources.ca.gov
- Tova Handelman, Senior MPA Program Manager
tova.handelman@resources.ca.gov
- Mike Esgro, Senior Biodiversity Program Manager
michael.esgro@resources.ca.gov
- 3. Points of contact for Sea Grant, prospective fellows, and finalists:**
- Justine Kimball, Senior Climate Change Program Manager
justine.kimball@resources.ca.gov
- Tova Handelman, Senior MPA Program Manager
tova.handelman@resources.ca.gov
- Mike Esgro, Senior Biodiversity Program Manager
michael.esgro@resources.ca.gov

4. Position description:

Background: The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is a cabinet-level state agency nested within the California Natural Resources Agency. Created by the California Ocean Protection Act of 2004, OPC was established to ensure healthy, resilient, and productive coastal and ocean ecosystems in California. OPC serves as the Governor's advisor on ocean and coastal policy and uses partnerships, policy and funding to

advance science-based solutions to protect coastal and ocean ecosystems in California. With this diverse complement of tools, OPC has unique flexibility to develop innovative and impactful approaches to conservation. We use each of these tools to identify and implement solutions that improve ocean governance, increase stewardship, and advance scientific understanding necessary to protect marine resources and the communities that rely on them. These efforts yield significant benefits to the state while providing a model to improve protection and conservation across the world.

Fellowships at OPC provide an opportunity to work at the interface of science, policy and management to protect California's coastal and marine ecosystems. OPC fellows are fully integrated members of OPC staff and as such, they gain valuable professional experience that will prepare them for success in future endeavors.

OPC's work is directed by the priorities outlined in the [Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean](#), which is centered on four key goals: 1) Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change; 2) Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions; 3) Enhance Coastal and Marine Biodiversity; and 4) Support a Sustainable Blue Economy. OPC staff is advancing these goals through projects and policy initiatives related to sea-level rise; ocean acidification and hypoxia; sustainable fisheries and aquaculture; kelp forest recovery; marine protected areas; plastics and microplastics; offshore renewable energy, increasing partnership with tribes and environmental justice communities; and implementing the state's 30 x 30 initiative to conserve biodiversity in coastal waters. To understand the scope and breadth of the Council's work, please see the [agenda](#) from the Council's June 14, 2022 meeting.

OPC Sea Grant Fellows: Changing ocean conditions have the potential to threaten communities, ecosystems and California's economy. As such, there is an urgent need to catalyze innovative and bold action that builds resilience and safeguards ocean health. To advance our work addressing these critical issues, OPC would host two Sea Grant fellows, one within our Climate Change team and the other within our Marine Biodiversity team. Recognizing that these issues are cross-disciplinary, there is expected overlap and coordination across teams on issues including, but not limited to habitat restoration and climate threats to ecosystem health. The work of both fellows will likely include opportunities for coordination with agency and external partners, scientific analysis, evaluation of data gaps, identifying opportunities for new and/or leveraged OPC investments, project management and stakeholder outreach.

The Climate Change Fellow would support OPC's efforts to understand, prepare for, and adapt to climate change impacts including, but not limited to, ocean acidification and hypoxia, sea-level rise, offshore wind, and harmful algal blooms.

The Marine Biodiversity Fellow would support OPC's efforts to protect coastal and ocean biodiversity, which may include efforts on kelp forest recovery, marine protected areas, 30 x 30 implementation, water quality, sustainable fisheries, and aquaculture.

Both fellows have opportunities to support work on OPC's other strategic priorities. In addition to supporting the programmatic work on climate change and marine biodiversity specifically, the two Sea Grant fellows will be involved in the following:

Broad Efforts of the Council. All OPC staff support the functions of the [seven-member Council](#), including agenda setting, policy recommendations, and project development. Potential tasks associated with managing projects include: frequent communication with project stakeholders, partners, or grantees; presenting staff recommendations to the Council; drafting and amending contracts and grant agreements; organizing, and/or leading related meetings and workshops; participating in site visits; ensuring outcomes of projects are communicated to the public, relevant agencies, and institutions; seeking out additional funding sources or matching funds; encouraging transparency by working with stakeholders; and working to maintain broad project or program support. **Both fellows would support all the functions of the Council.**

Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel. The Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel (RASGAP) helps fund scientific research that supports coastal and ocean management and policy priorities and decision-making by evaluating proposals solicited by California's two Sea Grant programs. **Fellows will be responsible for helping review and score pre- and full proposals and participating in RASGAP technical review panels.**

Legislative Tracking & Bill Analyses. As a state agency that is part of the Governor's Administration, OPC does not take a position on any legislation. However, OPC tracks relevant bills that may explicitly direct OPC to take action or indirectly impact OPC's priorities to protect coastal and marine resources. **Both fellows may have the opportunity to contribute to bill analyses if an OPC-relevant bill is moving forward in the legislature.**

Communications. Both fellows will support OPC's communications to elevate our work to a wide and diverse set of partners and stakeholders. Communications activities may include but are not limited to: representing OPC publicly at meetings and workshops; drafting talking points and press releases; and writing content for OPC's website and social media platforms.

Desired skills or attributes include:

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to lead groups of people, often with divergent views, to advance progress on a particular issue.
- Ability to translate complex scientific information for use by government decision-makers, stakeholders and the general public.
- Ability to work well independently under minimal supervision or guidance.
- Ability to manage multiple projects concurrently.
- An entrepreneurial spirit and strong personal initiative.
- Passion for ocean and coastal ecosystem conservation.