

## Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship

*2021 Host Office Descriptions*

### FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Virginia Sea Grant (VASG) and the Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) are now soliciting applications for the 2021 Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship. This twelve-month paid fellowship is intended to provide educational and professional development opportunities for post-graduates interested in Virginia's coastal and marine resources. In addition to learning about state-level policy and management processes, fellows receive on-the-job training with a Virginia state agency or non-governmental organization (NGO), working to address important coastal and marine resource issues. Selected finalists for the fellowship will interview with prospective host offices to find the best match. VASG, VEE, and their partners anticipate supporting a minimum of two post-graduate fellows starting on October 1, 2021. This announcement and guidance on how to submit your application can be found at: <https://vaseagrant.org/>

### PARTICIPATING HOST OFFICES

Each office listed below has expressed interest in hosting a fellow during the 2021 fellowship year. Additional host offices and projects may be added before the fellowship application deadline. Please visit <https://vaseagrant.org/fellowship-research-funding/commonwealth-fellowship-home/> for the current list.

#### *Department of Conservation and Recreation*

- *Project: Verification of Shoreline Management BMPs for Chesapeake Bay TMDL Pollutant Reduction Credits*

#### *Department of Environmental Quality*

- *Project: Watersheds & Local Government Assistance Program Technical Methods and Policy Improvement for Specific Water Quality Impairments: Dissolved Oxygen and pH*

#### *Department of Wildlife Resources*

- *Project: Climate Change Preparedness and Planning*

#### *Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources*

- *Project: Commonwealth of Virginia Coastal Master Plan Initiative*

#### *The Nature Conservancy*

- *Project: Advancing Responsible Offshore Wind Development in Virginia*

Applicants are strongly encouraged to visit host office websites for more details on their missions and activities. Each host office has shared descriptions of potential projects available to finalists during their fellowship. While final projects may vary based upon the requirements of the host office and the skillsets of the selected fellow, these examples do provide a representation of the host office's current needs.

In Collaboration With



The Nature Conservancy  
(Virginia Chapter)

*Project Title:* Advancing Responsible Offshore Wind Development in Virginia

*Location:* Richmond, Nassawadox, or Charlottesville, VA

*Description of Host Office*

The mission of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. A leading conservation organization in the United States and around the world, TNC works with public and private partners to ensure our lands and waters are protected for future generations.

*Project Background*

The Conservancy supports increasing the proportion of electricity generated by renewable energy while minimizing impacts to the environment. Offshore wind is being developed along the Atlantic Coast from North Carolina to Maine, with the two turbines that were installed in 2020 in Virginia being the first sited in federal waters and the first to be owned by an electric utility company. Those two turbines represent a pilot phase focused on research, in which the lease is held by the Department of Mines Minerals and Energy (DMME). The commercial buildout phase is scheduled for 2024-2025 for which 188 turbines producing 2640 megawatts of energy are planned.

Given TNC's global goals to reduce climate emissions while protecting and restoring resilient, healthy oceans, we want to ensure that the development of offshore wind in Virginia proceeds with the best information on impact avoidance and minimization strategies during siting, construction, and operation. The Conservancy's offshore wind team in Virginia, consisting of fisheries and coastal scientists and government relations experts, is working with colleagues, state and federal partners, other non-profits and developers along the Atlantic coast to promote robust pre-construction assessment and research, monitoring during construction, and ongoing post-construction monitoring and research, to inform adaptive management of existing and new projects.

*Potential Fellowship Project*

The Commonwealth Fellow will be an integral part of an interdisciplinary team implementing a project that advances TNC's offshore wind goals in Virginia. Opportunities for the fellow will include: research to advance our knowledge of offshore wind impacts on the environment and how those impacts can be avoided and minimized, engaging with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to advocate on how offshore wind in federal waters can be regulated, and coordinating with partners across states to ensure consistency and consideration of cumulative impacts from Atlantic offshore wind development. The staff working on this team are located in Nassawadox, Richmond, and Charlottesville, and depending on the focus the fellow wishes to take, the location of this fellowship and the mentor could be in any of these areas. There is also the possibility for the fellow to spend time on more than one of these topics and have one or more co-mentors.

