



# FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

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January 2015, Issue 64



## FOCUS ON FELLOWS KIRSTEN HOWARD



Fellow Kirsten Howard grew up in Campbell River, a coastal town on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. Campbell River depends heavily on the fishing industry and coastal tourism, and Kirsten's awareness of this fact sparked an early interest in the coast.

Kirsten, who received a joint bachelor of arts degree in economics and sociology from Brown University, became increasingly interested in climate change science and policy as an undergraduate. It was then that she realized coastal communities like her hometown would become more vulnerable as sea-level rise, intensifying storms, and ocean acidification increased.

Continuing her studies at the University of Michigan, Kirsten received a master of science degree in natural resources and environment, with a focus in environmental policy and planning. While there, she learned about the fellowship through the University of Michigan's Sea Grant office.

As part of her fellowship with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program, Kirsten assesses ecosystem services in the Great Bay estuary of New Hampshire. The assessment will help coastal managers better understand and communicate the benefits that Great Bay provides to the people who live and visit the area. It will also help the Nature Conservancy decide how much oyster restoration to conduct over the next decade. Oyster restoration can help the estuary filter water, retain nutrients, and rehabilitate areas of eelgrass that support marine species.

Kirsten is also helping to develop a coastal data viewer that will improve public access to new and existing spatial data sets of New Hampshire. The viewer will provide users with information about coastal risks, hazards, and conservation opportunities.

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The summer sun showed up for Kirsten's first visit to New Hampshire's Isles of Shoals to test water quality with the Shellfish Program.

The fellowship has given Kirsten a better understanding of how state agencies work with communities and the federal government. She has forged relationships with a variety of people and organizations, both while working on her fellowship project and through her work with the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup. Conferences, meetings, and workshops have introduced Kirsten to topics ranging from ecosystem services valuation to speechmaking to green infrastructure.

When off the job, Kirsten loves hiking and skiing in New Hampshire with family and friends. "I just bought new snowshoes, which I plan to try out this winter!" she says.

Climate change adaptation is also one of Kirsten's passions. It began back at the University

of Michigan, when she and a fellow student embarked on what they called the "Great American Adaptation Road Trip." Their project—to document on-the-ground examples of climate resilience—sought answers to the question, "What does climate change adaptation look like?" Their documented adaptation strategies and stories from around the country can be found on their website, [adaptationstories.com](http://adaptationstories.com).

When the fellowship ends, Kirsten wants her focus to stay on coastal resilience issues in New England. "There is a lot of great work just starting at the community level," emphasizes Kirsten, "and I would like to continue to participate in those processes as they move forward." 

CLASS OF  
2013-2015



## FOCUS ON FELLOWS MARGOT MANSFIELD

Massachusetts Fellow Margot Mansfield grew up in Davis, California, and spent her childhood exploring the natural beauty and grandeur of Northern California by camping with her family in the Sierra Nevada mountains and California Coastal Range as well as visiting Lake Tahoe and the beaches of Santa Cruz.

Those days spent exploring the outdoors inspired Margot to study earth and space sciences at the University of Washington. While there, she spent an academic quarter at the Friday Harbor Laboratories on Washington's San Juan Islands.

"I used to joke that this experience was my 'study abroad' chapter, but it was truly transformational: I had navigated my way from the mountains to the rivers and, finally, to the coast," notes Margot.

Her passion for understanding physical coastal systems led Margot, upon graduation, to pursue an internship with the Washington State Department of Ecology carrying out seasonal beach morphology surveys. At that time, Margot became aware of the fellowship program and filed away a mental note to consider becoming a fellow some day.

Margot then entered the master's degree program in coastal geology at the University of Maine. She researched how ongoing sea level rise influenced the rates of change between coastal saltmarsh and adjacent freshwater wetlands in the Gulf of Maine. As her graduate studies drew to a close, Margot recalled that mental note she had made and decided that applying for the fellowship was the next right step.

Margot is working as a fellow for the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management in their StormSmart Coasts program. Low-lying coastal areas in Massachusetts are vulnerable to erosion associated with relative sea-level rise and frequent storms. Margot helps address competing marine resource use issues as they pertain to beach and dune nourishment.

While she identifies vulnerable beaches and offshore sediment resource areas in Massachusetts, Margot also characterizes historical and current shoreline-

change patterns on the state's coast. She also lends a hand with seasonal field campaigns that characterize the grain size and elevation profiles of several public beaches. Some of her research findings have already been incorporated into management and policy recommendations via the 2014 Draft Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan and the commonwealth's Coastal Erosion Commission.

The fellowship has provided Margot with a huge degree of flexibility for pursuing professional growth opportunities. She coordinated The Great Marsh Coalition's 2014 Sea Level Rise Symposium, which had its largest turnout to date. The event provided research updates and highlights on New England's Great Marsh as well as case studies geared to local adaptation.

Margot also has grown her professional network in the worlds of coastal management, restoration, and academia by attending local, regional, and national meetings. The network of previous and current fellows has also proved invaluable.

"I feel fortunate to be part of a fellowship cycle with many Northeast states, because I'm getting a unique glimpse into regional efforts through my relationships with current fellows," emphasizes Margot.

When not at the office,



Margot enjoys the live music scene in Boston, keeps tabs on her favorite West Coast sports teams, and travels to visit friends.

In the future, Margot hopes to continue her coastal management and science career. Although an eventual return to the West Coast would be ideal, she is open to exploring any opportunities that may come about after the fellowship.

"Ultimately, I'm looking to grow my technical background in coastal processes and landforms, specifically to learn more about how sea-level rise affects coastal beaches and estuarine systems in regard to erosion and flooding," says Margot. "I want to continue to bridge this knowledge base with the needs and challenges facing coastal communities." 

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## FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP: 2015 STATE PROJECTS SELECTED

Six projects have been selected for the 2015-2017 Coastal Management Fellowship. Below is a summary of each of these projects for the coming year. Recruiting efforts are well underway, but we need your help to spread the word to eligible fellowship applicants. Remember that applications should be submitted to area Sea Grant directors and are due on January 23, 2015.

**Host Agency:** CNMI Division of Coastal Resources Management  
**Location:** Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
**Project Goal:** Achieve resilient and sustainable growth in CNMI by centralizing data and creating decision-support tools.

**Host Agency:** Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management  
**Location:** Boston, Massachusetts  
**Project Goal:** Provide stormwater management tools to Massachusetts coastal communities that are both effective in improving coastal water quality and resilient to climate change.

**Host Agency:** Maine Coastal Program  
**Location:** Augusta, Maine  
**Project Goal:** Strengthen the resilience of Maine's coastal communities by creating a Hazard Resiliency Index and increasing participation in FEMA's Community Rating System.

**Host Agency:** New Hampshire Coastal Program  
**Location:** Portsmouth, New Hampshire  
**Project Goal:** Systematically integrate social science into ecosystem management for New Hampshire's estuaries.

**Host Agency:** Oregon Coastal Management Program  
**Location:** Salem, Oregon  
**Project Goal:** Plan for sea level rise by building an inventory of vulnerable estuary shoreland resources.

**Host Agency:** Puerto Rico Coastal Zone Management Program  
**Location:** San Juan, Puerto Rico  
**Project Goal:** Design and create an online self-assessment and solutions tool to help coastal communities better understand the risk and impacts associated with coastal hazards, including climate change, and pilot this tool in coastal communities in Puerto Rico.

For more information on the 2015 state projects, please visit the fellowship website at [www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/stateprojects.html](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/stateprojects.html) or contact the fellowship coordinator at [ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov). 

## NEWS ABOUT FORMER FELLOWS:

### WHITE HOUSE APPLAUDS WORK OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT FELLOW

The *Soft Shorelines Stabilization* guidebook developed for the state of Washington by 2012-2014 NOAA Coastal Management Fellow Kelsey Gianou was featured as an example in the recommendations to the president publication by the White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. The guidebook, which provides an introduction to common shoreline stabilization impacts and applicable regulations, is specifically mentioned as a good example of improving resilience in the nation's infrastructure by promoting and prioritizing the use of green and natural infrastructure. View the guidebook at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/1406009.pdf>. Read the recommendations report at [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/task\\_force\\_report\\_0.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/task_force_report_0.pdf). 



### FORMER FELLOW SELECTED AS NEW CEO OF SURFRIDER FOUNDATION



Former Oregon fellow Chad Nelsen (1996-1998) was recently selected as the chief executive officer of the Surfrider Foundation. The Surfrider Foundation is the largest grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our oceans, waves, and beaches. Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers in Malibu, California, Surfrider now has more than 250,000 supporters, activists, and members worldwide. In an interview on the Surfrider Foundation's website, Chad mentions the fellowship as a step in his rise to fame. Read more of Chad's interview at [www.surfrider.org/coastal-blog/entry/meet-surfriders-new-ceo-chad-nelsen](http://www.surfrider.org/coastal-blog/entry/meet-surfriders-new-ceo-chad-nelsen). 

## WHAT'S NEW ON THE DIGITAL COAST?

**Insights into Coastal Management Needs** – Every three years, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management takes an in-depth look at user needs, interests, and trends. In April, the most recent report was published. Take a look to see what the nation's coastal management community is thinking about and acting on in terms of coastal planning and development, conservation, and hazards. View the report at [www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/sites/default/files/files/publications/02112014/survey.pdf](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/sites/default/files/files/publications/02112014/survey.pdf).

**C-CAP Coastal Comparison Tool** – Coastal land cover data just got even better with the addition of the new C-CAP Coastal Comparison Tool. The tool allows users to compare land cover data for a county to the coastal portion of its state and the contiguous United States. Users can also compare counties to assess differences and similarities in their land cover and land use practices. Visit the tool at [www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/ccap-comparison](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/ccap-comparison).

To stay updated on all new additions to Digital Coast, subscribe to the *Digital Coast Connections* e-newsletter at [www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/publications/subscribe](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/publications/subscribe). 

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### JANUARY

**25 to 28: Delaware Estuary Science and Environmental Summit**  
Cape May, New Jersey  
[www.delawareestuary.org/summit](http://www.delawareestuary.org/summit)

### FEBRUARY

**23 to 25: National States Geographic Information Council Meeting**  
Annapolis, Maryland  
[www.nsgic.org/upcoming-conferences](http://www.nsgic.org/upcoming-conferences)

**23 to 25: 2015 Climate Leadership Conference**  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.climateleadershipconference.org](http://www.climateleadershipconference.org)

**23 to 25: Offshore Wind Power USA**  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[www.greenpowerconferences.com/WE1502US](http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/WE1502US)

### MARCH

**30 to April 2: Coastal GeoTools**  
North Charleston, South Carolina  
[www.coastalgeotools.org](http://www.coastalgeotools.org)

## NOAA OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING

### JANUARY

**On-Site:**  
**14 to 15:** Planning for Meaningful Evaluation  
Mobile, Alabama  
**28 to 29:** Coastal Inundation Mapping  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

### FEBRUARY

**On-Site:**  
**10 to 11:** Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings  
Imperial Beach, California  
**26 to 27:** Planning for Meaningful Evaluation  
Savannah, Georgia  
**Online:**  
**4:** Fostering Behavior Change for Coastal Management: An Introduction to Community-based Social Marketing  
**18:** OpenNSPECT

### MARCH

**On-Site:**  
**25 to 26:** Coastal Inundation Mapping  
Auburn, Washington

For more information on virtual and site-specific trainings, visit [www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/list](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/list).

## CREDITS AND INFORMATION

*Fellow News* is published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management to relay information about the fellowship program and provide a forum for information exchange among fellows, mentors, Sea Grant, and the Center.

Please send your questions and suggestions for future editions to [ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov)

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