

Coastal Hazard Resilience Coordination and Collaboration | 2019-2020 Washington Sea Grant Fellowship

Manager: Brian Lynn, Coastal Program Manager
Project Mentor: Bobbak Talebi, Senior Coastal Planner
Washington State Department of Ecology

Overview

Washington was the first state in the Nation to earn federal approval for its Coastal Zone Management Program (Coastal Program), established under the authority of the 1972 Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The Coastal Program, housed within the Department of Ecology, meets the goals of the federal law through a comprehensive approach to coastal resource management. This work requires us to balance the often competing — and occasionally conflicting — demands of coastal resources use, economic development, and conservation. We partner with a range of stakeholders, agencies, local governments, academics, Tribes, and non-profits to achieve this mission. We focus our efforts on five key priorities:

- Protecting and restoring **coastal wetlands**.
- Preventing or reducing threats from **coastal hazards**.
- Attaining increased opportunities for **public access**.
- Partnering to manage the **impacts of growth and development**.
- Planning for the use of **ocean resources**.

Depending on the fellow's interests and the program's activities, the fellow's work could involve research and writing, policy analysis, strategic planning and project management, event planning and facilitation, partnership building and coordination, stakeholder engagement, web design and maintenance, and internal and external communications.

While this year's fellowship will focus on community resilience to coastal hazards, we value growth and development of fellows in all areas of coastal management. In addition to having specific outputs, the fellow will have the opportunity to explore and take on creative thinking initiatives.

Area of Focus

Recently, the state has been updating and improving natural hazard data for all coastal counties. This modeling and analysis work has produced Risk Reports that provide details on the extent and severity of impacts from flooding, landslide, erosion, and earthquake and tsunamis. Agency experts have been following up by working hands-on with elected officials, emergency managers, and planners to identify priorities and develop strategies for resilience action.

While communities acknowledge risks from these hazards and want to be take actions, they struggle with the many steps needed to do so. This Fellowship will build on a two-year project aiming at developing the resources, training, and communication tools to overcome this challenge. Specifically, this Fellowship will lead our efforts in the following:

1. Work with a variety of agencies and stakeholders to gather examples of risk reduction projects from across the state. By having a collection of examples and in-depth case studies highlighting best practices from their colleagues, communities without staff and resources will have access to risk reduction options and will be more confident when deciding on which actions to take.

2. Develop and carry out a communication and community engagement strategy for disseminating best practices, including the use of ESRI story mapping, professional training, community outreach, video production, blogs, and graphic design.
3. Continue the restructuring and development of the Coastal Hazards Resilience Network¹ website to carry out a new mission – a tool for orienting communities to relevant science, best practices, and resources.
4. Assist with the design and execution of the state’s first coastal hazards conference, bringing together practitioners, scientists, tribal communities, and decision-makers to share knowledge, ideas, and best practices related to existing and future coastal hazards impacts and risk reduction.

Project Partners:

Office of the Governor
 Washington Sea Grant
 The Nature Conservancy
 FEMA Region X
 State Emergency Management Division
 Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council
 State Department of Natural Resources

State Department of Commerce
 Pacific Coast Local Governments
 Washington Marine Resource Committees
 Washington State Parks & Recreation
 Tribes
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Fellow Mentoring and Agency Connections

The Fellow will work with the Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program at the Department of Ecology in Olympia, WA. The fellow will have a mentor and a supervisor that will oversee activities and guide development.

The fellow will have a tailored Performance and Development Plan that provides a comprehensive and integrated approach to managing the relationship between mentors and fellows, evaluating fellows’ progress on tasks and professional growth, and ensuring clear and open discussions about opportunities for improvement - using goal-setting, self-evaluation, and supplemental information. These elements establish the foundation for a successful fellowship and career.

The fellow will be part of a multi-agency team working on hazards resilience, including another Washington Sea Grant Fellow at Ecology. This team is supported by a range of coastal management experts, including ocean policy, shoreline management, coastal geology and engineering, floodplain management, wetlands and critical areas, and legislative engagement professionals.

The Fellow will be encouraged to attend relevant coordination meetings, trainings or other opportunities to gain exposure and understanding of how government and non-governmental organizations work on regional coastal management. When opportunities arise, the Fellow will be encouraged to present work to a variety of regional audiences. This experience will connect the fellow to state, regional, and national partners and encourage coordinated participation in larger resilience conversations centered on fundamental and unified approaches to protecting resources, people, and systems.

¹ Coastal Hazards Resilience Network website: <http://www.wacoastalnetwork.com/>