



# FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

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## FOCUS ON FELLOWS

### Laurel Kellner



Native Californian Laurel Kellner has traveled the world to find herself back in home territory and thoroughly enjoying the experience.

“I grew up in the Bay Area and have a strong emotional connection to this environment,” says Laurel, who remembers that, as a child, she and her family would escape San Francisco’s

urban scene almost every weekend to hike through Lafayette Reservoir, Tilden Park, and other getaways nearby.

An enthusiastic traveler by her teens, Laurel had already explored England and Italy when she embarked on a tour of Ecuador’s Galapagos Islands that affected her deeply. “One day, our boat stopped at a white sand beach stretching off into the distance, and the only other creatures in sight were these little ghost crabs,” says Laurel. “I felt such a sense of peace and a desire to make sure that places like this were protected.”

In college at the University of California–Berkeley, Laurel chose geography as a major while also taking advantage of learning opportunities in faraway places. “I was able to study the history of 17<sup>th</sup> century ships by diving in Bermuda to scan the ocean floor for artifacts. The waters off Bermuda are crystal clear and a whole new world opens up—you cannot believe you’ve spent your entire life living above it,” she says.

Laurel traveled to many countries as part of the United States’ national under-23 women’s rugby team. And after graduation, Laurel spent more than two years working on geography education and sustainable tourism for National Geographic in Washington, D.C.

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Afterwards, Laurel attended Oregon State University to obtain an M.S. in marine resources management. Her thesis on sustaining working waterfronts proved to be “a great personal and professional fit. There’s a growing movement around the nation to recognize these places and their cultural and economic importance to the character of small-town communities,” she notes. “On a personal level, I found it so cool to be able to walk down to a dock and buy a 29-pound tuna from my favorite fisherman—who might have risked his life to bring it to me—and go home and cook it.”

Before finishing her master’s degree, Laurel had her eye on a NOAA Coastal Fellowship opportunity with the California Coastal Commission (CCC) working on issues related to climate change adaptation. “I thought, what a perfect opportunity to explore a subject I’d studied for the past two years, plus to be back home in the same town with my family!”

When Laurel began her fellowship, Governor Schwarzenegger was preparing to release the state’s climate adaptation plan, and Laurel helped edit the chapter detailing California’s coastal and ocean resources. She also took part in organizing a five-day workshop for coastal and resource managers on climate adaption planning. “Several



*Laurel (second from left) enjoys the Petaluma waterfront in California with her grandmother Pat, mother Madeline, and father Clint.*

agencies are now moving forward with climate change planning and we believe the workshop helped to spur them on,” says Laurel.

At present, Laurel is aiding the CCC in developing interim planning guidelines for sea level rise, and she is writing grants that will enable the commission to improve its outreach efforts on adaptation and hazard avoidance. “We want to create ‘living’ guidance documents that can be updated for local planners trying to implement climate change adaptation strategies,” she notes.

Many colleagues have aided Laurel during her fellowship, but she wants to give a special nod to Lesley Ewing, a senior coastal engineer, and Susan Hansch, her mentor and chief deputy director

of CCC’s headquarters. “Lesley has made sure I’m familiar with sections of the Coastal Act that pertain to sea level rise and hazard avoidance, and she’s pointed out how shoreline protective devices such as seawalls need to be carefully considered because of their potential impacts to beaches, bluffs, and wetlands.”

Laurel is not sure what the future holds after the fellowship, “but as a native Californian, I’d like to stay in the state,” she says. “I’ve found through this experience that sustainable development, responsible tourism, and wise coastal management are very important issues, and it would be also ideal if I could continue to blend those interests in my career.” *fd*

# FOCUS ON FELLOWS

## Laura Mattison



Compiling an inventory of coastal Oregon's dikes and levees might seem worlds away from Coastal Fellow Laura Mattison's original ambition to become a poet and intellectual. But in her fellowship, Laura has discovered surprisingly similar opportunities to be creative, intellectually engaged, and an agent for positive change.

Laura's birthplace of Concord, Massachusetts, was also home to Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and other giants of American literature and philosophy. She grew up in nearby Sudbury just steps from Walden Woods, the setting that inspired philosopher and pioneering naturalist Henry David Thoreau.

"My interest in environmental studies goes way back to being a kid and hiking around with the dog in Walden Woods. And that's what all the kids did," she says. "We would build all these

forts and collect frogs in the swamps. Even in high school. Only by then we realized what we were doing wasn't just fun, it was also very 'Thoreauvian' of us."

Laura first became aware of resource management and policy concerns as she delved into local political issues while attending the University of Vermont, where she majored in religious studies. After graduation, her learning curve accelerated during a Peace Corps stint on the islands of Fiji in the South Pacific Ocean. While there, Laura worked closely with local residents and their children on issues related to environmental education and marine protected areas.

"That's when I realized that poetry wasn't going to get anyone very far in terms of solving environmental and community problems," she explains. "I discovered that the people who knew the most about environmentalism were the people who used natural resources in their everyday lives. What they were looking for wasn't idealism but practical tools to help ensure that those resources would be there for their kids and grandkids."

Laura decided to attend Brown University for an M.S. in environmental studies where she did her thesis research on

fisheries management issues in Rhode Island. "It didn't take long for me to draw fascinating parallels between working with local fishermen in Fiji and local fishermen in Rhode Island," she explains. "And then that was it. I was immersed in a world that was fascinating and engaging and idealistic and even, I'd say, poetic."

As a coastal fellow for the Oregon Coastal Management Program, Laura is developing a geographic information system (GIS) product that will help local officials plan wisely for sea level rise. Gathering information from local residents and data from lidar and aerial photography, Laura is developing an inventory that houses information on the location, management, and infrastructure of levees and dikes in coastal estuaries.

The project, says Laura, is clear-cut while also lending itself to expansion and creativity. For instance, Laura has added local and historical information of the kinds she came to value during graduate school and the Peace Corps. "Countless farmers and fishermen have taken hours of their time to give me tours of watersheds and help me find dikes. A lot of them have been pretty excited to show me around and tell me old stories about where they live,"

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*Laura and her boyfriend Pete at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon.*

notes Laura. “It’s confirmed my belief that natural resource users such as fishermen and farmers know some of the

most valuable information about environmental issues.”

In addition, the inventory has benefited from a treasure trove of information generously shared by watershed councils, port authorities, soil and water conservation districts, and county clerks and assessors.

Laura is grateful to her supervisors and colleagues, whose support and guidance have helped her along. She gives special thanks to former fellow Tanya Haddad, now the agency’s Coastal Atlas administrator, whose lidar and ArcGIS expertise were so helpful.

What is on tap for Laura

following the fellowship? “I definitely want to stay involved in wetland and estuarine research. I’d like to create GIS products, like I’m doing now, but then be able to move onto the next steps of using that product for coastal and community resource resiliency.” She believes that GIS products, along with cooperation among local residents, ecologists, and coastal managers, can help to restore wetlands, revitalize urban areas, and foster sustainable economic development—and she’d love to use her creative and intellectual abilities to bring that cooperation to fruition. *fn*

## FOCUS ON THE CENTER

### The Coastal Climate Adaptation Website

Sea level rise, intensified storms and hurricanes, coastal inundation—these and other hazards, influenced by a changing climate, are expected to increase in the coming decades. Where can coastal managers, officials, and stakeholders get the information they need to ensure that their communities can adapt and thrive despite climate-related challenges?

The Coastal Climate Adaptation website (<http://collaborate.csc.noaa.gov/climateadaptation/>) is a good

place to start, providing access to hundreds of adaptation-related publications, resources, and local examples:

- Adaptation and action plans
- Case studies and strategies
- Guidance on climate science and on communicating this information
- Guidebooks
- Outreach materials
- Training and workshop materials

Recent updates to the site make the process of finding resources

and engaging in climate-related discussions even easier for users. Resources are broken out by state and by category, such as “climate change communication” and “policies and legislation,” to name two examples.

“It was important to us when designing this product to make sure that those new to the topic are not overwhelmed by the many tools and resources featured on the site,” says Stephanie Fauver, a meteorologist with the NOAA Coastal Services Center’s

Human Dimensions program.

The “Get Started” section provides new site users with an introductory sampling of published adaptation plans, strategies, and research:

- A state’s climate adaptation plan (Maryland)
- A city’s climate adaptation plan (Keene, New Hampshire)
- An overview of impacts (climate impacts broken out by region and sector)
- A document detailing strategies for communicating on the topic of climate change
- A synthesis of coastal adaptation options (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
- Two adaptation guidebooks: One by the United Kingdom Climate Impacts Programme; the other developed through the combined efforts of King County, Washington State, the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington, and ICLEI–Local Governments For Sustainability “The Coastal Climate

Adaptation website is a great place for people to share information, and even to find basic fact sheets on climate change—for instance, its potential impacts on infrastructure or human health,” says Fauver. “With many of our site users involved in outreach and education, these materials help them explain the need for adaptation in a way that can get ‘buy-in’ from local stakeholders.” 

## FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP Call for State Proposals

All U.S. states and territories with federally approved coastal zone management programs are eligible to submit one project proposal to compete for selection as a 2011–2013 fellowship host state. Multiple state agencies or organizations with partnered implementation of a state’s coastal management program are also eligible. States that currently host a first-year fellow are not eligible to apply for a second fellow. This year, four project proposals will be selected.

A six- to eight-page proposal in 12-point font must include these sections:

- Background and Introduction
- Goals and Objectives
- Milestones and Outcomes
- Project Description
- Fellow Mentoring
- Project Partners
- Cost Share Description
- Strategic Focus Area

Proposals are due to the NOAA Coastal Services Center by close of business on Friday, October 22, 2010. One signed original must be received through the mail, e-mail, or fax on this date (not postmarked, but received). Proposals can be sent to

Coastal Management Fellowship Program  
c/o Margaret Allen  
NOAA Coastal Services Center  
2234 South Hobson Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29405  
[csc.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:csc.fellowships@noaa.gov)  
Fax: (843) 740-1224

To view examples of previously selected state proposals, visit the fellowship website at [www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows/stateprojects.html](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows/stateprojects.html). 

NOAA Coastal Services Center  
2234 South Hobson Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29405-2413



## UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### OCTOBER

11 to 13: **Hydrology Conference 2010**

San Diego, California

[www.hydrologyconference.com](http://www.hydrologyconference.com)

15 to 20: **Sea Grant Week 2010**

New Orleans, Louisiana

[www.laseagrant.org/sgweek2010](http://www.laseagrant.org/sgweek2010)

### NOVEMBER

14 to 17: **Energy Use in Fisheries**

Seattle, Washington

[www.energyfish.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.energyfish.nmfs.noaa.gov)

For more information on upcoming events, please visit [www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/conferences.html](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/conferences.html).

## NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER TRAINING

### CanVis Virtual Workshop

October 20

November 17

December 15

### Coastal Inundation Mapping

October 20 to 21

Tuckerton, New Jersey

### Planning for Meaningful Evaluation

November 3 to 4

Orono, Maine

### Project Design and Evaluation

November 1 to 2

November 4 to 5

Seattle, Washington

### Public Issues and Conflict Management

October 13 to 14

Richmond, Virginia

November 9 to 10

Moss Point, Mississippi

### Coastal Climate Adaptation

October 18 to 22

Narragansett, Rhode Island

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

## 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](mailto:csc.fellowships@noaa.gov)

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