

2023 Northwest Seaport Alliance WSG Hershman Fellowship Project

Project Title: clean air, climate solutions, sustainability, and environmental justice

Host Organization Location & Contact Information

[Northwest Seaport Alliance](#)

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

Tacoma Office: 1 Sitcum Way (on Commencement Bay)

[Facebook](#)

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Name, Title, & Contact Information for Fellowship Mentor/Supervisor

Steve Nicholas, Senior Manager, Air Quality & Sustainable Practices (AQSP)

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Position Description

The Team/Program/Organization: The AQSP Program is part of the NWSA's broader Environmental & Planning Services Department. Other programs within that department focus on water quality, habitat restoration and permitting, remediation, and planning. 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 Clean Up 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 WSG 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.

The Work: This is an especially exciting time for a WSG Fellow to join the AQSP Team, as our workload and opportunity for impact is increasing dramatically, for several reasons:

- The 2020 update to the [Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy \(NWPCAS\)](#) was unanimously adopted by the Managing Members of the NWSA (10 port commissioners) in April 2021. It sets the goal of phasing out emissions of both diesel particulate matter (DPM) and greenhouse gases (GHG) across all seaport activities by 2050 or sooner. In addition, in December 2021 both the Port of the Tacoma and the NWSA adopted a five-year Clean Air Implementation Plan to advance the ambitious goal of zero-emission by 2050 or sooner. The AQSP Team leads a complex,

multi-dimensional effort to collaborate with many internal and external stakeholders and partners to execute on both the 2020 NWPCAS and the associated implementation plans.

- In addition, the AQSP Team continues to be responsible for delivering on critical strategic initiatives for the CEOs/Senior Executive Teams 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 positive development, and one that leads to increased demands on our time and opportunities for impact. Examples include engagement in the creation of a Pacific Northwest “Clean Hydrogen Hub; a partnership with the USDOE and the Busan Port Authority to study the feasibility of establishing a green shipping corridor between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea; engagement in implementation of the new state Clean Fuel Standard and/or Climate Commitment Act; and pursuit of a growing number of state and federal grant opportunities.

The Fellow’s Role: The NWSA’s 2023-24 Hershman Fellow will serve as our Community Liaison & Equity Program Lead. He or she will advance the organization’s efforts to: 1) communicate, engage, and partner with near-port communities on air quality and climate related issues in both Seattle and Tacoma per the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy; and 2) pursue environmental and climate justice in the Puget Sound region with the vision of reducing and eventually eliminating the NWSA’s contributions to environmental health disparities for communities living near seaport activities and major freight corridors. Specifically, the Fellow will lead and coordinate a range of high-priority projects related to community engagement and environmental justice in near-port communities. Specific examples of major responsibilities include:

- Doing research and analysis to inform the NWSA’s efforts to reduce environmental health disparities in near-port communities and do its part to implement emerging state-level environmental justice programs (e.g., including the HEAL (Health Environments for All) Act, and elements of the Clean Fuel Standard and Climate Commitment Act).
- Collaborating with Community Engagement and Communications staff at the NWSA, Port of Seattle, and Port of Tacoma to strategically design and carry-out online and in-person events, supporting the flow of information with and between near-port residents and community-based organizations including the facilitation of feedback and discussion.
- Serving as editor-in-chief of the NWSA’s quarterly newsletter, Ports Clean Air Quarterly; and
- Maintaining and expanding our recently launched web portal, NW Clean Ports, for near-port residents to view progress toward our clean air and climate solutions.

Mentoring & Networking: The NWSA will continue to make mentorship of its Fellow a priority. While Nicola Graham and the rest of the Air Quality & Sustainable Practices (AQSP) Team will serve as primary mentors – the team meets twice weekly, and Nicola will have weekly one-on-one meetings with the Fellow as well – the Fellow will have frequent contact and ready access to the entire Environmental & Planning Services Department and its director (Jason Jordan).

Regarding professional development opportunities, the Fellow will participate in the development and delivery of multiple briefings for senior executives and elected officials (i.e., port commissioners). In addition, the Fellow will be invited and encouraged to participate in and/or present at multiple local and national webinars and conferences during the year.

Regarding networking opportunities, collaboration with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and partners is core element of our team’s work, and critical to our success. As a small team

(4 FTE, including the Fellow) with a huge task – eliminating air and climate pollution from all seaport activities by 2050 or sooner – the NWSA Air Quality & Sustainable Practices Team works closely with virtually every other environmental program business unit within the organization, as well as a wide range of external partners, including other ports (Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma, Washington Public Ports Association, others), government agencies (City of Seattle, City of Tacoma, King County, Pierce County, Department of Ecology, Department of Commerce, WSDOT, Governor’s Office, our regional Clean Air Agency, and others), industry partners (e.g., our two utilities – Tacoma Power and Seattle City Light, marine terminal operators, trucking companies, consulting firms, others), environmental/climate/social justice advocacy organizations (e.g. Climate Solutions, Front and Centered, others); and community-based organizations (e.g. Duwamish River Community Coalition, Communities for a Healthy Bay, others). The Fellow will have multiple opportunities during the year to liaise and network with these organizations.

Location/Work Environment: The NWSA is co-located, with offices on the waterfronts of both Elliott Bay and Commencement Bay. The Tacoma office serves as NWSA headquarters and is larger – with 100-150 employees (in normal times) working out of that building or on the terminals. The Seattle office is much smaller, with 10 or fewer employees working out of that building on any given day. Currently, the NWSA’s Air Quality & Sustainable Practices Team has been working from home (one in Seattle, one in Tacoma, and one in Port Orchard) four days a week, and at the Tacoma office one day a week (Wednesday). In addition, the team meets in-person at the Seattle office once a month, on the last Friday of each month.

NWSA’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement/Policy/Program

“The Port of Tacoma and the NW Seaport Alliance respect and value the rich diversity of their employees, customers, vendors, contractors, and stakeholders. Regarding our employees, we are committed to building and maintaining a work environment that: is inclusive and welcoming to all; values diverse thought and expression in pursuit of the organizations’ missions; and reflects the demographics of the community we serve.”

The Port of Tacoma (which houses the NWSA) has a robust Diversity & Inclusion policy, plan, and program. The Port reports annually on its Diversity & Inclusion Plan, key elements of which include recruitment and hiring practices, employee training, and community outreach. This focus is strengthened in the Port’s new Strategic Plan. DEI is cited as one of the seven core values of the port, and one of the six key strategies under the “organizational success” goal of the Plan. In addition, reducing the Port’s contribution to the environmental health disparities that exist in communities living near port activities in both Seattle and Tacoma is a central goal of the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy, on which the WSG Fellow would be working.