



CA State Lands Commission Sea Grant Fellow Opportunity Legal, Environmental Planning, and Mineral Resources Management Divisions

Host Location

California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825

Fellowship Supervisors

Staff Counsel within the Legal Division in close coordination with Environmental Program Managers within the Environmental Planning and Management Division and Engineering staff within the Mineral Resources Management Division

Point of contact for prospective fellows and finalists

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Agency Background

The [California State Lands Commission](#) (CSLC) is an independent and dynamic state agency that works on the cutting edge of integrating science into policy decisions. One of the CSLC's major roles is to act as the landlord for lands within its jurisdiction. 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 the mean high tide line to three nautical miles offshore. The CSLC holds these lands in trust for the people of California under the Public Trust Doctrine.

Part of the CSLC'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 CSLC is the main agency tasked with protecting public access and overseeing public trust uses. Valid public trust uses often conflict with each other; the CSLC works to manage those conflicts and ensure that the Public Trust Doctrine is upheld on sovereign land. In this way, the CSLC, 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 Lieutenant Governor, State Controller, and the Director of Finance. The Fellow will be supervised primarily by Staff Counsel within the CSLC's Legal Division, in coordination with a Division of Environmental Planning and Management (DEPM) manager and Mineral Resources Management Division (MRMD) petroleum engineering staff. DEPM is the lead division for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and compliance as well as scientific investigation and coastal policy development; MRMD is responsible for the safe and environmentally responsible development, regulation, and management of all energy and mineral resources including oil and gas.

Position Description

This Sea Grant Fellow will have the opportunity to work on investigatory projects throughout the fellowship year involving complex and challenging marine and coastal issues related to:

- Natural oil and gas seeps;
- Legacy oil wells and other coastal hazards;
- Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA);
- Coastal oil behavior.

For example, the area along the northern Santa Barbara Channel is one of the most prolific hydrocarbon seepage areas in the world with the most intense seepage in the Coal Oil Point seep field just west of the city of Santa Barbara. Seepage of oil and emissions of natural gas and volatiles from oil are significant sources of ocean, beach, and air pollution in Santa Barbara County (see: www.sbcountyplanning.org/energy/information/seepspaper.asp). In addition, the CSLC staff coordinates, through responsible parties, the planning and field activities for removal of dangerous remnants of coastal structures, piers, wells and pilings, many related to legacy oil and gas development, to eliminate to the extent possible, the hazard these remnants present to the public (see: www.slc.ca.gov/Programs/Coastal_Hazards/SB_Hazards.pdf).

Project work is likely to include:

- Reviewing seep-related studies and articles, including a 2007 seep study focusing on the Santa Barbara Channel, and assisting in any updates to studies as necessary;
- Researching and performing a case study of legacy oil wells in Summerland, Santa Barbara County;
- Developing educational materials and conducting outreach to Santa Barbara county communities on the history, extent, activity, changes, and impacts associated with local seeps and legacy oil wells and other hazards;
- Participating in NRDA interagency meetings and/or NRDA policy development; and
- Coordinating with staff from other agencies and entities, such as the Ocean Protection Council, Ocean Science Trust, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Santa Barbara County Energy Division, etc.

The Fellow will be welcome to participate in the Commission's Prevention First symposium and other conferences, as well as interagency meetings, and collaborative projects with other Fellows as opportunities arise. Among other meetings and events, our 2012-15 Sea Grant Fellows drafted and presented reports to State Lands Commissioners; attended Commission meetings, legislative hearings, and relevant coastal and marine conferences; and represented the CSLC in collaborative working groups, including the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-Level Rise, Marine Protected Areas Statewide Leadership Team, California Seafloor and Coastal Mapping Steering Committee, and Marine Resources Companion Plan Development Team for the 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan update. Specific project and program duties will be developed collaboratively among the Fellow, Division Chiefs, and various team supervisors.

Desirable Qualifications

- Ability to work both independently and with diverse interdisciplinary teams that require clear communication;
- Ability to apply and develop expertise in natural resources and coastal management issues;
- Ability to translate science into layman's terms;
- Background in Chemistry, Engineering, or other related discipline;
- Willingness to travel frequently for field visits in the coastal Santa Barbara County region and CSLC's Long Beach Office; and
- An interest in natural resource laws, rules, and regulations.