



FELLOW NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter for NOAA Fellows and Friends



Fellows Lizzy Mogus-Garcia, Maravilla Clemens, Annika Tomson, and Carl Hendrickson inspect a logging vehicle's cockpit during the Coastal and Estuarine Research Foundation (CERF) conference's social event in Portland, Oregon. These fellows, supported by professional development funds, attend events like this to connect, learn, and network with peers, contributing to their professional growth.

Dates to Know

Program Timeline

- Friday, January 26, 2024: Applications due from candidates to their local Sea Grant

- Friday, February 23, 2024: Endorsements due from Sea Grant
- Friday, March 22, 2024: Finalists selected
- Late April to early May 2024: Matching workshop presentations (virtual)
- Late April to early May 2024: Matching workshop interviews in Charleston
- Thursday, August 1, 2024: Fellowship begins

Fellows Up Close

Class of 2022 to 2024



Lizzy Mogus Garcia (she/her) – Coastal Management Fellow

Backstory. Lizzy has two bachelor's degrees from Ohio State University—a B.S. in evolution and ecology and a B.A. in Spanish. She earned an M.S. at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in ocean, coastal, and earth science. She was nominated by the Texas Sea Grant Office and will be working in Albany, New York with the New York State Department of State, Office of Planning, Development, and Community Infrastructure. Her email address is elizabeth.mogusgarcia@dos.ny.gov.

Project description. Following extreme flooding events and anticipated sea level rise, New York State has undertaken a series of projects and initiatives that promote coastal resiliency and address vulnerabilities. I am focusing on developing a framework for the coastal management program to support community-driven managed retreat by analyzing other programs and case studies to identify successes and pitfalls. I am also developing a checklist to assess a community's level of readiness to participate in a state-supported managed retreat program. Alongside these tasks, I will be focusing on communication and outreach within communities by acknowledging the range of emotions related to managed retreat, and understanding the makeup of a community. A major component is to include communities that have been or are underserved and socially vulnerable, that are typically at the forefront of any climate change impacts.

Community benefits. The overall goal of my project is to create a more resilient New York State by working with communities so they have everything they need to adapt to climate change. This project will be the first of its kind in the state, and will emphasize the community-led approach through empowerment and equitable engagement, giving communities a voice in their future.

Local highlights. Since moving to Albany, I have been able to experience a new part of the country that I had only been to a handful of times before. Although coming to New York from Texas was a big adjustment, weather wise, I have been enjoying all of the seasons and hiking that this region has to offer! Albany has become a great home where I can find all the vegan food that I want to eat, and a place where I have met so many great people.

Rewarding project experience. Through this fellowship, I have been able to travel around the state to meet and work with so many people. Given the variety of projects that I am working on, I find myself meeting experts, students, and community members with such vast knowledge and unique experiences.



Natalie Cross – Coastal Management Fellow

Backstory. Natalie has a B.S. in earth systems (oceans, atmosphere and climate) and an M.S. in earth systems, with a focus on ocean justice and ecology, from Stanford University. She was nominated by the California Sea Grant and will be working in the Coastal States Organization in Washington, DC. Her email address is ncross@coastalstates.org.

Project description. The goal of my project is to support the institutionalization of justice and equity within the country's state

and territory coastal management programs. Rather than working on one anticipated project, my fellowship is more programmatic, as I will be providing technical assistance and capacity support to a number of coastal programs in their development and implementation of equitable community-led resilience projects. I am also dedicating a portion of my time to building relationships with other nonprofits and organizations working in the coastal justice space. And lastly, I am working on a number of communication pieces in order to facilitate peer-to-peer learning between coastal managers regarding environmental justice.

Community benefits. Ideally, my fellowship project will help to drive a shift within the coastal management programs and ensure that equity and justice are at the forefront of their work and priorities. This shift will result in benefits for everyone in the coastal management community, and even more so for those who have been excluded from these spaces. The primary goal of the technical assistance is to strengthen and help form relationships between coastal programs and the systemically under-resourced communities. I also hope that by highlighting the innovative approaches being undertaken by various coastal programs, this will inspire other managers (including those in the environmental field more broadly) to take similar approaches.

Overcoming the learning curve. Coming from more of a “hard science” marine ecology background, I was pretty new to the federal, state, and territory landscape of coastal management. There are so many different actors and it was a bit intimidating, to say the least; every day felt as though I was hearing a new acronym or learning about a new group. However, I found that setting aside time to do what might feel like basic research was really helpful. Anytime I heard an acronym I was unfamiliar with, I'd look it up, or I'd ask clarifying questions. I know this all sounds like simple, logical advice, but I'd highly recommend giving yourself time, space, and grace to get up to speed on this field, as the practitioner role is inherently different from an academic one, and you aren't expected to automatically know everything on day one.

Rewarding networking experience. I had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Women's Environmental Leadership Summit within the first few weeks of my fellowship. Hosted by the Smithsonian's Center for Environmental Justice, this summit convened women leaders in the environmental justice movement from all generations and parts of the country. There were a number of panels and interactive workshop sessions that taught me a lot about some of the very innovative ways individuals and organizations are pushing for more just and equitable environmentalism. But more importantly, it was such an incredible space to be a part of—it was so inspiring to be surrounded by other women (and primarily other Black and brown women) who all share my passion for environmental justice, and it really reinforced for me the importance of fostering community in

this work.

Words of wisdom to those applying. Trust yourself and don't be afraid to make this fellowship your own! I completely understand that the application process is a bit daunting. If you aren't coming from a management background, it can be easy to feel as though you might not be qualified. But the point of a fellowship is to learn, to be mentored and supported as you enter into a new field. Be authentic and express what actually interests you; even if it might not be an explicit part of the project descriptions, there is a chance there might be space to adjust a project to be better suited for your interests, and the only way the mentors will know to do that is if you ask. Definitely reach out to your fellow applicants or people already in the fellowship—it is such an incredible group of people, and we all just want to help you succeed!

News You Can Use

Social Coast Forum 2024

It's almost time for the [Social Coast Forum](#), the nation's premier coastal management conference with a focus on social sciences. The conference will be held February 12 to 15, 2024, in Charleston, South Carolina. Advance registration continues through January 24. Don't delay your registration—this conference often sells out, and we want all fellows to attend!

Trainings and Resources

Upcoming Offerings

The NOAA Office for Coastal Management has a training curriculum devoted to coastal resource management. Courses are scheduled throughout the year.

Additional Resources

You may also be interested in additional training resources from our Digital Coast partners and contributing partners.

[Course Calendar](#)

[Training Resources](#)

About the Program

The NOAA Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowships were established to provide on-the-job education and training opportunities in coastal resource management and policy, and to provide project assistance to state coastal zone management programs and Digital Coast partners. The fellowship programs are administered by [NOAA's Office for Coastal Management](#). Fellowships are open to postgraduate students. For more information, visit [this webpage](#).



