

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



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Project Title: Commonwealth of Virginia Coastal Master Plan Initiative

Location: Richmond, VA

Description of Host Office

The Secretary of Natural Resources and Chief Resilience Officer, Matthew J. Strickler, advises the Governor of Virginia, Ralph S. Northam, on natural resources issues throughout the Commonwealth and works to advance the Governor's top environmental priorities. Those environmental priorities include climate change and resiliency, coastal adaptation and protection, Chesapeake Bay Restoration, and land conservation. The Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection, Rear Admiral Ann C. Phillips USN (Ret.) advises the Governor through the Secretary of Natural Resources on matters specific to the climate challenges influencing Virginia's Coastal region. The Secretary of Natural Resources oversees five Virginia state agencies: Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Wildlife Resources, Department of Historic Resources, and Marine Resources Commission. The Governor, Secretary, Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection and agencies work to protect and restore the Commonwealth's natural and historic resources with a focus on understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change.

Project Background

On November 2, 2018, Governor Ralph Northam signed Executive Order 24 that lays out a series of actions the Commonwealth of Virginia will undertake to limit the impact of flooding, extreme weather events, and wildfires. On January 19, 2019, Governor Ralph Northam signed Executive Order 29, that establishes the Council on Environmental Justice, and on November 14, 2019, Governor Ralph Northam signed Executive Order 45, setting sea level rise planning and construction standards for State-owned buildings, and ensuring Virginia's compliance with the National Flood Plain Program. On October 22, 2020, Governor Northam released Virginia's Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework, detailing how the Commonwealth will develop a plan to adapt and protect Virginia's Resilient Coast by fall 2021. That plan and planning process is now underway, and a professional engineering firm is assisting the Commonwealth with technical support in developing the plan. These services are being managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, with the Program Manager for the Coastal Virginia Master Plan reporting directly to Rear Admiral Phillips. Coastal adaptation and resiliency is a top priority for the Governor's Administration.

Potential Fellowship Project

The Commonwealth Fellow will support the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection, and the Program Manager for the Coastal Virginia Master Plan in the Department of Conservation and Recreation in the creation and implementation of initiatives to increase the Commonwealth of Virginia's

resilience to natural hazards and events. The fellow will report to the Special Assistant and provide administrative, research and other support as requested. Primary responsibilities will focus on the expansion and continuation of the Coastal Master Plan Framework and developing the Coastal Master Plan process to reduce flood risks to coastal Virginia. Associated tasks will include staffing the Framework and Executive Order 71 directed Technical Advisory Committee, subcommittees, advisory panels, assisting with post General Assembly 2021/2022 Session legislative and policy actions and outcomes, assisting with and staffing studies and working groups, coordinating across and between agencies, localities, and other stakeholder groups, conducting research, and other duties as assigned. An interest in climate adaptation policy and environmental and climate impact and adaptation strategies is desired.