

2020-2021 Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellowship Application

Host location and contact information

Port of Seattle Headquarters
Pier 69
2711 Alaskan Way
Seattle, Washington 98121
(206) 787-3000

Name of fellowship supervisor

Jon Sloan, Sr. Manager – Environmental Permitting & Compliance
Maritime Environment & Sustainability

Project overview

The Hershman Fellow will lead the Port of Seattle's efforts to scale its Smith Cove Blue Carbon Pilot Project throughout Elliott Bay and the Duwamish Waterway. Since 2018, the Port has placed three tons of Olympia oysters, planted bull kelp spores, and established eight eelgrass restoration plots throughout 22 acres of nearshore and intertidal habitat at Smith Cove. The Smith Cove Blue Carbon Pilot Project seeks to understand how restoration of urban nearshore areas can trap and store carbon in the environment, ameliorate localized effects of seawater acidification, and improve habitat productivity by enhancing natural processes. Additional objectives of the Port's blue carbon work and habitat restoration work include developing innovative techniques for shoreline restoration and resilience; increasing riparian tree cover; enhancing shoreline public access and opportunities for environmental interpretation; and reducing underwater noise. The fellow's responsibilities will be related to three inter-related Port of Seattle initiatives:

- Manage the first year of the Port's long-term blue carbon monitoring study in collaboration with Smith Cove project partners, including the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Ecology, and Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Smith Cove is in north Elliott Bay, between Terminal 91 and Elliott Bay Marina. The terminal supports fishing and commercial vessels, a park, two cruise ship berths, and provides access to two busy railway networks. The Smith Cove Blue Carbon Pilot Project sits among those uses and provides a test case for marine nearshore restoration in an urban-industrial setting. The project is important to the health of Puget Sound and could yield practical and cost-effective actions to counteract the impacts of climate change to the marine environment, while also improving habitat for imperiled species of fish and wildlife. The fellow will work closely with Smith Cove project partners to undertake data collection and analysis, as well as engage in community outreach to share information about the project.
- Contribute to efforts to develop a shoreline assessment and management plan that will evaluate habitat conditions along 15.1 miles of Seattle area marine, estuarine and freshwater shorelines. The Port of Seattle has developed and tested innovative shoreline rehabilitation techniques which provide for slope stability while also improving habitat. The Alternative Bankline Stabilization Program will produce a port-wide assessment of shoreline conditions, then prescribe 'greener' methods to ensure bankline stabilization and protection of shoreline structures without compromising environmental performance. The fellow will work with Port staff and consultants to perform shoreline assessments and identify appropriate alternative bankline stabilization strategies.

- Participate in a regional Ocean Acidification working group with representatives from the Seattle Aquarium, Seattle 2030 Districts, University of Washington, King County, and City of Seattle, towards development of an Ocean Acidification Action Plan. The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (OA Alliance), based in Seattle, has developed a program to assist local, state and national governments with developing plans to undertake cost-effective steps to help offset local impacts of ocean acidification. The fellow will attend quarterly working group meetings and work closely with Port staff to prepare a draft Action Plan to submit to the OA Alliance.

The fellowship will provide a unique opportunity to work at the crossroads of economic, environmental, and community equity policies.

The fellow is expected to conduct their work through an equity lens and build on the partnerships between the Port and our neighboring communities. In December 2019, the Port of Seattle Commission adopted the Duwamish Valley Community Benefits Commitment. This program seeks to improve capacity-building, promote a healthy environment, and foster economic prosperity within near-Port communities. The fellow will have an opportunity to incorporate these equity goals in each of the three projects that they will participate in.

Fellowship mentor and key staff

Jon Sloan will serve as the Hershman Fellow's supervisor and mentor. Jon will oversee the fellow's activities and guide their development. He brings over 20 years of natural resource expertise in the private, public, and tribal sectors. The fellow will also work with the following key staff at the Port of Seattle:

- Sandra Kilroy – Director of Maritime Environment and Sustainability
- George Blomberg – Senior Environmental Program Manager
- Matthew Mateo – Senior Environmental Management Specialist
- Laura Wolfe – Senior Environmental Management Specialist
- Christina Billingsley – Senior Program Manager for Community Engagement

Mentorship, professional development, and networking opportunities

The fellow will be part of the Port's Maritime Environment and Sustainability Department, a passionate team of 25 scientists, planners, and specialists that manage all the environmental programs for the Maritime and Economic Development Divisions. The Port is in the middle of a generational expansion of its capital development program, investing in significant redevelopment and upgrading infrastructure along the Seattle waterfront.

The fellow will work with Jon Sloan to develop a performance and development plan that aligns with project goals and the fellow's career goals. Jon Sloan will regularly check-in to discuss progress and conduct a final performance evaluation at the end of the fellowship. This process is similar to that used by the Port of Seattle for full-time staff and to establish a clear framework for expectations and career growth.

The Port of Seattle routinely partners with public, private, non-profit, and tribal entities. The Smith Cove Blue Carbon Pilot Project alone required partnerships with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the City of Seattle, the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Suquamish Tribe, Grette Associates, and The Watershed Company.

The fellow is expected to maintain and grow these partnerships while identifying other opportunities to collaborate as the Port's blue carbon and habitat restoration work expands.

The Port will encourage the fellow to plan, facilitate, and attend all coordination meetings and other relevant events that align with the fellow's interest. The Port supports the fellow gaining a deeper understanding of coastal management issues and approaches from the perspective of a special purpose district charged with promoting economic development without compromising environmental performance. The fellow will have opportunities to apply science-based solutions to complex marine and coastal issues, grow their professional network, and showcase their knowledge and expertise to a broad audience including elected officials.

The Port will also support attendance at relevant conferences including but not limited to the American Planning Association Washington Chapter, , the Green-Duwamish Watershed Symposium, Green Infrastructure Symposium, and the Washington Public Ports Association environmental conference.