

Northwest Seaport Alliance

Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellowship 2021-2022

Host Organization

[Northwest Seaport Alliance](#) (NWSA)

Seattle Office: 401 Alaskan Way (Terminal 46, on Elliott Bay)

Tacoma Office: 1 Sitcum Way (on Commencement Bay)

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Fellowship Location

The NWSA is co-located, with offices on the waterfronts of both Elliott Bay and Commencement Bay. The Tacoma office is considered NWSA headquarters and is larger – with approximately 150-200 employees (in normal times) working out of that building or on the terminals. The Seattle office is much smaller, with about 20 employees (in normal times). Since March 2020, the NWSA's Air Quality & Sustainable Practices Team has been working from home (one in Seattle, one in Tacoma, and one in Port Orchard). By the time this Fellowship begins, we anticipate that we will be splitting our time, as a team, between being on-site in Tacoma (perhaps once or twice a week), being in the Seattle office (perhaps once a week), and working from home the rest of the days.

Fellowship Mentor/Supervisor

Steve Nicholas, Senior Manager, Air Quality & Sustainable Practices (snicholas@nwseaportalliance.com, 802-461-7439 (cell))

Position Description

The Northwest Seaport Alliance is a marine cargo operating partnership of the Port of Seattle and Port of Tacoma. We are the fourth-largest container gateway in the United States. Under a port development authority, the NWSA manages the container, breakbulk, auto and some bulk terminals in Seattle and Tacoma. The Air Quality & Sustainable Practices Program (AQSP) is part of the Northwest Seaport Alliance's broader Environmental & Planning Services Department. Other programs within that department are focused on water quality, habitat restoration and permitting, remediation, and planning, but the AQSP Team is responsible for the NWSA's myriad clean air and climate initiatives, as well as promoting sustainable corporate practices more broadly. We work very closely with most of the other major business units at the Alliance (commercial, operations, maintenance, engineering, public affairs, communications, etc.) – and with a wide range of external industry (marine terminal operators, trucking companies, etc.), government (US EPA, WA Department of Ecology, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, etc.), community (Duwamish River CleanUp Coalition, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, etc.), and nonprofit partners (Climate Solutions, Front & Centered, etc.). We also work closely with other ports, notably the Port of Seattle and the Vancouver-Fraser (B.C.) Port Authority. The Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellow will quickly become an integral member of the NWSA's three-person AQSP Team, which consists of [Nicola Graham](#), [Steve Nicholas](#), and [Graham VanderSchelden](#). The team meets twice weekly, and the Team Leader (Steve) meets weekly with each team member.

AQSP Work

This is an especially great time for a WSG Fellow to join the AQSP Team, as our workload and opportunity for impact is increasing dramatically this year and next, for several reasons:

- The 2020 update to the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy is slated for adoption by the Port of Tacoma Commission and NWSA Managing Members on 4/6/21. The AQSP Team led the Port of Tacoma and NWSA involvement in the development of that four-port Strategy and is charged with developing and coordinating execution of the implementation plans for both the Port and the NWSA.
- The Port of Tacoma's new Strategic Plan will be adopted by the Commission this year, as well. The AQSP Team has responsibility for delivering on critical aspects of that Plan.
- We continue to be responsible for delivering on critical aspects of CEO goals and strategic initiatives for the CEOs of both the Port of Tacoma and the NWSA; and
- The focus on clean air, climate solutions, sustainability, and environmental justice is increasing significantly in the public policy arena (state, local, federal, and international), within near-port communities, and across the maritime industry. This is a very positive development, and one that leads to increased demands on our time and opportunities for impact. Examples include increased opportunities to support the Commercial Team on business development opportunities, more state and federal grant opportunities, and rising requests from the Public Affairs Team to support legislative review.

Specific Tasks and Major Project Components

We have many interesting and important programs and projects underway, and many more on the near-term horizon. Our preference is to work with the Fellow, once identified, to agree on the best match with that person's skills, experience, and preferences. Our goal will be to assign the Fellow a lead role on one major project, and a support role on one or two others. That said, here are three specific project sense to give WSG and prospective Fellows a sense of what the work here might entail:

- *Improving the NWSA's ability to serve and partner with climate/sustainability-focused customers:* Research and summarize the climate and sustainability goals and programs of the NWSA's top 10 beneficial cargo owners (BCOs) and ocean carriers. Cross-reference those climate and sustainability goals with those of the NWSA and develop recommendations for partnership and marketing opportunities.
- *Advancing the NWSA's efforts to reduce environmental health disparities in near-port communities:* Conduct a detailed analysis of the WA Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map for the near-port communities in both NWSA harbors and develop recommendations for how to prioritize our clean air/climate actions and investments in ways that will reduce environmental health disparities.
- *Enhancing NWSA and Port of Tacoma efforts to integrate climate and sustainability goals into design and construction practices and move toward zero-emission buildings and facilities:* Compile and summarize "best practices" on sustainable design/construction and zero-emission buildings by other ports in the U.S. and leading international ports. Review and summarize established tools and frameworks for integrating sustainability into building and infrastructure development (e.g., LEED, Living Building Challenge, Envision, etc.). Based on this research, and consultations with key internal stakeholders, recommend a way forward for the NWSA on sustainable design and construction.

Networking and Professional Development Opportunities

We will make this a priority. Steve will serve as the primary mentor and supervisor and will meet with the Fellow on a regular basis. As noted above, by dint of the work we do and the environment in which we operate, there will be numerous opportunities for the Fellow to network both internally (with staff from a wide range of business units at the Port and NWSA) and externally (with industry, government, community, and nonprofit partners). The AQSP Team participates in numerous networks and

associations – such as the Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA) and the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) – which will afford additional opportunities for networking across the maritime industry.