



FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

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AMANDA SANTONI



Fellow Amanda Santoni's early appreciation for coastal resources began at the family supper table in her hometown of Pasadena, Maryland, just a short drive to the Chesapeake Bay.

"I learned to fish on the bay through a program called, 'Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs,' catching crabs by using chicken necks and my dad's old crab pots," says Amanda.

Family get-togethers were marked by a bushel of crabs for good eating—and lively debates about whether this season's catch was abundant or scarce, too pricey or a great deal.

Attending Randolph-Macon College, Amanda had no idea at first which major to pick but eventually chose biology. An ecology class enabled Amanda to start a research project on marine larval ecology, and this project fired her interest in coastal and marine issues.

Seeking to learn more on the subject, Amanda pursued a master's degree in environmental management at Duke University. Her master's thesis evaluated how thoroughly the 20 coastal counties of North Carolina complied with stormwater rules and regulations. While at Duke, Amanda also had the opportunity to be a coastal advocacy and policy fellow for the North Carolina Coastal Federation. She had heard about the fellowship when first starting graduate school and decided it was the right next step.

Amanda is now working with the Delaware Coastal Program on a project formally titled, "Quantifying the Value of Delaware's Tidal Wetland Ecosystem Services."

"What this means in English," says Amanda, "is that I am trying to find the dollar value for all of the benefits that tidal wetlands provide in the state of Delaware." This will be achieved in the form of a survey to Delaware residents, a choice experiment that presents controlled, hypothetical scenarios to respondents.

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Amanda doing some vegetation monitoring at the St. Jones Reserve

To complete the project, Amanda is working with economists and natural resource experts in the state. The values determined by the survey results will then be used to leverage funding for wetlands protection and management. The project is very ambitious, and just developing a survey for choice experiments can take years—but Amanda hopes to complete the project by the time her fellowship is done.

“One of the things I have found extremely valuable about the fellowship is the amazing cohort of coastal management fellows who inspire me and give me hope for the future of our coasts,” notes Amanda. “The fellowship has also given me the chance to work on federal consistency determinations, and I’ve taken part in the Wetland Conservation Strategy team that will help guide this agency.”

Treks in the field have enabled Amanda to participate in marsh bird and horseshoe crab surveys, vegetation monitoring and biomonitoring, carbon cores, and sediment elevation tables. She is also working on a GIS project to determine areas of potential salt marsh migration in order to inform their management.

In contemplating the future, Amanda is certain that she wants to stay in the coastal management field. “I want to continue to use my multidisciplinary background to work on complex coastal issues,” she says. Only time will tell where she ends up, geographically. Having lived in six different states over the past five years, this coastal fellow hopes that the next position will keep her in one place for a long time. 

CLASS OF
2014-2016



FOCUS ON FELLOWS IAN YUE

When Fellow Ian Yue thinks back on his childhood, he remembers always feeling a great pull toward nature and a desire to take part in all it had to offer. Born and raised in the Minnesota city of Edina, just south of Minneapolis, Ian recalls begging his parents to send him to wilderness camp and running outside to see the eerie, orange sky when tornado sirens sounded.

Drawn to the interdisciplinary nature of the environmental field, Ian decided to focus on environmental studies and anthropology while at Wheaton College in Illinois. Next he attended the University of Connecticut for a master’s degree in agricultural and resource economics. Ian credits the list servers from the “wonderful staff” at Connecticut Sea Grant with keeping him informed of opportunities—one of which was the fellowship program.

Ian's fellowship with the Connecticut Office of Long Island Sound Programs involves two aims. One is to create a method for in-kind compensation for shoreline flood and erosion control structures that can offset adverse environmental, public trust, and navigational impacts. The second is to promote a policy of no net increase in coastal armoring along Connecticut's Long Island Sound coastline.

In the years before Ian's fellowship, no state-level statutory authority existed to create the legal foundation for in-kind compensation. Passing such authority into statute through the state legislature ordinarily is very difficult.

However, the damages caused by Hurricanes Sandy and Irene created an opportunity to amend a statute, and his office colleagues jumped at the opportunity. Ian's project now applies this Connecticut statute that allows state regulatory practices to be more effectively implemented along the Long Island Sound coastline.

Before the fellowship ends, Ian plans not only to complete the compensation method but also to pilot test it for long-term use. He appreciates being given such high-level tasks. "I could not be more grateful for the foresight of my mentors and the seriousness with which they promote my fellowship



Ian monitoring salt marsh dieback at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, Connecticut

as a valuable professional development opportunity," says Ian.

Another welcome surprise for Ian has been the innovative work possible in a state regulatory office setting. "Within the focus on permitting, regulation, and enforcement of environmental policies, a person can at times be very creative and put in place a better, more sustainable living environment."

The fellowship has given Ian the opportunity to pursue professional development activities such as trainings and conferences, and he's been able to travel, network, and learn essential skills to become a better coastal professional.

Ian says he has been blessed with incredibly

supportive communities during his time in Connecticut and thinks it would be wonderful to continue living and working in the state. Still, he has never been opposed to adventure and would be excited about the growth experience of living somewhere new to help address specific local and regional environmental issues.

"I could certainly see myself continuing to work in the coastal management field because of what it stands for: unabashed integration of the natural and social sciences, and the convergence of environmental policy, planning, and management," says Ian. "A position in a Sea Grant or land grant university extension would be my dream role, linking applied research to real-world problems." 

NEWS ABOUT FORMER FELLOWS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We asked 1998-2000 Maryland fellow Zoe Johnson to tell us what she's been up to since her fellowship. Here's what she had to say.

Where was your fellowship, and what was your project?

I served my fellowship at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. My project, "Sea Level Rise Response Strategy for the State of Maryland," set the stage and direction for a great deal of the progressive sea level rise, coastal hazard, and general climate adaptation planning undertaken by the State of Maryland over the last decade and a half.



What did you do after your fellowship?

After completing my fellowship, I took a year and a half off to care for my son, and then I returned to work as a coastal hazard planner with Maryland's Coastal Program. I ended up working at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources until just this past July—nearly 17 years from when I moved from my home state of Washington to start my fellowship. It is amazing how fast time flies! Over these years, I served in a number of roles related to climate change, sea level rise, and coastal hazard planning. My most recent position was director of climate change policy and planning with the Chesapeake and Coastal Service, where I was responsible for overseeing a wide range of climate change planning and policy initiatives at the state level.

In July, I accepted a position with NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office as the first-ever climate change coordinator for the Chesapeake Bay Program. I am responsible for leading efforts to develop climate change policies in support of the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and helping partners work together to increase the resiliency of the Bay watershed in the face of the adverse effects of changing environmental conditions. In addition to assessing the vulnerability of living resources and habitats to a changing climate, I am working closely with Bay Program partners who are currently engaged in ecosystem restoration and conservation efforts; serving as the program's climate change liaison; and facilitating meetings of the Bay Program's Climate Resiliency Work Group.

What are some of the accomplishments you are most proud of?

I am amazed at how far the field of climate change and sea level rise adaptation planning has come over the last decade and proud that I have been so very fortunate to be part of this growing and emerging profession and field of work. I have crafted a number of strategies for which I am proud, my fellowship project being one of the first. But I was fulfilled by a number that came after, including Maryland's Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change: Sea Level Rise and Coastal Storms (2008) and the Strategy for Building Economic, Social and Ecological Resilience (2011). I am very proud of the three pieces of successful legislation that I worked to develop, including the Living Shorelines Protection Act (2008); the Coast Smart Council (2014); and the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (2015). And, perhaps at the top of my list, I am proud but mostly honored to have been able to represent Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley on President Obama's State, Tribal and Local Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience.

Did the fellowship help lead you to where you are?

While I am proud of my accomplishments I am also humbled by how much more work there is to be done to address the impacts of climate change that are already so readily apparent. That said, it has been a great honor to work in the field of climate adaptation over the past 17 years, and I owe a tremendous debt to the fellowship for kick-starting my career in this amazing field. In my travels to meetings, conferences, and workshops around the country, it amazes me how many Coastal Management Fellows I meet that are still working in the field. I am humbled by their continued dedication and remain thankful that I can count myself as one of the crowd.

If you are interested in hearing more about what Zoe is doing, you may contact her at zoe.johnson@noaa.gov. 

FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP: CALL FOR STATE PROPOSALS

All U.S. states and territories with federally approved coastal zone management programs are eligible to submit one project proposal to compete for selection as a 2016-2018 fellowship host state. Multiple state agencies or organizations with partnered implementation of a state's coastal management program are also eligible. States that currently host a first-year fellow are not eligible to apply for a second fellow. This year, up to six project proposals will be selected.

A six- to eight-page proposal in 12-point font must include these sections:

- Background and Introduction
- Goals and Objectives
- Milestones and Outcomes
- Project Description
- Fellow Mentoring
- Project Partners
- Cost Share Description
- Strategic Focus Area

Proposals are due to the NOAA Office for Coastal Management by close of business on Friday, October 16, 2015. One signed original must be received through the mail, email, or fax on this date (not postmarked, but received). Proposals can be sent to

Coastal Management Fellowship Program
c/o Margaret Allen
NOAA Office for Coastal Management
2234 South Hobson Avenue
Charleston, SC 29405
Email: ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov
Fax: (843) 740-1224

To view examples of previously selected state proposals, visit the fellowship website at www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/stateprojects.html. 

NOAA Office for Coastal Management
2234 South Hobson Avenue
Charleston, SC 29405-2413



UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

OCTOBER

5 to 9: National States Geographic Information Council Annual Conference
Kansas City, Missouri
www.nsgic.org/2015-nsgic-annual-conference

6: 2015 International Marine Spatial Planning Symposium: Sharing Practical Solutions
Narragansett, Rhode Island
<http://rhody.crc.uri.edu/msp15/>

14 to 16: American Shore and Beach Preservation Association's 2015 National Coastal Conference: Broadening Coastal Perspectives
New Orleans, Louisiana
www.asbpa.org/conferences/conf_fall_15.htm

14 to 16: Maritime Cultural Landscape Symposium
Madison, Wisconsin
www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=N:4294963828-4294963805&dsRecordDetails=R:CS4545

26 to 28: Dune Management Challenges on Developed Coasts
Kitty Hawk, North Carolina
www.asbpa.org/dunes/dune_workshop.htm

NOVEMBER

8 to 12: Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference
Portland, Oregon
www.erf.org/cerf2015

DECEMBER

1 to 2: Living Shorelines: Sound Science, Innovative Approaches, Connected Community
Hartford, Connecticut
www.estuaries.org/living-shorelines-national-technology-transfer-and-regional-workshops

FEBRUARY 2016

9 to 11: Social Coast Forum
Charleston, South Carolina
www.cvent.com/events/2016-social-coast-forum/event-summary-2ae-d342036a74448ad6d78f447d2f04f.aspx

MARCH 2016

14 to 17: Pacific Risk Management 'Ohana
Honolulu, Hawaii
<http://collaborate.coast.noaa.gov/PRIMO/Pages/index.aspx>

NOAA OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT

OCTOBER

On-Site:
1: Introducing Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience
Annapolis, Maryland

6 to 8: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Smithfield, Rhode Island

6 to 8: Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities
Newport, Oregon

7 to 8: Coastal Inundation Mapping
Trenton, New Jersey

21 to 22: Project Design and Evaluation
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

29: Introducing Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience
Honolulu, Hawaii

NOVEMBER

On-Site:
3 to 4: Managing Visitor Use
Imperial Beach, California

DECEMBER

On-Site:
1 to 2: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Savannah, Georgia

JANUARY

On-Site:
5 to 6: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Wells, Maine

12 to 13: Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
Huron, Ohio

For more information on virtual and site-specific trainings, visit www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/list.

CREDITS AND INFORMATION

Fellow News is published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management to relay information about the fellowship program and provide a forum for information exchange among fellows, mentors, Sea Grant, and the Office.

Please send your questions and suggestions for future editions to ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov

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