



FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

We Welcome our Newest Fellows: Class of 2019-2021

Our new fellows will tackle critical coastal issues.

In April, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management matched NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship candidates with coastal zone programs in six U.S. states and territories. Recipients of the two-year fellowships will carry out innovative projects addressing hazard vulnerability, erosion, community resilience, public access, and social equity.



Emma Cutler, from Dartmouth College and nominated by New Hampshire Sea Grant, was matched with the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program to apply geospatial technologies and resources, developed by Wisconsin's partners, NOAA Digital Coast, and others, to Great Lakes coastal hazard issues, culminating in a self-guided project to develop a multi-hazard vulnerability viewer.



Sabrina Pereira, from the University of Rhode Island and nominated by Rhode Island Sea Grant, was matched with the New Jersey Coastal Management Program to identify measures or frameworks for evaluating community resilience, develop a method for equitable community resilience planning, and suggest integration of these findings with state initiatives in New Jersey.



Leah Feldman, from the University of Rhode Island and nominated by Rhode Island Sea Grant, was matched with the New York State Coastal Management Program to develop a scenario planning tool (potentially utilizing virtual reality or augmented reality) that will support three goals: community and regional resilience planning, local waterfront revitalization planning, and improved federal consistency review.



Melanie Perello, from Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis and nominated by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, was matched with Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Management Program to provide data, tools, and resources to area practitioners and landowners tackling Lake Superior erosion in Minnesota.



Adrian Laufer, from Oregon State University and nominated by Oregon Sea Grant, was matched with the Oregon Coastal Management Program to improve the availability of public access information for planning efforts and to encourage public enjoyment of and appreciation of the Oregon coast.



Ben Sweeney, from the University of Rhode Island and nominated by Rhode Island Sea Grant, was matched with the New Hampshire Coastal Management Program to develop creative funding mechanisms and policy to support on-the-ground adaptation and resilience in coastal New Hampshire communities.

Farewell to our 2017-2019 Fellows

We say farewell to five amazing coastal fellows.



Vidya Balasubramanyam worked with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program. There, she developed a [geospatial living shoreline site suitability assessment](#) that takes into account the biophysical and sociopolitical conditions of the shoreline, and assigns a [living shoreline site suitability index](#) to each site. She also laid the foundation for the development of a technical assistance and outreach strategy for local decision makers and property owners to pilot nature-based shoreline management strategies to address erosion issues along the New Hampshire tidal shoreline. The geospatial site suitability assessment is being used as one of the tools to evaluate permit applications and facilitate conversations with permit applicants about alternatives to hardening. Consultants are using the assessment to discuss options with property owners for their eroding shorelines. Others plan to use this information to decide where to allocate resources for soft shoreline stabilization.



Sean Duffey worked with the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management to develop a vulnerability assessment for the Sandy Neck Barrier Beach System Area of Critical Environmental Concern—a state-designated coastal environmental area on Cape Cod. He gathered data and information, solicited information from local stakeholders and state agencies, and collected field data to inform the assessment of climate change threats and stressors that either are currently affecting coastal habitats, or could in the future. For his final product, Sean developed an ESRI story map documenting the coastal habitats—and the threats they face—at the study area. He also completed a report providing recommendations and action steps for stakeholders to use to improve the resilience of the area of critical environmental concern. These products will be used to teach the public about the area, and will provide guidance to stakeholders to improve the sustainability and resilience of coastal habitats in the future. He also produced an assessment of tidal crossings that are located within the watersheds impacting the area. This report will help town officials and restoration practitioners with restoration efforts at the assessed study sites.



Emily Hall worked with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, where she led efforts on the [Blue Plan](#), a marine spatial planning effort for the Long Island Sound. The goals of the Blue Plan are to understand what natural resources and human uses exist in the Sound and where they occur, and to write policies that will protect and reduce conflict with those natural resources and human uses when future uses come into the Sound. Emily's responsibilities included conducting in-depth research of other state and regional ocean planning efforts, completing an inventory of Long Island Sound natural resources and human uses, formulating policy based on Connecticut natural resource and human uses, and coordinating the development of the final Blue Plan document. The Blue Plan will be reviewed in the 2020 legislative session. If accepted by the state legislature and considered federally consistent by NOAA, the final plan will be integrated into Connecticut's Coastal Management Program, which means it will have to be considered when applying for various types of permits in Long Island Sound.



Sarah Idczak worked with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Oregon Coastal Management Program, where she updated the [oil spill response plans for the state's coastal zone](#)—which had not been significantly updated since they were created over 20 years ago. The data and tools available to design these plans and respond to oil spills are now much more advanced, so she used this opportunity, and the available resources, to make the plans more effective and user-friendly. Her work was multi-faceted and varied—it included gathering, creating, and managing spatial data; performing spatial analysis and creating maps using geographic information systems; creating print- and web-based outreach materials; meeting with stakeholders, partner agencies, and coastal tribes; researching oil spill response best practices; and updating the text of the plans themselves. The plans will be the blueprints that responders use to take swift action to contain oil spills before they spread, thereby protecting sensitive natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources.



Jackie Specht worked with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Chesapeake and Coastal Service, to understand the challenges, options, and practices for beneficial reuse of dredged material. Jackie developed policy and guidance for beneficial use of dredged material, which will inform how the Department of Natural Resources pursues and regulates its use on state lands. She also assessed thin-layer placement of dredged material as a marsh restoration technique to determine if it is a technique that the state should employ, and if so, the best management practices that should be used. Her web-mapping tool, Beneficial Use: Identifying Locations for Dredge, or BUILD, allows users to spatially identify potential beneficial-use opportunities. BUILD is expected to become available to the public, with an associated guidance document and story map, through the [Maryland Coastal Atlas](#) in 2019. Jackie also helped develop a site-suitability model that identifies beneficial-use placement sites. Jackie developed a [webpage](#) and outreach materials, and gave talks locally and nationally to communicate the beneficial uses of dredged material and the resources the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has available. Finally, she designed [A Beneficial Use Demonstrations Projects Story Map](#), which gives examples of how the state is using dredged material to enhance coastal resilience.