



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

DNR 2023 HERSHMAN HOST FELLOWSHIP PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title: Watershed and Aquatic Resilience Planning

Host Organization: Washington Department of Natural Resources, Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands

Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St SE, Olympia WA, 98504

Fellowship Supervisor:

Primary:

Max Showalter, Policy Advisor

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360-791-1040

Secondary:

Marissa Aho, Policy Director and Chief Resilience Officer

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360-515-8087

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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Mentor and Key Staff:

Mentor: Max Showalter, Policy Advisor

Key Staff: The following staff represent those with whom the fellow will interact directly to support completion of their project. However, the fellow should expect to integrate into the team within the Office of the Commissioner and experience regular interaction with her policy, legislative, external affairs, and Tribal relations teams, as well as interactions with key operational staff in Olympia and the staff of our Regional Offices throughout the state.

- Daily interactions:
 - Marissa Aho, Policy Director and Chief Resilience Office
 - Csenka Favorini-Csorba, Deputy Policy Director
 - Cortney Higgins, Policy Advisor
- Weekly interactions:
 - Patrick DePoe, Director of Tribal Relations
 - EJ Juarez, Director of Environmental Justice and Equity
 - Rachel Benbrook, Watershed Steward
- As-needed interactions:
 - Alex Smith, Deputy Supervisor for Forest Resilience, Forest Regulation, & Aquatic Resources
 - Terra Rentz, Strategic Advisor to Alex Smith
 - Tom Gorman, Division Manager of Aquatic Resources
 - Cynthia Catton, Science Advisor of Aquatic Resources
 - Jen Watkins, Division Manager of Forest Resilience
 - Saboor Jawad, Division Manager of Forest Regulation

Project Overview:

Summary: We seek a fellow to work within the Policy and Resilience team to plan, strategize, and initiate implementation of projects promoting watershed resilience, salmon recovery, and healthy riparian and marine ecosystems. This fellowship will provide experiences in policy development, interactions with Tribal nations and stakeholders, and strategic planning and implementation of large projects. Described below, the fellow in this position will help to expand our Watershed Resilience Action Plan to new watersheds, with exposure to and opportunities in other Commissioner projects related to watershed and aquatic health.

About DNR and the Office of Commissioner: Managing nearly 6 million acres of land and water across the state, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides a wide array of benefits to our state and communities, including hundreds of millions of dollars for schools, hospitals, and libraries. First elected in 2016, Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz leads the ~1,600-person agency. The Office of the Commissioner includes Legislative Affairs, Tribal Relations, External Affairs, Communications, and Federal Affairs, as well as the Policy and Resilience team where the fellow will reside. DNR Policy and Resilience is a 7-person team that leads development and implementation of the Commissioner's priorities in coordination with staff across the agency, state government, and external partners.

Detailed Description: The fellow in this position will co-lead development of watershed scale salmon and ecosystem recovery planning and implementation alongside the primary mentor, with flexibility to participate in additional watershed and marine ecosystem projects as interested. The primary focus of this project is expansion of the [Watershed Resilience Action Plan](#) (WRAP). Released in February 2022, the WRAP coordinates, enhances and maximizes investments and work to protect and restore salmon habitat in ways that provide jobs and

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build healthier, more equitable communities within the Snohomish Watershed. Since its creation, the WRAP has served as a pilot for future DNR activities in other watersheds, and DNR is eager to take the lessons learned from Snohomish to begin working with partners in additional watersheds.

Expansion into additional watersheds will feature projects co-developed with watershed partners to deliver fast and meaningful results in salmon recovery and watershed resilience. The fellow in this position will work with Tribes, agency staff, and other partners to co-develop a short WRAP-style “planlet” which identifies key areas for collaboration with DNR. The fellow will lead policy-level implementation of pilot projects identified within each planlet. Example projects could include beaver training and outreach programs, kelp and eelgrass outreach and monitoring, initiation of water quality screening studies, or urban forest and heat monitoring. Deliverables will include a short planlet for each watershed including metrics of success, an action strategy for pilot project implementation, and, as timeline allows, a communications products about the successful pilot project.

Additional opportunities for the fellow include:

- Assisting in development of the [Statewide Kelp Forest and Eelgrass Meadow Health and Conservation Plan](#);
- Participate in development of a kelp and eelgrass health and conservation playbook for local jurisdictions;
- Contribute to a Riparian Systems Playbook within the Snohomish Watershed alongside the Watershed Steward;
- Support scoping and interagency outreach surrounding development of a watershed scale monitoring program to assess land management practices’ cumulative effects on salmon; and
- Supporting development of projects to promote Tribal access to Indigenous and traditional foods on public lands.

Mentorship, Professional Development, and Networking Opportunities

A primary focus of DNR is to provide mentorship and professional development to the fellow and help build a future workforce of natural resource professionals. The fellow in this position can expect to integrate directly into the Policy team, and develop skills in: communication to diverse audiences; conservation and recovery planning and implementation; grant writing; Tribal relations; and stakeholder engagement. While this will be the team’s first Hershman Fellow, the Policy team has previously hosted undergraduate and post-graduate interns. The primary mentor has experience mentoring interns and was a WSG Fellow in the past.

The fellow should expect to gradually develop independence in their work and develop a resume of skills and deliverables suitable to a natural resource career by the end of their fellowship. The office will prioritize opportunities for the fellow to develop a professional local network by providing regular engagement. In addition to networking that directly supports the fellow’s project, the fellow can expect to participate in meetings like the DNR Tribal Summit, gain experience in state legislative session and engagement with legislators, and attend other professional conferences or meetings as the fellow is interested.

DNR anticipates providing trainings to the fellow, including Government-to-Government Relations, watershed management, and facilitation depending on the fellow’s interest. Weekly check-ins with the primary mentor will ensure the fellow has regular opportunities to receive and provide feedback. At the beginning of the fellowship, the primary mentor and fellow will jointly assess the fellow’s interests to build a plan for professional development.