

**Port of Seattle**  
**Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellowship 2021-2022**

**Host Organization**

Port of Seattle  
Headquarters, Pier 69  
2711 Alaskan Way  
Seattle, Washington 98121

**Fellowship Location**

Port of Seattle offices, pending COVID-19 guidance.

**Fellowship Mentor/Supervisor**

Kathleen Hurley, Sr. Environmental Program Manager, Maritime Environment & Sustainability  
With support from Jon Sloan, Sr. Manager, Maritime Environment & Sustainability

Fellow will also work with:

Sandra Kilroy, Director, Maritime Environment and Sustainability Department  
George Blomberg, Sr. Environmental Program Manager, Habitat Restoration Program  
Matthew Mateo, Senior Environmental Management Specialist, Environmental Planning  
Danielle Butsick, Sr. Environmental Management Specialist, Permitting & Compliance  
Christina Billingsley, Sr. Program Manager, Community Engagement

**Position Description**

As a special-purpose municipal corporation, the Port of Seattle (Port) serves King County and operates the Seattle seaport and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (STIA). The Port's mission is "to create good jobs here and across the state by advancing trade and commerce, promoting manufacturing and maritime growth, and stimulating economic development." The Port owns and manages many properties and seeks to maximize the public assets in their portfolio, with an eye toward best uses and environmental sustainability. Port organizational values include:

- We conduct business with the highest ethical standards. Our business practices reflect integrity, accountability, honesty, fairness, and respect at all levels.
- We honor our commitments and provide outstanding service and value to each other, our customers, the citizens of King County, and the region.
- We are capable, high-performing people who appreciate the privilege of public service. We practice open communication, innovation, collaboration, and transparency in all interactions.
- We embrace the richness of a diverse workplace and support employee development. We encourage healthy and diverse organization that enhances our contributions locally and globally.
- We are responsible stewards of community resources and the environment. We exercise care and wisdom in the use of both financial and natural resources.

The seaport is an approximately 1,540-acre commercial port in Seattle. Although there are active seaport operations throughout Seattle's shoreline, the port's principal marine cargo operations and industrial properties are in the lower 5 miles of the Green-Duwamish River, known as the Lower Duwamish Waterway, and in south Elliott Bay, including the East and West waterways, where the Lower Duwamish Waterway discharges to Elliott Bay. Additional port facilities and properties in east and northeast Elliott

Bay operate as marine cargo facilities, marine transportation/cruise vessel terminals, marinas, and marine industrial properties.

The STIA Airport Operations Area consists of 1,287 acres, which includes the terminal, runways, and airport support services, generating approximately 172,000 jobs. The Port also owns an additional 1,505 acres of aviation properties outside of the Airport Operations Area. STIA has partnered with area cities and developers to help boost local economies in Burien, Des Moines, and SeaTac. The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) airport operation and compatible land use regulations guide STIA's activities. The Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) utilizes sustainability concepts to augment existing operations and land uses to accommodate projected growth. The SAMP identifies measures for the Port to satisfy growing air transportation needs while meeting sustainability goals and objectives.

#### *Specific Tasks and Major Project Components*

The Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellow will contribute to the development of the Port's Multi-Site Habitat Mitigation Bank in the Green-Duwamish River Watershed and associated near-shore marine areas.

The watershed, known as Water Resource Inventory Area 9 (WRIA 9), has been heavily developed over time, degrading estuarine, riparian, and freshwater wetland environments. Development and operations by the Port and other businesses in the watershed sometimes adversely affect aquatic environments or sensitive areas. Federal, state, and local regulations and decision-making guidelines require that potential development projects avoid and minimize environmental impacts to the extent possible and that all unavoidable adverse impacts be offset by mitigation actions that provide compensatory natural resource values and fish and wildlife habitat functions. However, there are limited opportunities to complete mitigation projects in this heavily developed region. As a significant landowner and lessor in the area, the Port has the direct ability to identify, implement, and sustain offsetting habitat restoration and creation projects.

To that end, the Port is proposing to establish a *Joint Umbrella Wetland Mitigation and Habitat Conservation Bank* (Bank) within the watershed to rehabilitate ecological functions and restore priority habitat, while facilitating sustainable growth and development throughout the region. Upon certification by an Interagency Review Team (IRT), the proposed Bank project will provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands and other aquatic resources, as well as provide conservation credits for impacts to special status salmonid species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Bank project is being proposed through Washington State's Mitigation Banking System, co-chaired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and will also be reviewed and proposed for certification by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries as a conservation bank.

The proposed Bank will include multiple sites that serve WRIA 9, including the Lower Green River, Duwamish Estuary, and Nearshore subwatersheds. The Bank would substantially contribute to the Port's Century Agenda goals and strategies to advance commerce and promote industrial growth in an environmentally responsible way.

The proposed Bank will initially include habitat creation and restoration sites in marine, estuarine, and freshwater environments, all of which are important for various life-history stages of Pacific salmon. The Terminal 25 South project will provide substantial off-channel marsh and marine shoreline habitat at the south end of the East Waterway, where habitat is otherwise lacking. Terminal 117, located in the heart of Seattle's South Park neighborhood, will provide brackish water marsh and mudflat, which is critical for

Chinook salmon as they migrate through the transition zone (note: this project is currently under construction). In Auburn, 34 acres of floodplain wetlands and buffers will be enhanced contiguous to the Port's existing 60-acre compensatory mitigation site on the banks of the Green- Duwamish River. Future sites could include restoration at Terminals 105, 107, 108, and 115 South; Pier 48; and others depending on availability, feasibility, market conditions, and agency approval.

The WSG Hershman Fellow will support multiple aspects of the multi-site mitigation bank program, including:

- Work with port staff, consultants and stakeholders to develop a business plan that will provide visibility to the port's mitigation bank by establishing goals and objectives for mitigation credit sales and marketing as well as identifying potential customers of mitigation bank credits;
- Participate in conceptual design, construction support, and monitoring of mitigation bank projects in the urban Green-Duwamish River Watershed and associated nearshore areas, including coordination with project sponsor, project managers, designers, and other project team members;
- Support innovation in the port's habitat mitigation banking program by participating in the floating wetland islands project with port staff, UW faculty, UW students, EarthCorps, and project stakeholders.
- Support additional habitat program tasks, such as development of a habitat restoration inventory, participation in periodic habitat maintenance with weeding, planting, and related activities, and other related tasks as identified during the fellowship.

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 the projects that they will participate in.

#### *Networking and Professional Development 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. This program includes development of the multi-site mitigation bank.

The Fellow will be offered a performance and development plan that aligns with project goals and the Fellow's career goals. Staff 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 mitigation bank program requires partnerships with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington Department of Ecology, City of Seattle, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, consultants, and project stakeholders.

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 and environmental restoration 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.