



# FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

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## FOCUS ON FELLOWS: Amanda Wenczel



Looking back, coastal fellow Amanda Wenczel cannot recall a sudden “Aha!” moment pointing her to a career in environmental sciences. As a child growing up in central New Jersey, Amanda happily took for granted the leafy park just steps from her front door and the lazy summer days spent at her grandparents’ cottage on the Jersey Shore.

It wasn’t until college that Amanda fully appreciated the role she could play in enhancing environmental awareness and action.

As an undergraduate at Smith College, Amanda majored in biology but took several courses addressing conservation-related practices such as building “green” structures, saving endangered species, and preserving coral reefs. “My instructors focused on the ways that policy influences the environment and environmental actions,” she says. “Until then, I hadn’t truly realized how I could get involved, or how I could make a living in environmental work.”

After graduation, Amanda headed to the University of Delaware to obtain a master’s degree in marine policy (M.M.P.). She considers herself fortunate to have arrived at a time when Cape Wind, a proposed wind-energy farm located off the coast of Cape Cod, was being hotly discussed. The proposal generated strong opinions, not only because of its potential aesthetic and wildlife impacts, but also because it would affect both state and federal waters. “My advisor, Willett Kempton, was one of the lead professors working on an opinion survey of Cape Cod

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FOCUS ON FELLOWS (CONTINUED)

residents, so I was able to see the results and learn how the survey was done,” she notes.

While working at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Amanda met former coastal fellows Zoë Johnson and Lindsay Leiterman. Amanda decided to apply for the fellowship after learning how much Zoë and Lindsay enjoyed the “hands-on” aspect. “I liked the fact that fellows are given guidance and lots of responsibility—basically, ‘Here you go, it’s your project,’” she emphasizes.

Amanda’s fellowship with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Office of Coastal Management has come with a major geographic learning curve, and the transition from the East Coast to the Great Lakes region has enlarged her understanding of coastal diversity.

“Where I’m from, the coast is mostly sand, but in this state, the coast is so varied! In western Ohio, low-lying land is sometimes flooded with lake water when it storms, but eastern Ohio has bluffs as high as 50 feet,” notes Amanda. Understanding the topography and geology of the Ohio coast are central concerns for Amanda, who is working on the Lake Erie Shore Erosion Management Plan (LESEMP).

LESEMP completion goals include characterizing erosion along the shore and creating a voluntary, incentive-based regional erosion plan. “Understanding habitat, protected lands, and social issues are also important considerations

in looking at erosion in Ohio,” says Amanda. “A few highways and state roads here have actually had to be changed because of erosion problems, and some people are installing structures that they mistakenly think control erosion. Right now, we’re working with Ohio Sea Grant on a survey and focus groups so that we can understand how residents, contractors, public officials, and others feel about erosion and what they believe should be done about it.”

Debi Beck, a resources engineer in the agency, has been a great help to Amanda. “Debi has degrees in geology and engineering, and she’s explained the background and technical aspects of erosion in Ohio. She’s also given me important documents to read. Really, everyone in this agency has been so supportive. This is a partnered project, so I’ve been able to work with DNR’s divisions of wildlife and geological survey, too. We’re trying to bring together all of our in-house expertise and look at the issue from as many points of view as possible,” notes Amanda.

What’s in store for Amanda once she completes the fellowship? She suspects she’ll move back to the East Coast, but beyond that the future is “up in the air. I’d like to stay with a state or regional agency, but the truth is, I’m a project-focused person,” she says. “I’ll make my decision based on whether the project is one that interests me. Right now, LESEMP is the project that has my attention.” 

## FOCUS ON FELLOWS: Wesley Shaw



Australia, Antarctica, Mexico, Chile—coastal fellow Wes Shaw has visited or lived in an extraordinary number of places. But don’t let his wanderlust fool you. Wes’ strong sense of place—in particular, his attachment to the wild beauty of Alaska—and his desire to preserve the character of the coast informs his work with the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management in Boston.

“My fellowship in Massachusetts has turned out to be an incredibly good fit, and this office is filled with great people,” says Wes, who is helping the agency to develop floodplain management education and outreach tools.

Although Wes was born in Arizona, he spent most of his childhood in Portland, Oregon. His preference for unspoiled places was evident in his college choice—Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. When Wes majored in history and minored in chemistry at

this small liberal-arts college, it was “tucked away in some sweet-onion fields, a very pastoral place,” says Wes. “Now it’s a town of wineries and a hip place to live, but then it was just a pleasant place to go to school, very removed from the rest of the world.”

After spending his junior year living in Australia, Wes decided he’d rather not have a traditional desk job immediately after graduation. He applied to work on boats in Alaska that took tourists up the Yukon River and through the islands of the Inside Passage. Wes, who began as a deckhand and ended up working as a naturalist for the company, has returned to Alaska nearly every year since his college graduation.

“Alaska is, without a doubt, the second most gorgeous place I’ve ever seen in my life—the first is Antarctica,” says Wes. “It has a relatively intact ecosystem, and people there really care about where they live. I think the specialness of Alaska is what drove me into marine resource management.”

After several summers of working in Alaska, and winters of traveling abroad or working in the Pacific Northwest, Wes made the decision to go back to graduate school. “I made the decision to apply while I was living on a wooden sailboat in Juneau. I felt I needed more conservation tools, and it wasn’t enough anymore just to be a concerned citizen.” He entered the master’s degree program in marine resource management at Oregon State University and completed it in 2005.



Now ensconced in Massachusetts, Wes attributes his positive fellowship experience partly to the influence of two mentors in the agency: Rebecca Haney, a coastal geologist, and Andrea Cooper, the smart growth coordinator.

“I’ve really benefited from their different skills and approaches. They have also given me a lot of latitude to design the program to fit my skills and interests. For instance, we’re developing outreach materials for StormSmart Coasts, a new program we’ve started that helps local officials think about ways to improve floodplain management. I get to write these materials, and Andrea and Rebecca have helped me revise drafts and target the writing to local officials. It’s rewarding and challenging work.”

Wes’ writing experience has been so rewarding, in fact, that his work was recognized this past summer at the national conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM). With the

assistance of Massachusetts attorney Ed Thomas, Wes drafted a fact sheet for local officials summarizing the legal framework of managing coastal floodplains. The document is now posted on the ASFPM website, and it has been favorably received in many quarters.

At present, Wes is doing outreach work and preparing additional materials for the StormSmart Coasts website, which is slated to go live in early 2008.

Wes is not entirely sure where his future career will take him, but he does know one thing—he will be in Alaska again. Several years ago, he talked some friends into purchasing a piece of property west of Juneau on Excursion Inlet, a tiny community of only 10 people. There, a considerable walking distance from the nearest form of transportation, stands a simple hut in a lovely, quiet spot. In all the world, it’s the place where Wes feels most at home. *W*

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## FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP: 2008 State Projects Selected

Six exciting new projects have been selected for the 2008–2010 Coastal Management Fellowship. Below is a summary of each of these projects for the coming year. Recruiting efforts are well underway, but we need your help to spread the word to eligible applicants. Remember, applications should be submitted to area Sea Grant directors and are due no later than January 28, 2008.

**Host Agency:** California Coastal Commission

**Location:** San Francisco, California

**Project Goal:** Develop a collection of climate change information and use that information to develop a series of public workshops

**Host Agency:** Delaware Coastal Management Program

**Location:** Dover, Delaware

**Project Goal:** Develop a sea-level-rise adaptation plan for the State of Delaware

**Host Agency:** Maine Coastal Program, Maine State Planning Office

**Location:** Augusta, Maine

**Project Goal:** Apply an ecosystem-based management framework to Maine's coastal waters

**Host Agency:** Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management

**Location:** Boston, Massachusetts

**Project Goal:** Make storm-resilient communities a reality in Massachusetts

**Host Agency:** New York State Division of Coastal Resources

**Location:** Albany, New York

**Project Goal:** Develop New York State guidelines for post-storm redevelopment plans

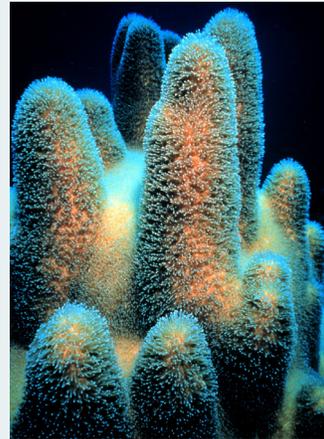
**Host Agency:** Washington State Department of Ecology

**Location:** Olympia, Washington

**Project Goal:** Develop a public access portion of the Washington Coastal Atlas

If you would like more information about the 2008 state projects, please visit the fellowship website at [www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows.html](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows.html) or contact the fellowship coordinator at [csc.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:csc.fellowships@noaa.gov).

## FOCUS ON THE CORAL FELLOWSHIP



Please note: In the future, *Fellow News* will no longer publish news and features about the coral fellows. Instead, a separate newsletter from the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program will be the vehicle for distributing this information.

The first issue of this new publication will announce the newly selected 2008–2010 Coral Reef Management fellows. The newsletter will be distributed to interested program participants and partners.

An existing publication, the NOAA *Coral Reef News*, will also include information on the coral fellows. NOAA *Coral Reef News* is available at this website: [www.coralreef.noaa.gov/news/](http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/news/).

For more information about the Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program, please contact Marci Wulff at [Marci.Wulff@noaa.gov](mailto:Marci.Wulff@noaa.gov) or (301) 563-1176.

# FOCUS ON THE CENTER

## New Center Trainings

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center has recently developed several courses that can help you refine your geospatial and coastal resource management skills.

### **Coastal Community Planning and Development**

Many coastal resource managers desire a deeper understanding of the principles associated with alternative coastal development. NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and state coastal resource management agencies have developed an introductory, two-day course that will provide course participants with the background, examples, and strategies needed to support alternative development efforts in coastal communities. Moreover, class participants will increase their ability to effectively communicate with stakeholders.

### **Negotiating for Coastal Resources**

This one-and-a-half-day course is an interactive curriculum designed to provide practical skills and information on all facets of negotiation to coastal managers, nongovernmental organization representatives, and government staff members. Participants will assess their personal negotiation styles, learn how to prepare for negotiations, practice collaborative negotiation strategies, and demonstrate techniques that can overcome barriers to negotiation.

### **Coastal Inundation Mapping**

This two-day course provides helpful information to certified floodplain managers, National Weather Service personnel, and county, state, and municipal officials. Course topics include an overview of different coastal inundation products, an analysis of data types used to create them, geographic information system (GIS) techniques for mapping and visualizing inundation, and basic information on performing risk and vulnerability assessments.

Class participants should have six months to one year of basic GIS skills.

### **Remote Sensing for Spatial Analysts**

This two-day course helps spatial analysts to understand the basics of remote sensing techniques by providing them with hands-on computer training. Students will use remote sensing, in combination with spatial data, to investigate issues such as land cover and use, shoreline erosion, and fisheries and benthic habitat assessment.

Students should have a mastery of basic GIS skills before attending this class. Familiarity with ArcGIS is required, since all hands-on GIS exercises will utilize ArcGIS software.

### **GIS Tools for Strategic Conservation Planning**

This four-day course teaches students how to apply GIS tools, methodologies, and analyses to strategic conservation planning using

a green-infrastructure approach. The course was developed by NOAA and The Conservation Fund in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center.

Green infrastructure refers to an interconnected network of natural areas and open spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides an array of benefits to people and wildlife.

All participants should have prior experience or training in the use of ArcView 9x software. Materials presented are both comprehensive and fast-paced.

### **Available Soon . . . Collaborative Approaches to Hazards Management Workshop**

Many Center partners have expressed the need to enhance planning networks that address natural and human-made hazards impacting our coastal communities. This new workshop will bring together state- and local-level floodplain managers, coastal resource managers, emergency managers, and planners to discuss mechanisms for collaboration and to learn more about leveraging resources to increase coastal community resilience.

To learn more about these courses, or other Center trainings, visit [www.csc.noaa.gov/training/](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/training/).

### CREDITS AND INFORMATION

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

Please send your questions and suggestions for future editions to [csc.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:csc.fellowships@noaa.gov)

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### JANUARY

**16 to 17: Restoring Tidal Hydrology: Breaking Down Barriers**

Charleston, South Carolina  
[www.csc.noaa.gov/restoration\\_workshop/](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/restoration_workshop/)

**20 to 24: 88th American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting**

New Orleans, Louisiana  
[www.ametsoc.org/meet/annual/](http://www.ametsoc.org/meet/annual/)

**30 to 31: California Current Ecosystem-Based Management Initiative Working Meeting**

Santa Cruz, California  
[http://ims.ucsc.edu/CCEBM/public\\_detailspage.html](http://ims.ucsc.edu/CCEBM/public_detailspage.html)

### FEBRUARY

**7 to 9: 7th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference**

Washington, D.C.  
[www.newpartners.org/about.html](http://www.newpartners.org/about.html)

**14 to 18: American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting**

Boston, Massachusetts  
[www.aaas.org/meetings/](http://www.aaas.org/meetings/)

### MARCH

**2 to 7: 2008 Ocean Sciences Meeting**  
Orlando, Florida  
<http://aslo.org/meetings/orlando2008/>

**4 to 7: 6th Annual Climate Prediction Applications Science Workshop**  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
[www.sercc.com/events/](http://www.sercc.com/events/)

**4 to 8: Conference of American Congress on Surveying and Mapping and Land Surveyors' Association of Washington**  
Spokane, Washington  
[www.lsaw.org/docs/2008ConfHousing.pdf](http://www.lsaw.org/docs/2008ConfHousing.pdf)

**27 to 30: National Science Teachers Association National Conference**  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[www.nsta.org/conferences/2008bos/](http://www.nsta.org/conferences/2008bos/)

For more information on upcoming events, please visit [www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/conferences.html](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/conferences.html).

## NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER TRAINING

### Coastal Community Planning and Development

January 29 to 30

Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

### Negotiating for Coastal Resources

January 24 to 25

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

For more information, please visit [www.csc.noaa.gov/training/](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/training/).

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