

WASHINGTON SEA GRANT 2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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Funding cycle: February 1, 2026 -
January 31, 2028

Letters of Intent (LOIs) must be
received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time,
February 25, 2025.

Full proposals must be received
by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time, April 22,
2025.



Washington Sea Grant (WSG) requests proposals for the funding cycle beginning February 1, 2026. Research must address issues of importance to Washington's marine and coastal waters and align with the WSG Strategic Plan. Specific priorities for this request for proposals (RFP) include 1) issues of concern to Washington's Pacific coastal communities or 2) those that align with the Puget Sound Partnership's Science Work Plan. An emphasis on cultivating partnerships, advancing inclusive research practices, and addressing climate-change related problems and solutions is strongly encouraged.

About \$2 million will be available over a two-year period to support an estimated six to nine projects. Principal investigatorIs (PIs) may request annual budgets up to \$150,000 for a total project cost of \$300,000; a 50 percent non-federal cost- share or match is required.

Investigators at academic and research institutions throughout Washington may apply. Projects will be funded for up to two years. A start date of February 1, 2026 is anticipated.

Applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent and full proposal through eSeaGrant, the WSG online proposal submission system (esg.wsg.washington.edu). Please be sure to allow sufficient time for online proposal submission.

Guidance for preparation and submission of Letters of Intent and proposals is provided below.



Helping people understand and address the challenges facing Washington's ocean and coasts

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Cover: The Last Salmon Run by Alfredo Arreguín — ©1990.

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I SCHEDULE FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Information session for prospective investigators	Registration required	Monday, January 27, 2025 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Pacific Time
Information session for prospective investigators	Registration required	Tuesday, January 28, 2025 2 - 3 p.m. Pacific Time
Outreach workshop for prospective investigators Join Washington Sea Grant staff to learn more about specific areas of expertise and their potential to support and/or participate in proposals and research projects. A staff list with expertise is available here	Registration required	Monday, February 3, 2025 1 - 3:30 p.m. Pacific Time
LOIs due in eSeaGrant		Tuesday, February 25, 2025 5 p.m. Pacific Time
Full proposals due in eSeaGrant		Tuesday, April 22, 2025 5 p.m. Pacific Time
Peer review and project selection		May - September 2025
Notification of funding decisions		Mid September 2025
Project start date		February 1, 2026
Annual project reporting		Feb/Mar/Apr 2027 Feb/Mar/Apr 2028
Project end date		January 31, 2028

II PROGRAM AND PROJECT PRIORITIES

WSG serves Washington and the nation by funding marine and coastal research to strengthen understanding and sustainable use of ocean and coastal resources. Based at the University of Washington (UW) in the College of the Environment, WSG is part of a national network of 34 Sea Grant programs administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and funded through federal-university partnerships.

To accomplish its mission and achieve its vision, WSG adheres to a set of core values focused on excellence, equity, innovation and societal impact. It seeks to forge tools, foster insights, build capacity and invest in relationships for sustainable management, enjoyment, and use of Washington's marine resources. WSG celebrates the diversity of people and the environment and the complex interactions between them.

Facilitating practical and collaborative solutions to today's ocean and coastal issues, WSG fosters a culture of scientific integrity and serves as a trusted broker of place-based information and real-world expertise that honors the history, people and places of Washington.

WSG STRATEGIC PLAN

Proposals must align with the [WSG 2024–2027 Strategic Plan](#).

The plan identifies four program areas: *Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development, Resilient Communities and Economies, Healthy Coastal Ecosystems, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture*.

- ◆ The plan articulates WSG's commitment to pursuing activities that advance three cross-cutting principles: 1) cultivating partnerships; 2) practicing a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility for the benefit of all of Washington's residents; and 3) promoting actions to address challenges associated with climate change in coastal areas.
- ◆ Proposals are required to align with one or more of the program areas and address one or more of the cross-cutting principles. ***Please review the WSG Strategic Plan in preparing your Letter of Intent and full proposal.***

SPECIFIC PRIORITIES FOR 2025 RFP

1. **Research of value to Pacific coastal communities**

WSG is particularly interested in funding projects that engage with and address issues of concern to Washington's Pacific coastal communities.

2. **Research aligned with the Puget Sound Science Work Plan**

WSG will partner with the Puget Sound Partnership to fund projects that align with the [Puget Sound Science Work Plan](#).

III GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

PROJECT AWARD INFORMATION

This RFP solicits research projects that will be conducted from February 2026 to January 2028. Projects may be scheduled to begin in 2026 or 2027 and may be of one or two years in duration. The project end date may be no later than January 31, 2028.

In addition to funding projects through its federal omnibus award, WSG anticipates partnering with the Puget Sound Partnership to direct state funding to projects that align with the Puget Sound Science Work Plan.

WSG anticipates that six to nine projects will be selected for funding in the 2026–2028 cycle. Awards are contingent on the availability of funds to WSG through NOAA’s National Sea Grant Office and the Puget Sound Partnership. Proposals may request annual budgets up to \$150,000 for a total project cap of \$300,000 in requested funds.

REQUIRED COST SHARE OR MATCH

Federal law requires that WSG provide a non-federal cost share (match) of 50 percent, or one dollar for every two dollars of federal funds awarded. For WSG competitive projects, cost share is the applicant’s responsibility in all but exceptional cases. Cost share sources must be clearly identified; projects selected for funding will be required to provide documentation that supports the funds claimed. Cost share must be expended during the same time period as the project and may be provided in-kind or as cash.

Examples of cost share sources include non-federal salaries, wages and benefits of those working on the project; expendable supplies and equipment; and volunteer time, supplies, space or equipment. Foundation, state and local grants and other state funds are eligible sources of cost share funds with documented approval from those sources.

INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY

WSG encourages applications from investigators in the natural and social sciences. Principal investigators (PIs) must be affiliated with a university, two- or four-year college, museum, research laboratory or other nonprofit or tribal institution in Washington state. Co-principal investigators (Co-PIs) may be affiliated with the above-listed Washington institutions, institutions outside of Washington, state and federal agencies or for-profit or foreign organizations. Individuals from state agencies and for-profit and foreign organizations are discouraged from requesting direct support, with few exceptions; however, their contributions may be eligible as cost share for the project. Federal employees are prohibited from requesting direct support; however federal contributions may be documented as leveraged support for the project.

WSG is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives and ways of thinking. WSG encourages proposals that include participants diverse with regards to age, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, culture, religion, citizenship type, marital status, education level, job classification, veteran status, income and socioeconomic status. WSG is especially interested in supporting early career investigators.

PIs may each submit ONE Letter of Intent and ONE associated full proposal as lead PI. Lead PIs may participate as Co-PIs on other proposal submissions.

PIs who have received WSG funds previously and have not completed reporting requirements are ineligible for future funding until all delinquent reports have been submitted and approved. A summary of all prior WSG projects will be required as part of the full proposal.

STUDENT AND POSTDOCTORAL SUPPORT

Student education and training is a vital component of WSG projects and only in exceptional cases will research projects that lack significant involvement of students or postdoctoral researchers be funded. WSG encourages projects that promote the professional development of students and include direct student support in proposal budgets. WSG encourages projects to recruit and engage students from underserved and under-represented communities. This may include engagement of and support for undergraduate and graduate students, research fellows and postdoctoral researchers.

SEA GRANT GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Research projects seeking to support graduate students may request a Sea Grant graduate research fellow. Sea Grant graduate research fellows must be full-time registered graduate students working toward an advanced degree and whose research concerns a specific element of the larger proposal. The fellowship will offer up to eight quarters (or equivalent number of semesters) of graduate student stipend/salary and benefits over a two-year project, and that cost must be included in the project budget. You may also request graduate student tuition and fees. The fellowship compensation, graduate student tuition and fees will not be subject to indirect costs per Sea Grant’s federal implementing regulations (see 15 CFR 917.11). If an investigator intends to include support for a graduate fellow, that should be stated clearly in the Letter of Intent.

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

In addition to supporting research projects that are scientifically excellent and societally relevant, WSG is committed to supporting projects that engage and inform relevant communities. A project's relevance and benefit to coastal communities is important to advancing the WSG mission and strategic plan.

Each proposal must include an engagement plan that describes how the project design and implementation was developed in partnership with and informed by relevant communities and audiences, and how results will be shared directly with those concerned. In creating an engagement plan, PIs are encouraged to clearly specify their engagement **goals, audiences, products, and timelines.**

In considering engagement with relevant communities, PIs are encouraged to work with WSG staff and to identify and engage communities, individuals and organizations early in the planning process. While WSG staff may participate as part of a project team, the cost of their time should not be included in project budgets; instead, they will be funded separately through the WSG outreach budget. WSG staff are also available to facilitate interactions with potential project partners and participants and to discuss specific outreach, communications and education goals.

On **Monday, February 3, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.** Pacific Time, WSG will host an outreach workshop to brief potential PIs on the Sea Grant program, introduce WSG staff and facilitate collaborative plans for outreach and engagement. Investigators are strongly encouraged to attend. [Please register here.](#)

The timing of the outreach workshop is intended to facilitate early engagement with WSG staff in the proposal development process. Early consultation with WSG outreach staff is essential to the success of the proposal.

NOAA DATA SHARING PLAN

All proposals are required to include a NOAA Data Sharing Plan that meets requirements established by the [NOAA Data Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts](#). Projects selected for funding will be required to report on implementation of the data sharing plan.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST; HUMAN SUBJECTS AND ANIMAL CARE; PERMITS

All projects undertaken through WSG must be conducted in full compliance with applicable federal and state laws pertaining to conflicts of interest. The UW's Significant Financial Interest (SFI) disclosure policy applies to all UW participants in grants and contracts. Please note: this policy requires that any UW personnel who are responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of university research on any project selected for funding are required to electronically complete a disclosure before the WSG omnibus grant can be submitted to NOAA. Project members external to UW will be expected to follow the policies of their home institution in accordance with state codes and federal policies. For situations in which institutions do not have formal policies, the UW policy will apply.

For projects that involve research on vertebrate animals or human subjects, it is the PI's responsibility to identify and ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state and institutional requirements. PIs must identify the use of vertebrate animals or human subjects in full proposal submissions. UW PIs should contact the [Office of Animal Welfare](#), or the [Human Subjects Division](#). Other investigators should contact the relevant divisions at their institution. Project funds will not be awarded without appropriate approvals.

Per National Environmental Policy Act requirements, funded investigators are required to provide proof of all state and federal permits required to complete the project prior to expenditure of funds on activities requiring such permits. Information on required permits, including whether the permits have already been secured, will be required for all projects selected for funding, prior to final proposal submission to NOAA. Failure to secure permits may result in delayed receipt of funds or changes to the scope of work proposed.

IV LETTER OF INTENT GUIDANCE

Letters of Intent (LOIs) are required, and applicants that do not submit an LOI will not be eligible to submit a full proposal. Please note that LOIs are not competitive and will not be evaluated for merit, but will be used by WSG to inform the selection of reviewers and panelists. We encourage research teams to reach out to WSG staff at the LOI stage to ensure alignment with WSG's goals.

All Letters of Intent are due **February 25, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time through eSeaGrant** (esg.wsg.washington.edu). After this time the system will automatically lock out further submissions. Please be sure to allow ample time for online completion and submission of LOIs.

Each Letter of Intent must contain the following components:

1. Proposal Information
 - a. Project title
 - b. Keywords
 - c. Project initiation and completion dates
2. Investigators
 - a. Principal Investigator name and contact information (this may NOT be changed at the full proposal stage)
 - b. Co-Investigators (Co-Investigators may be added or changed at the full proposal stage)
3. Proposal Checklist
 - a. Does your proposal align with the WSG 2024-27 Strategic Plan?
 - b. Does your proposal contribute research of value to Pacific coastal communities or is it aligned with the Puget Sound Science Work Plan?
 - c. Does your proposal address one or more of the following: cultivating partnerships, advancing inclusive research practices, and/or addressing coastal climate change?
 - d. Can the work be completed in two years?
 - e. Can the work be completed with the budget available (\$150,000/year in federal funds)?
 - f. Can you provide the required 50% non-federal matching funds?
 - g. Do you plan to request a Sea Grant research fellow or fellows?
4. Brief Project Narrative (500-1000 words)
 - a. The following elements should be included:
 - i. Background: description of the problem or opportunity addressed;
 - ii. Goals and objectives: research question(s) or hypotheses; rationale for project and alignment with WSG priorities; expected outcomes and potential benefits;
 - iii. Approach: methods used to reach project goals and objectives; and
 - iv. Engagement plan (see above for details).
5. Suggested Reviewers
 - a. Please provide contact information for 3-5 reviewers qualified to perform an independent review of your proposal; include at least one reviewer from outside Washington state. Suggested reviewers must be free from conflicts of interest as defined by the [NOAA Policy of Conflict of Interest for Peer Review](#). Suggested reviewers cannot be beneficiaries of the proposed project, affiliated with applicant institution(s) in any way (including having received an honorarium from the institution within the last 12 months), employed at the same institution as the investigators within the last 12 months, colleagues the investigators have worked with in the last four years as project co-investigators, co-authors, etc.; or former mentors, advisors or students of investigators.

V FULL PROPOSAL GUIDANCE

Only investigators who submit Letters of Intent are eligible to submit full proposals. Full proposals must be submitted electronically through the WSG eSeaGrant system by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Tuesday, April 22, 2025. Full proposals received after the deadline will not be considered; the system will lock out further submissions after this time. Please be sure to allow ample time for online proposal completion and submission.

Each full proposal must contain the following components:

1. Proposal information

Project title, keywords, and project initiation and completion dates. The proposed project end date may not extend past January 31, 2028.

2. Principal Investigator and Co-PI records and resumes

Curriculum vitae, resume, or biographical sketch of no more than two pages for each of the senior personnel on the project. A WSG template is available in eSeaGrant.

3. Investigator demographics

NOAA Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved demographics question. Response is voluntary.

4. Project summary information

The project summary should provide a clear and concise description of the project in terms that are understandable by individuals who are not experts in your field.

- a. *Objectives* (2,000 character limit, including spaces)— Briefly and clearly state the short-term and long-term objectives of the proposed research and how they align with WSG priorities. Incorporate both the scientific and broader impacts or societal benefits of the project in these objectives.
- b. *Methodology* (2,000 character limit, including spaces)— Succinctly describe the methods and approaches to be used in accomplishing the objectives.
- c. *Rationale* (2,000 character limit, including spaces)— Concisely state the problem or opportunity addressed. Indicate why the project is important, appropriate for WSG support, and why the proposed approach is necessary or appropriate. Identify the expected outcomes of the project and project partners and potential end users.
- d. *WSG Strategic Plan Focus Areas*
- e. *Sea Grant Classification Codes*
- f. *Data Sharing Plan Summary* (2,000 character limit, including spaces)

5. Project narrative

(Required: 12-page maximum; Times New Roman, 12-point or larger, 1-inch margins, single-spaced)

The project narrative is the primary basis for evaluation. Documentation must be complete and provide adequate information for evaluation of the project's technical merits and its contribution to WSG's priorities. The following elements should be covered:

- *Goals and objectives*—Describe the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved for each year of the work plan presented. The project outcomes should be clearly stated.
- *Background*—Provide sufficient background information for reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed research and relevance to WSG priorities and cross-cutting themes. Summarize the problem, need or opportunity to be addressed and critically evaluate existing knowledge and previous work pertaining to the problem or opportunity.
- *Approach*—Provide a work plan that fully describes the project structure and design, identifies specific tasks to be accomplished, explains the methods that will be used to accomplish the tasks and identifies the roles of team members and partners. In all projects that involve students, fellows or postdoctoral researchers, explain how the proposed activity will provide training for these individuals and in what capacity they will be involved.
- *Engagement plan*—Describe a) your community collaborators, target audiences, and participant groups and provide justification for their engagement; b) the engagement, outreach, communications or education approaches to be used in co-development of your project and in dissemination of outcomes; c) anticipated outcomes and how engagement effectiveness will be evaluated; and d) estimated costs. Engagement activities may include use of project results in education or resource management settings; technical training and assistance; development of publications, presentations and other outreach products for public audiences or specific user groups; and involvement in teaching, citizen science and volunteer networks. Ensure outreach costs are included in your budget in the applicable budget categories.
- *References* (these do not count towards the 12-page limit).

6. Project Timeline

Provide details of project activities and key milestones. A WSG timeline template is available in eSeaGrant.

7. Additional information

Provide the following:

- request for a student fellow and the number of quarters/semesters requested for each year
- use of vertebrate animals (yes/no)
- use of human subjects (yes/no)
- required permits (e.g., Animal Care permits, Human Subjects permits)

8. Budget

Completed budget worksheet for each year of the project. Detailed budget instructions are provided in eSeaGrant. All subawards will require full project documentation (narrative and budget) and official approvals from sub-awardee organizations or institutions.

9. Budget justification

A separate detailed justification for each budget item must be added to each budget worksheet. Detailed instructions and a budget justification example are provided in eSeaGrant. Subawards require an additional scope of work and budget worksheet documents and justifications.

10. Current and pending support

List planned and ongoing research support for all investigators. All current and pending support records must provide the investigator name and affiliation and the following information for each record:

- support status (current, pending, submission planned in near future)
- project/proposal title
- source of support
- total award amount
- award period
- project location
- person-months committed to project

A WSG current and pending support template is available in eSeaGrant. This information will be used to assess capacity to complete the proposed project.

11. Letters of Commitment or Support

Provide letters of commitment or support from sub-awardee institutions, contributors of cost share or leveraged funds, other collaborating institutions and organizations that will benefit from project results. Each organization providing third-party cost share contributions in the proposal MUST provide a letter of commitment, on their letterhead, acknowledging their commitment and the dollar amount.

12. NOAA data sharing plan

(6,000 character limit with spaces)

Provide a data sharing plan that meets requirements established by the [NOAA Data Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts](#). Additional information concerning NOAA data sharing plan requirements is provided in eSeaGrant. Projects selected for funding will be required to report on implementation of the data sharing plan.

13. Results of prior Sea Grant support

For all investigators receiving funding from any Sea Grant program during the previous five years, provide the following information:

- Title of the project, amount and period of support
- Short summary of the major accomplishments of the project, including outreach
- List of publications resulting from the project
- Short description of commercial, societal or other impacts and deliverables.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information will be required for all projects selected for funding—[Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants](#) (OMB Control No. 0648-0538). Additional information will be provided.

VI REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects are selected according to the following process:

1. The call for proposals is widely distributed across the state.
2. Non-competitive Letters of Intent are submitted by project PIs to assist in the selection of reviewers and panelists.
3. Full proposals are submitted by PIs who have previously submitted a Letter of Intent.
4. Each full proposal is distributed to at least two external reviewers for written evaluation and comments.
5. The WSG director convenes a scientific and technical review panel comprising experts in the range of disciplines proposed across the submitted proposals. At least one panel member provides written evaluation and comments for each proposal. Panel members are provided with copies of the proposals and external reviews. The panel discusses each proposal individually and develops recommendations for funding.
6. External reviewers and scientific and technical review panelists apply the following criteria in project evaluation.
7. Summaries of proposals recommended for funding are provided to members of the WSG Advisory Committee (<https://wsg.washington.edu/about-wsg/advisory-committee/>), who provide comments on project contribution to the WSG program and make recommendations regarding priorities for funding.
8. The WSG director and leadership team review all information available and make final decisions on projects for inclusion in the WSG omnibus proposal. Projects are selected based on the following criteria: ranking and recommendation of the scientific and technical panel; recommendations and input from the WSG Advisory Committee; diversity and balance of proposals across program and priority areas, institutions and geographies; availability of funding. Proposals selected for funding may be returned to applicants for revision prior to submission to the National Sea Grant Office.
9. Washington Sea Grant submits a Letter of Intent to the National Sea Grant Office describing the proposed projects and the rationale for their selection. Once the National Sea Grant Office concurs with the Letter of Intent, final proposals are submitted as part of the WSG 2024–2027 omnibus proposal to the National Sea Grant Office, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce. Contingent on the availability of funds, satisfaction of any animal care and human subjects requirements, and confirmation of all required permits, projects will be funded and implemented on February 1, 2026.

Criteria	Weighting	Description
Project contribution	20%	Importance, relevance and applicability of proposed project to WSG priorities, including cultivating partnerships, advancing inclusive research practices, and addressing climate change; application to problems or opportunities with societal relevance; and contribution to student and postdoctoral support.
Technical and scientific merit	35%	The degree to which the project will advance scientific understanding and whether the approach is technically sound and innovative, uses appropriate methods, includes clearly stated measurable objectives and mechanisms to evaluate success, and is likely to achieve anticipated results in the time proposed.
Engagement plan	15%	Effective plan for ensuring that relevant groups contribute to, benefit from, and learn about project outcomes; degree to which potential users of the results and Washington Sea Grant staff have been and will be included in project planning and implementation.
Inclusive Research Practices	10%	The degree to which the project advances knowledge and topics of particular relevance to communities disproportionately impacted by environmental changes; engages communities in development of research questions and methodologies; broadens the participation of underserved and underrepresented communities and individuals in research; and provides benefits to all Washingtonians
Qualification of applicants	10%	The degree to which applicants possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the project, with consideration to career stage and past performance.
Project costs	10%	The degree to which the budget is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe, reasonable given the availability of program funds, and effectively leverages other resources to achieve project objectives.

VII CONTACTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Investigators are encouraged to discuss proposal ideas with the WSG director. To arrange a time to talk or to ask questions, please contact WSG at wsgres@uw.edu or 206.543.6600.

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Deputy Director
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WASHINGTON SEA GRANT RFP INFORMATION SESSIONS AND OUTREACH WORKSHOP

Washington Sea Grant will hold two RFP information sessions and an outreach workshop for prospective investigators. All who are interested in submitting a proposal are strongly encouraged to attend.

The information sessions will include a short presentation about the RFP by Terrie Klinger, WSG interim faculty director, and an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

The outreach workshop will include the same RFP overview as the information sessions, as well as short introductions to WSG outreach staff, followed by an interactive opportunity to connect with WSG outreach staff. The outreach workshop is intended to facilitate collaborative and innovative plans for outreach and engagement.

All meetings will be held virtually on Zoom and registration is required.

Monday, January 27, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Pacific Time

REGISTRATION

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time

REGISTRATION

WASHINGTON SEA GRANT OUTREACH WORKSHOP

(Attendance strongly encouraged)

Monday, February 3, 2025

1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Pacific Time

REGISTRATION

Join Washington Sea Grant staff to learn more about specific areas of expertise and their potential to support and/or participate in proposals and research projects. A staff list with expertise is [available here](#).



The University of Washington (UW) ensures equal opportunity in education regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran status in accordance with UW policy and applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.



Sea Grant

WASHINGTON

W UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

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