



FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

In This Issue

FOCUS ON FELLOWS

Kim Hernandez

FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP

2016 State Projects Selected

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

AND EVENTS

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FOCUS ON FELLOWS

KIM HERNANDEZ



CLASS OF 2014-2016

Fellow Kim Hernandez was born and raised in Hutchinson, Kansas, where she spent the first 24 years of her life. “If I had a dollar for every time I’ve been asked how a Kansas girl ended up on the coast, I’d be a billionaire,” jokes Kim, “and could solve all the environmental problems!” She credits three experiences with inspiring her love for coastal environmental issues.

For most of her childhood she spent time each summer with family on the beaches of South Padre Island, Texas, and that early exposure instilled in her a deep appreciation for the ocean. Eventually, as a University of Kansas undergraduate pursuing dual degrees in environmental studies and global and international studies, Kim spent a semester abroad in Australia, where she was able to scuba dive along the Great Barrier Reef and the reefs off Fiji.

Then, while working on a community development project in Ecuador, Kim saw firsthand how fishing practices such as the use of trawl nets could negatively impact the reefs and sea turtles. From these experiences, she knew she had to dedicate her life to working on ocean issues.

Deciding to further her education at Duke University, Kim earned a master’s degree in environmental management with a concentration on coastal management and geographic information systems (GIS). Her master’s project focused on sea turtles, sea level rise, and beach renourishment activity in North Carolina.

Kim discovered the fellowship program even before entering graduate school and knew it was something she wanted to do eventually. She applied and was matched with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources’ Chesapeake and Coastal Service, where she focuses on incorporating data into planning and decision-making initiatives.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





Kim collects water quality data during a juvenile fish survey with the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

“It is my responsibility in all my projects to ensure the best available data are being considered before a major decision is made,” says Kim. “I also help translate the data so it can be applied to management and policy decisions in a meaningful way.”

For instance, Kim helped refine the Maryland Coastal Atlas data portal to improve usability, and she used data from the portal during federal consistency reviews.

She also coordinated a participatory mapping workshop that will help support a management plan for a proposed national marine sanctuary, Maryland’s Mollusks Bay-Potomac River sanctuary. Thirty-two participants from 13

different sectors came together during the workshop, developing 23 maps that showcase activities in the area.

Kim also partners with people from across the Mid-Atlantic region on ocean-related issues and planning activities. Supporting the Maryland representatives, Kim is working with members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body on the region’s first ocean action plan. She has also participated in work groups that have characterized the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and advised on the synthesis of data sets on ecological and human uses. These data products will inform decisions about ocean activities.

Kim has also worked with Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research

Reserve on a GIS site assessment exploring retrofit options for a property vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge. She has also helped the reserve staff members with water quality field work, surface elevation tables, and juvenile fish surveys.

At the end of her fellowship, Kim hopes to have developed a series of online story maps that capture how she has successfully incorporated data into major management decisions so that these maps can inspire others to make use of the abundance of data out there.

Through the fellowship, Kim was able to attend conferences and training, including a symposium on sea turtle biology and conservation, her true passion since graduate school.

When Kim is not at the office, you can find her on the indoor climbing wall, at the yoga studio, on the volleyball court, or exploring the Annapolis waterfront. She also spends time volunteering at the local animal shelter and visiting with friends.

While Kim’s life has not taken a predictable path, she’s jumped at new opportunities as doors have opened. Kim does not know where she’ll end up after the fellowship but is open to new opportunities that arise. Whatever happens, this fellow is 100-percent dedicated to spending her life in the environmental field. 

FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP: 2016 STATE PROJECTS SELECTED

Six projects have been selected for the 2016-2018 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 22, 2016.

Host Agency: San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

Location: San Francisco, California

Project Goal: Expand the San Francisco Bay Regional Sediment Program beyond the pilot stage and into new parts of the Bay Area.

Host Agency: California Coastal Commission

Location: San Francisco, California

Project Goal: Help prioritize the California Coastal Commission's climate preparedness and adaptation planning efforts through policy analysis and development of regional maps, products, and other tools.

Host Agency: New York Coastal Management Program

Location: Albany, New York

Project Goal: Use cutting edge technologies to develop innovative public communication tools and create wiki-style mapping capabilities and mobile apps for collecting user-generated information to support community and regional resilience planning, offshore planning, and storm event response and recovery.

Host Agency: North Carolina Division of Coastal Management

Location: Morehead City, North Carolina

Project Goal: Engage North Carolina coastal communities in an assessment of their vulnerability to coastal hazards and disruptions, and their needs for support in improving their resilience.

Host Agency: Washington Coastal Management Program

Location: Olympia, Washington

Project Goal: Develop guidance and tools for improved implementation of shoreline armoring regulations in Puget Sound.

Host Agency: Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

Location: Madison, Wisconsin

Project Goal: Compile a current and comprehensive public access inventory and develop mobile websites and apps to promote coastal heritage tourism and deep travel in Wisconsin.

For more information on the 2016 state projects, please visit the fellowship website at coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/stateprojects.html or contact the fellowship coordinator at ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov. 

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

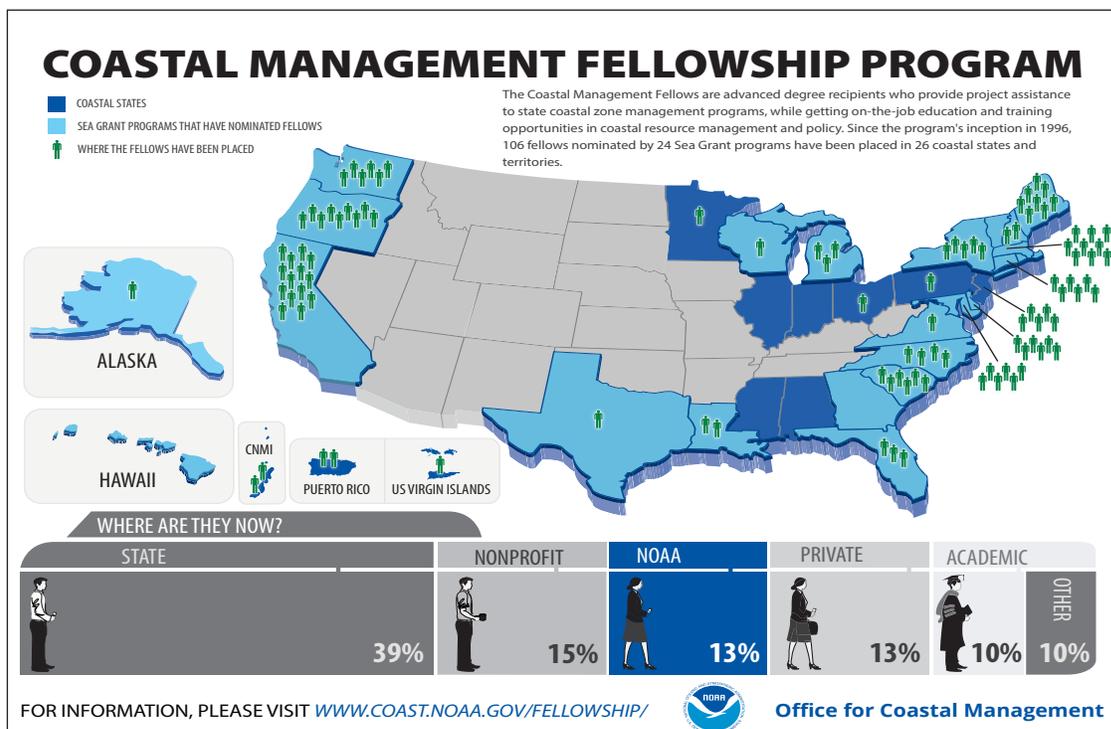
FOR HE'S (AND SHE'S) A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW



The NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship Program is celebrating its 20th birthday. For the past 20 years, the Coastal Management Fellowship Program has been matching postgraduate students with coastal zone management programs to work on two-year projects that the programs might not otherwise have had the resources to accomplish. For more than half that time, I have been coordinating this program and have seen firsthand the positive impact of the fellowship on both the coastal programs and the fellows that have participated.

I have seen fellows' projects get noticed by the White House. I have seen fellows go on to become heads of national organizations, managers of National Estuarine Research Reserves, and leaders within NOAA. I have seen fellows start their own businesses with the sole mission of taking their fellowship project to other state coastal programs. Pretty cool stuff. I have also seen coastal programs gain a greater capacity to address critical issues such as climate change and community resilience—all because fellows are onboard.

Since its inception in 1996, the program has placed 106 post graduate students from 42 different universities with 26 state and territory coastal zone management programs. This graphic gives a snapshot of the program today.



Most of our fellows would agree that the fellowship program is one of the best ways to get into the field of coastal management and secure a job. The program has a well-earned reputation for placing only the best and brightest as fellows and for producing seasoned coastal management professionals after the fellowship is complete. In fact, almost all fellows stay in the coastal management field immediately following their fellowship, and many continue to work at the state level. In the most recent class of fellows to finish the program, every person continued working in state-level coastal management.

If you work with a state or territory coastal program and are interested in getting a fellow of your own, proposals are due in mid-October of each year. Our website lists the details that should be included in the proposal and how the selection process works.

If you are a postgraduate student interested in applying to the program, see eligibility and application requirements on our website. Each year, applications are due to your local Sea Grant program in mid-to-late January.

If you are looking for a career in coastal management, check it out! This video (coast.noaa.gov/data/gallery/videos/fellowship.mp4), told from a fellow's perspective, might be just what you need to become convinced.

In the meantime, keep your eye out for GeoZone blogs throughout 2016 to learn more about former fellows and what they're doing now, plus how their fellowship projects have had a positive impact on coastal management. 



Our 2013 to 2015 fellows, from left to right: New Hampshire fellow Kirsten Howard is now a coastal resilience specialist with the New Hampshire Coastal Program. New York fellow Liz Podowski is now a resiliency specialist with the New York Coastal Program. California Coastal Commission fellow Kelsey Ducklow is now that organization's local coastal program grant coordinator and climate change analyst. Oregon fellow Meg Gardner is the environmental program coordinator with the Oregon State Marine Board. Maine fellow Emily Norton is now a senior planner with the Maine Coastal Program. Massachusetts fellow Margot Mansfield is now a coastal hazards analyst with

This article was adapted from a blog post on the Digital Coast GeoZone blog at geozoneblog.wordpress.com. Fellows and fellowship projects will be featured on the blog throughout the year. If you would like to contribute to, or author, a blog post, please contact Margaret.Allen@noaa.gov.



1998 to 2000 Fellow Stars in Promotional Video on the Fellowship Program

Visit the main fellowship page at coast.noaa.gov/fellowship to view a video featuring former fellow Zoë Johnson's perspective on her fellowship experience. We'd like to thank Zoë for taking the time to help us create this video as we celebrate the 20th anniversary and educate potential candidates and others on the fellowship program. 

NOAA Office for Coastal Management
2234 South Hobson Avenue
Charleston, SC 29405-2413



UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

FEBRUARY

9 to 11: Social Coast Forum
Charleston, South Carolina
[event.com/events/2016-social-coast-forum/event-summary-2ae-d342036a74448ad6d78f447d2f04f.aspx](http://event.commerce.d342036a74448ad6d78f447d2f04f.aspx)

11 to 13: New Partners for Smart Growth
Portland, Oregon
newpartners.org

MARCH

14 to 17: Pacific Risk Management 'Ohana
Honolulu, Hawai'i
coast.noaa.gov/prim0

APRIL

2 to 5: American Planning Association Conference
Phoenix, Arizona
conference.planning.org/conference

4 to 6: Eastern Regional Climate Preparedness Conference
Baltimore, Maryland
communityresilience-center.org/conference-2016

18 to 22: Biodiversity Without Boundaries Conference 2016
San Juan, Puerto Rico
naturereserve.org/call-submissions

JUNE

19 to 24: Association of State Floodplain Managers 2016 National Conference
Grand Rapids, Michigan
asfpmconference.org

DECEMBER

10 to 15: 8th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration and 25th Biennial Meeting of The Coastal Society
New Orleans, Louisiana
estuaries.org/Summit

NOAA OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT

JANUARY

6 to 7: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Wells, Maine

13 to 14: Coastal Inundation Mapping
Boston, Massachusetts

20 to 21: Project Design and Evaluation
Beverly Hills, California

26 to 28: Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities
Mobile, Alabama

26 to 27: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Wakulla Springs, Florida

FEBRUARY

2 to 3: Coastal Restoration Project Design and Evaluation
Wallops Island, Virginia

11: OpenNSPECT
Online

17 to 18: Project Design and Evaluation
East Falmouth, Massachusetts

29 to March 1: Coastal Inundation Mapping
Houma, Louisiana

MARCH

2 to 3: Managing Visitor Use
Charleston, South Carolina

15 to 16: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Annapolis, Maryland

16 to 17: Coastal Inundation Mapping
West Barnstable, Massachusetts

22 to 23: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Huron, Ohio

APRIL

20 to 21: Project Design and Evaluation
Huron, Ohio

MAY

11 to 12: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Naples, Florida

18: OpenNSPECT
Online

JUNE

7 to 8: Coastal Restoration Project Design and Evaluation
Naples, Florida

7 to 8: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Dover, Delaware

JULY

11 to 12: Planning for Meaningful Evaluation
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

For more information on virtual and site-specific trainings, visit 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 Office.

Please send your questions and suggestions for future editions to ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov

Editor: Margaret Allen | Communications Director: Donna McCaskill | Copy Editor: Gerald Esch | Graphic Designer: Daniella Fishburne