



## California Sea Grant State Fellowship Program 2021

Host Agency: California State Lands Commission

Location: 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South, Sacramento, CA 95825

Position Name: Science Team/Coastal Resilience/Tribal & Environmental Justice

Fellowship Supervisors: Jennifer Mattox, Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison;  
Maren Farnum, Environmental Scientist

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### Agency Background:

The [California State Lands Commission](#) (Commission) is an independent and dynamic state agency that works on the cutting edge of integrating science into policy decisions. One of the Commission's major roles is to act as the landlord for lands within its jurisdiction. This sets the Commission apart from purely regulatory agencies. When California became a state in 1850, it acquired approximately four million acres of land underlying the State's navigable and tidal waterways. These "sovereign lands" include the beds of California's navigable rivers, lakes, and streams, as well as the State's tide and submerged lands along the State's 1,100+ miles of coastline and offshore islands, from approximately the mean high tide line to three nautical miles offshore. The Commission holds these lands in trust for the people of California under the Public Trust Doctrine.

Part of the Commission's trust responsibility includes reviewing and approving or denying lease applications for uses of or activities on sovereign lands (e.g., major energy projects, artificial reefs, piers, etc.). Activities on sovereign lands must be appropriate public trust uses, including commerce, fishing, navigation, environmental preservation, and recreation. The Commission is the main agency tasked with protecting public access and overseeing public trust uses. Valid public trust uses sometimes conflict with each other; the Commission works to manage those conflicts and ensure that the Public Trust Doctrine is upheld on sovereign land. In this way, the Commission, along with its sister state agencies, decides on appropriate uses for California's ocean and proactively plans for future issues and conflicts.

The three-person Commission is comprised of the State Controller, Lieutenant Governor, and the Director of Finance. The Fellow will be supervised by the Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison and the Environmental Scientist within the Commission's Executive Office. The Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison consults with other Commission staff on many issues where science and policy interface and helps staff navigate complex and politically sensitive issues, including adaptation to climate change and sea-level rise; management of California's marine protected areas; development of offshore renewable energy; and the preservation of cultural and tribal resources. This work includes extensive coordination with other Commission divisions, including Environmental Planning and Management, Legal, External Affairs, Mineral Resources Management, Marine Environmental Protection, and Land Management.

### Position Description:

The Sea Grant Fellow will have the opportunity to work on complex and challenging marine and coastal issues. The Sea Grant Fellow's main work will generally be split into two main areas: (1) coastal resilience, climate change preparedness, and other ocean science policy; and (2) tribal engagement and environmental justice.

Under the direction of the Science Policy Advisor/Tribal Liaison and the Environmental Scientist within the Executive Office, the Sea Grant Fellow will spend  $\pm 70\%$  time on projects related to climate change and sea-level rise; offshore renewable energy; coastal erosion, seawalls, and natural coastal infrastructure; and various marine spatial planning/blue economy initiatives. These projects encompass a number of challenging and high-profile activities that include delivering a comprehensive sea-level rise and climate change education and training program for Commission staff; participating on state-level interagency efforts to develop and implement sea-level rise policy, including the State Guidance update and the Safeguarding California update; compiling, reviewing, and developing materials related to coastal armoring and living shorelines; participating on interagency teams exploring offshore renewable energy potential; evaluating and compiling scientific materials for negotiations on sensitive projects; integrating the best available science into Commission decision-making processes; and collaborating with other state, federal, local, and tribal entities.

The Sea Grant Fellow will spend the remainder of their time ( $\pm 30\%$ ), under the direction of the Commission's Tribal Liaison and Environmental Justice coordinators, researching issues and supporting efforts related to Tribal engagement on projects; incorporating traditional knowledge and practices into activities and decisions; exploring and developing proposals for mutually beneficial partnerships with Tribes or other indigenous groups and trusts; participating on interagency groups including the Cultural Resources Climate Change Task Force and Santa Barbara oil and gas decommissioning working group; and participating on the Commission's environmental justice implementation team to ensure integration of Tribal environmental justice and equity issues.

The Fellow will likely have a variety of short-term and long-term projects throughout the fellowship year. The Fellow will also be welcome to participate in interagency meetings and collaborative projects with other Fellows as opportunities arise. Many of these projects are ongoing and the Fellow will have an opportunity to continue the work started by current and former Fellows. The Fellow will interact with Commission staff from multiple divisions that encompass a wide variety of coastal and marine resource topics. Specific project and program duties will be developed collaboratively among the Fellow, Science Policy Advisor and Tribal Liaison, and Executive leadership, and will be based on the Commission's needs that arise during the fellowship, as well as the Fellow's interests.

**Desirable Qualifications:**

- Ability to work both independently and with diverse interdisciplinary teams that require clear communication;
- Ability to develop and apply expertise in natural resources and coastal management issues;
- Ability to translate science into layman's terms;
- Familiarity and/or experience with GIS and web-development;
- Ability to work toward consensus positions with governmental, private, and public interest groups;
- An interest or experience in using social media to educate, engage, and communicate with a wide array of audiences; and
- An interest in CEQA and other natural resource laws, rules, and regulations (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), California Coastal Act, California Ocean Protection Act, Federal and State Endangered Species Acts, etc.).