



FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

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April 2011, Issue 49



FOCUS ON FELLOWS Leigh Wood



Recently, life has come full circle for former Coastal Fellow Leigh Wood—geographically speaking, that is. The fragile beauty of the South Carolina coast served as the backdrop of Leigh’s childhood and set her on a path to protect coastal resources. Last month, after concluding her coastal fellowship with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Leigh returned to

South Carolina’s shores in her new role as coastal training program coordinator for the North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in Georgetown, South Carolina.

Leigh’s two-year coastal fellowship—spent developing coastal vulnerability assessment tools and reaching out to New Jersey’s officials, resource managers, and stakeholders—was a critical destination on that journey. “The product development and outreach strategies I implemented, along with the coastal partnership and networking opportunities I was given during the fellowship, were priceless,” she says.

Born in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Leigh spent most of her childhood in South Carolina living just a mile or two from the beach in suburban Mount Pleasant, near Charleston. “My best memories include exploring the beach, crabbing and fishing with my family, and wandering the docks of marinas,” says Leigh, whose parents’ careers were linked to the coasts and ocean. Leigh’s early interest in the natural world was also nurtured by fifth-grade teacher Robert Hopkins. “He had a hands-on approach,” notes Leigh, “and we would take little tours of a creek area behind the school, collecting crayfish and other things to bring back to the classroom.”

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Leigh standing in front of a fallen tree with friends in Mariposa Grove at Yosemite National Park.

Not every teachable moment on coastal resources was pleasant.

On September 22, 1989, Hurricane Hugo roared into Charleston. “Our family evacuated to Atlanta, where my sister and I stayed for three weeks,” says Leigh. “I remember returning home and seeing our yard filled with full-grown pine trees that had been snapped in half. After the hurricane, so many beachfront cottages that had been damaged were replaced by massive mansions, and it really compromised the character of the islands, which were no longer affordable places to live. After Hugo,” she adds, “I was determined to have some influence on the future of the South Carolina coast.”

As an undergraduate at the College of Charleston, Leigh’s early interest in marine biology

shifted to urban studies when she realized she was fascinated by the connections between development practices and the quality of the coastal environment. After completing a B.A. in urban studies with a concentration in planning and administration, Leigh finished her M.S. at Clemson University in city and regional planning, with a concentration in environmental planning.

Leigh was well-acquainted with the NOAA Coastal Services Center’s reputation for connecting coastal science with decision makers. While studying at Clemson, she wasted no time Googling “coastal management fellowship” and was subsequently placed with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Coastal Management.

With the help of Dorina Frizzera, an environmental scientist and her fellowship mentor, Leigh developed two companion resources: the Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment Protocol (CCVAP) and the “Getting to Resilience” questionnaire. CCVAP, a GIS-based method, aids local governments in understanding the degree of vulnerability for their communities under present and future inundation scenarios. The “Getting to Resilience” questionnaire helps local officials validate existing

hazard planning efforts and consider ways to incorporate adaptation into planning, public outreach, disaster preparedness, and mitigation efforts.

“These sorts of resources are brand-new to many communities who might not have land-use planners or GIS specialists on hand, and they are loaded with the kinds of information communities need,” says Leigh. The agency’s partnership with the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium and Urban Coast Institute has enabled four “pilot” communities to benefit from the products so far. “I really enjoyed helping local decision makers cross the boundaries among individual sectors to start thinking as a group about hazard resilience and climate change. Our community outreach started a great dialogue among people who don’t usually communicate with each other.”

The product development and outreach skills Leigh honed during her fellowship will come in handy as she trains a broad network of planners, stormwater engineers, floodplain managers, and stakeholders at the North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR. Best of all, she’s living on the South Carolina coast once again. “I’m really happy to be back in the Southeast, close to family and a wonderful group of friends!” 📍

FOCUS ON THE CENTER

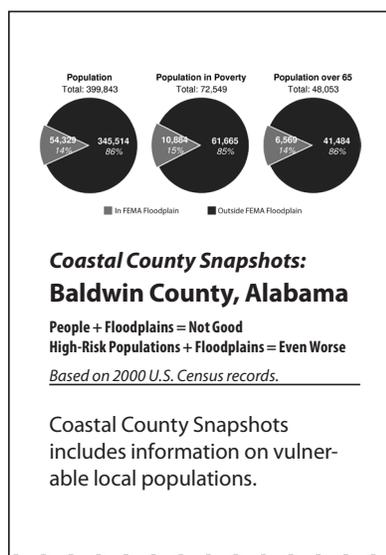
Supplying the Socioeconomic Piece of the Coastal Management Puzzle

A healthy coast helps drive the nation's economic engine and quality of life. That fact was sharply underscored last April when the BP oil spill dealt a heavy blow to the Gulf Coast fishing and tourism industries, a blow from which the region is still recovering.

For coastal professionals seeking to protect the environmental health and economic vitality of their communities, socioeconomic information and data are an invaluable aid. "For instance, knowing the facts about your community's population and economic activity can help you craft better plans for coastal hazards, sea level rise, and other impacts of climate change," says Jeffery Adkins, an economist with the NOAA Coastal Services Center. "In the case of flooding, you won't just know the specific areas in your community that are vulnerable—you'll be better informed on the implications of that flooding for the people who live and work and play there."

The following resources available from the Center can help coastal professionals be

better informed by incorporating socioeconomic information into management- and decision-making processes.



Coastal County Snapshots – Integrates social science data, land cover data, and other information to provide county officials with a local "snapshot" of coastal flooding and ocean and Great Lakes jobs. www.csc.noaa.gov/snapshots/

Economics: National Ocean Watch – ENOW provides information on six economic sectors that depend on the oceans and Great Lakes. The release of preliminary ENOW data is slated for this spring,

with finalized data later in 2011. www.csc.noaa.gov/enow/

Introduction to Economics for Coastal Managers – Outlines different ways of assigning economic value to resources and assessing the value of different management approaches. www.csc.noaa.gov/economics/

Spatial Trends in Coastal Socioeconomics (STICS) – Uses a map-based interface to display and download demographic and economic characteristics of jurisdictions. www.marineconomics.noaa.gov/socioeconomics/

Gross Domestic Product – Supplies gross domestic product data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis in tabular and geospatial formats, providing totals and a breakdown by 64 industries. www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/gdp/

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages – From the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this resource provides a quarterly count of employment and wages reported by employers covering 98 percent of U.S. jobs. www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/qcew/

To learn more about the Center's socioeconomic resources, contact Jeffery.Adkins@noaa.gov.

FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP: Sea Grant Endorsements

The NOAA Coastal Services Center has received the 2011-2013 Coastal Management Fellowship endorsements from Sea Grant. The Center received 44 applications from 23 Sea Grant programs across the country. Using four criteria—academic performance and diversity of educational background, endorsement by the applicant’s Sea Grant director, support from two letters of recommendation, and content of the applicant’s goal statement—12 finalists will be selected from among these candidates.

A workshop to match states with fellows will take place in Charleston, South Carolina, from April 18 to 22, 2011. Of the finalists selected, six will be placed with a host state. Each of the selected host states will send its fellow mentor to the placement workshop, and the finalists will be brought to the workshop at the expense of the Center.

The workshop consists of an orientation, project proposal presentations, finalist presentations, finalist and host state interviews, and fellow matching. If a state does not find

a suitable candidate during the workshop, it will be given the option to defer fellow placement for one year. States will only be allowed one deferment before they have to reapply.

This year, the host states are California (Coastal Commission), Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and South Carolina. For more information on 2011 state projects, please visit the fellowship website at www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows/stateprojects.html or contact the fellowship coordinator at csc.fellowships@noaa.gov.

WHAT’S NEW ON DIGITAL COAST?

Assessing Coastal Vulnerability and Ecological Resilience to Sea Level Rise in Southern New England – In this study, The Nature Conservancy explores the limitations and opportunities for regional-scale mapping of projected sea level rise. www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/inundation/discover.html

Conserving Coastal Wetlands for Sea Level Rise Adaptation – These resources can help communities identify wetland and other vulnerabilities in the face of sea level rise—and prioritize wetland conservation efforts that incorporate sea level rise considerations. www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/wetlands/index.html

Digital Coast in Action: Mapping Flood Forecasts for Better Flood Planning in Texas Communities – The addition of data and hydraulic models to flood-forecast maps has enabled some Texas officials to refine evacuation procedures and enhance long-term resilience planning. www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/action/txflood.html

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

MAY

11 to 12: **Coastal Development Strategies Conference**

Biloxi, Mississippi

www.dmr.state.ms.us/CMP/CRMP/Conference/11/conference.htm

24 to 27: **Climate Information for Managing Risks: Local to Regional Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies**

Orlando, Florida

<http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/cimr/>

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER TRAINING

The following trainings are delivered or otherwise supported by the NOAA Coastal Services Center.

CanVis Virtual Workshop

April 20

May 18

June 15

Coastal Community Planning and Development

March 30 to 31

Falmouth, Massachusetts

GIS Tools for Strategic Conservation Planning

May 3 to 6

Shepherdstown, WV

June 13 to 17

Moss Point, Mississippi

Habitat Priority Planner

June 14

Moss Point, Mississippi

Introduction to Geospatial Metadata

Delivered by the National Ocean Service's Office of the Chief Information Officer and NOAA's National Coastal Data Development Center

April 11 to 12

Honolulu, Hawaii

Project Design and Evaluation

May 2 to 3

Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Public Issues and Conflict Management

May 4 to 5

Saipan, CNMI

May 18 to 19

Tuckerton, New Jersey

June 14 to 15

Oakland, California

Roadmap for Adapting to Coastal Risk Virtual Training

May 11

Train the Trainer

Delivered by NOAA's National Coastal Data Development Center

April 13 to 15

Honolulu, Hawaii

For more information on virtual and site-specific trainings, visit www.csc.noaa.gov/training/.

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CREDITS AND INFORMATION

Fellow News is published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center 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 csc.fellowships@noaa.gov

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www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellownews/