

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



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF WATERSHEDS & LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

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

Location: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Richmond, VA

Description of Host Office

Virginia's diverse geography and abundant natural resources benefit agriculture, industry & commerce, and provide a rich environment for people, plants and wildlife. The mission of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is to protect and improve the environment for the well-being of all Virginians. DEQ administers state and federal laws, and regulations for air quality, water quality, water supply, and land protection. In addition, other agency programs cover a variety of environmental activities, such as improving the ability of businesses and local governments to protect the environment, and offering technical and financial assistance for air and water quality improvements.

Project Background

The Commonwealth Fellow will work with DEQ Watersheds Program staff (Total Maximum Daily Load Program) to develop and implement new field investigations employing continuous monitoring methods in swamp waters (DEQ Class VII Waters). Investigations will focus on status of the state waters identified as impaired due to violations of Water Quality Standards (WQS).

Potential Fellowship Project

The Commonwealth Fellow will be responsible for independent and joint analyses of new and existing data to support Agency Water Quality Policy changes and developing a strategy to apply findings to dissolved oxygen and pH impairments primarily in the coastal plain. This project will build upon ongoing temperature impairment work initiated during the current Commonwealth Fellowship project. The focus will be on swamp impairments where uncertainties about natural water quality conditions confound remediation strategies. Work will require coordination of input from multiple Offices within the Agency including Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment, Water Quality Standards, and Water Permitting. Anticipated goals and outcomes of this work include improved baseline characterization of pH and dissolved oxygen conditions in swamp waters, improved water quality management of impaired waters, impairment de-listings, and modifications/improvements to standards and assessment policies and their applications.