The Coral Fellowship Newsletter is published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) to relay information about the fellowship program and provide a forum for information exchange among fellows, mentors, program coordinators and other stakeholders

Coral Fellowship Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 3 September 2010

Special points of interest:

- Coral Fellows Webpage
- Coral Fellows Alumni Facebook Group

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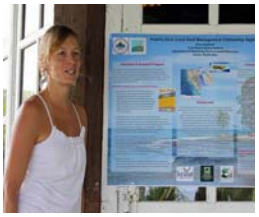
Coral Fellows Training Retreat in Rota, CNMI

Rota, CNMI

Fellows took part in a training retreat from September 18-20th, 2010 where they received training in Social Marketing and Fund Raising Techniques. The training topics were identified by the fellows based on their interests and needs and were provided by Kevin Doyle of Green Economies. Each fellow gave a presentation on their work as a coral fellow (see page 2 for more details) where they were able to share their success stories and challenges with one another. It was a valuable opportunity for the fellows to learn about coral reef management efforts across the Pacific and Caribbean and to share ideas about how to creatively tackle similar issues in their own jurisdictions.

Coral Fellows Training Session



Rina Hauptfeld, PR

While in Rota, fellows learned about the Talakhaya Watershed Revegetation project which aims to reduce sediment flow through the watershed to adjacent coral reefs. Aric Bickel, who is the coral fellow in CNMI is currently coordinating this effort.

Aric Bickel, CNMI

US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting in Saipan, CNMI

Coral Fellows at Poster Exhibit

The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force held it's biannual regional meeting in Guam and CNMI this year. Fellows attended the CNMI portion from September 13-16th, 2010. Task Force meetings provide a venue to report on the status of ongoing coral reef initiatives and to bring attention to coral reef conservation. Each fellow prepared and displayed a poster on the work that they are conducting in each of the states and territories that they work in.

Coral Fellows & Students

Coral fellows visited several of the local classrooms in CNMI and gave presentations on ocean conservation. Some of the presentation topics included: Plastics in the Marine Environment, Traditional and Cultural Aspects of Conservation, and Climate Change and the Oceans. Students and teachers were very excited about the presentations and showed their gratitude with big smiles and hand-made cards.

Rina & Students

Aric Bickel, led a site visit to Laolao Bay for the Coral Fellows and several other Task Force attendees. Laolao Bay is one of CNMI's priority conservation areas and Aric is coordinating the implementation of the Conservation Action Plan for the site.

Fellows used their time at the Task Force meeting to gain a better understanding of coral reef conservation management.

Site Visit Laolao Bay, Saipan CNMI

Check Out the Coral Fellowship Website for a complete profile on each of the current Coral Fellows

Guam: Tammy Jo A. Taft 2010-2012

Tammy is working as the Education and Outreach Coordinator where she will be creating materials that take scientific information about corals and make it digestible for the general public.

CNMI: Aric Bickel 2010-2012

Aric is leading the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) work being done in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy to reduce the impacts of non-point source pollutants in CNMI's watersheds.

American Samoa: Clare Shelton 2010-2012

Clare assists in the coordination and implementation of the Climate Change Local Action Strategy which addresses climate change impacts in the island.

Puerto Rico: Rina Hauptfeld 2010-2012

Rina is the Education Coordinator for the Tres Palmas Marine Reserve, where she works with partners to implement the Tres Palmas Management Plan.

U. S. Virgin Islands: Marija Micuda 2010-2012

Marija is developing sustainable tourism products and implementing marketing activities for the two marine protected areas in St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Hawaii: Lunalilo Kekoa Jr. 2010-2012

Lunalilo is the project coordinator and community liaison for the Kahekili priority coral site, a pilot site for modern watershed planning in Hawaii.

Florida: Lauren Waters 2010-2012

Lauren is coordinating the Maritime Industry Coastal Construction Impact Local Action Strategy in Florida.

Spotlight on Lauren Waters
Florida Coral Fellow

A very young Lauren Waters

Lauren was born in North Carolina and grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She told her parents that she was interested in the ocean around age 13, taking them off-guard because they lived so far from the ocean. For Christmas her parents made a deal with her; if she bought her own mask and snorkel, they would get her Scuba certified. "I think they thought that that would either make or break me, or at least help me decide if that was what I really wanted to do." Her first dive was in a rock quarry -while it was snowing - and she *still* liked it. "My parents knew then that I was serious about it." The next year she went on a family trip to Disney World and Daytona Beach getting her first experience diving in the ocean. "We went diving at Boynton beach. My dad had gotten certified with me just so that he could be my buddy."

She attended Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida where she majored in marine science. "I worked on crustacean physiology over two summer internships in college. I also dabbled in marine mammal necropsies." Most of her work in college took place in Florida, but she also took courses in Honduras and the South Pacific where she visited Yap, Palau, Pompeii, and Guam.

Lauren volunteered a lot in college. Her mom would say, "If you worked half as much as you volunteered, you could pay for your own college." She spent four years volunteering at an aquarium as a docent and also as the marine mammal stranding supervisor where she focused on rehabilitation work. Lauren was responsible for helping take care of the dolphins and other toothed whales that came in. "It was interesting to have that one-on-one experience with them. You really get a better understanding of their behavior and how they react."

In 2001, Lauren helped to rehabilitate a juvenile sperm whale named George (after his stranding location at St. George Island). The animal had suffered from shark attacks. "He was one of the hardest ones to take care of. He was listing to one side and the only way to keep him strait was to be in the tank with him, providing leverage. I was in the water with him for 3 hours. It was extremely tiring!" Baby George weighed 1100 pounds and made slow but steady progress throughout his rehab. Unfortunately, after 43 days of intensive rehabilitation George passed away from infection and gastrointestinal issues. "We were hoping to rehabilitate him to the point that he could be returned to the ocean, but it's difficult with such a young animal. There aren't the resources to provide the perfect substitute for their mom's milk, so dehydration is always an issue." He was and still is the longest living sperm whale in captivity. Biologists and veterinarians across the world were provided with data collected from George to

Spotlight on Lauren Waters, Florida Coral Fellow (cont...)

further scientific knowledge of sperm whales.

Lauren's first job after graduation was a summer internship on Egmont Key, near Tampa Bay where she conducted a sea turtle nesting survey. Her first "real job" was working for the state of Florida at the Wildlife Research Institute where she worked in the genetics department. "I was looking at microsatellite DNA of redfish to measure the influence of a breading/ stocking program on wild stocks. We could track the stocked fish using fin clips to determine how many were making it into the population." Lauren also spent four years as the lead field scientist studying the before and after effects of environmental restoration at Fort Desoto in Tampa Bay. She was responsible for a team of scientists who monitored the fish, sea grass, sediment, and water quality.

Lauren in motion

Lauren has always enjoyed conducting science, but found that it was often difficult for scientists who weren't associated with universities to receive grants. "We wanted to give degreed scientists the opportunity to conduct research regardless of their affiliation with a university." Lauren, Dr. Thomas Cuba, and Amanda Weinkauf started the Stillwater Research Group in 2005 and received their 501c3 designation in 2007. Stillwater Research is a non-profit group dedicated to research and education in the marine environment, "By creating this group we were able to apply for grant money to do science without losing money to pay for overhead expenses to a large university." In addition to research, they also conduct courses on coral reef ecology and biology each year.

Over time Lauren has become more and more interested in combining science and management. Her interest in management was piqued after working for an environmental consulting company where she was responsible for applying for permits for clients. During her time there she worked on a couple of boat-grounding incidents. "I was surprised to find that there wasn't really a protocol in place to deal with them quickly and efficiently. Everyone had different ideas about how it should happen and nothing was getting done." She decided to go into the management community to help address issues like these. "I've done a lot of research in the past and am still interested in doing science but I'd like to focus on bringing more science into management to make sure that we are making appropriate recommendations."

Lauren came across the fellowship position while looking for grants and scholarships for graduate school. "I was reading the posting and got so excited. It was so spot-on with what I was hoping to do, and go into, and get experience in, that I just couldn't believe it! I couldn't believe I'd just stumbled across something so perfect. It was awesome!" She pulled all of her materials together and applied that weekend. "It was just lucky happenstance that I came across it when I did." For Lauren, the Coral Fellowship was the opportunity to be on the "other side of the coin." The fact that she'd be reviewing the permits instead of trying to get them really caught her attention. It also helped that she had been looking at a few colleges along the Eastern seaboard and had been looking seriously at Nova University, which is located in Miami. "It just worked out that I was offered the job *and* got accepted at Nova."

Lauren will be working towards a master's degree in either Marine Biology or Coastal Zone Management, but hasn't decided yet which one it will be. "I might do a dual master's instead of just choosing one," says Lauren.

As a Coral Fellow at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Lauren is the coordinator for the Marine Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts (MICCI) projects. Right now she's focusing on creating a database and a searchable website that contains all of the information for all of the coastal construction permits in South Florida.

Lauren Waters Poster Presentation

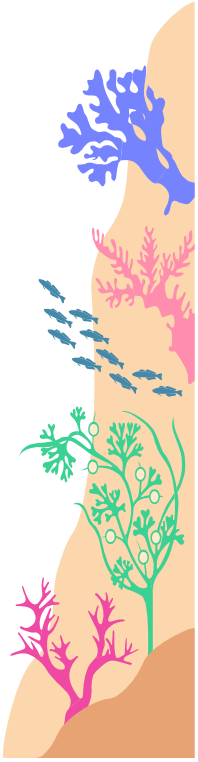
Another project she's guiding is the review of the current rules and regulations that the various agencies follow regarding coral reefs. She's looking across-the-board for similarities, discrepancies and overlaps in order to have a better understanding of who is responsible for what. "I hope to have a clear understanding of the regulatory system from top to bottom when I'm finished with this. Hopefully I'm helping to make the whole process more efficient and in turn help to protect our reef ecosystems."

Lauren has only been a Coral Fellow since August 1, 2010 but seems to be thriving in her new position. "So far I've really enjoyed my experience and am excited about where it's going for the next few years." When asked where she'd like to be in the future she says, "I'd like to stay active in this agency; it's an exciting thought to me. I also want to get some more research experience and finish my degree. I'd really like to combine management and science."

Lauren has always known that she wanted to be involved in ocean conservation. "I don't remember watching any particular shows or having that moment of realization when I was young. It wasn't until

"I am excited about bringing science to guidance, and excited to be involved in the first solid action to manage the entire South Florida reef tract."

~Lauren Waters



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coral Reef Management Fellowship was established in 2003 to respond to the need for additional coral reef management capacity and capability in the U.S. Flag Pacific and Caribbean islands. The fellowship program's mission is two-fold, it provides coral reef management support in each participating island jurisdiction by placing highly qualified individuals whose education and work experience meet each island's specific coral reef management needs, while providing individual fellows with professional training in coastal and coral reef resource management.

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We're on the web!
www.coralreef.noaa.gov/fellowship.html

Lauren Waters Continued...

Lauren teaching students in Saipan

college, when I actually stopped to think about it, that I realized that every report, art project or presentation I had to give since the 2nd grade had a marine theme. I was always interested in science in general, so maybe it stems from that." Regardless of where it came from we are very happy to have Lauren as the Coral Fellow in Florida.

Coral Fellows Alumni

2004-2006 Coral Fellows Cohort: Susan Curtis, Ginny Farmer, John Tomczuk, Qumar Schuyler, Melissa Bos, Mayra Suarez

The CRCP is seeking ways in which we can better connect with past and present coral fellows. The program often gets inquiries about what fellows go on to do once they leave the fellowship. To answer some of these questions we will be featuring a "Coral Fellows-Where Are They Now?" link on the Coral Fellows Website and have also started a Coral Fellows Alumni Facebook Group. Be sure to join the group (it is public) if you haven't already done so. Contact Paulo.Maurin@noaa.gov for a link and more information.

People on the Move

Marimar Lopez, Karlyn Langjahr, Marci Wulff, & Romina King in A. Samoa

Marci Wulff has been coordinating the Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program since 2007 when program coordination was moved from the Coastal Services Center to the Coral Reef Conservation Program. In that time she oversaw an external evaluation of the program's policies and procedures and implemented the recommendations that came out of that evaluation. Marci has had the opportunity to work with three cohorts of Coral Fellows and has been impressed with the dedication and hard work that each of them has brought to their jobs. Marci will be resigning from her position in early October in order to focus on her young family.

Paulo Maurin, who has been working with the CRCP since his Knauss Fellowship began in January 2008 will take over coordination of the Coral Fellowship program upon Marci's departure.

Alyssa Edwards, Karlyn Langjahr, Petra MacGowan, Marci Wulff, Elaina Todd, Kathleen Herrmann & Raimundo Espinoza in Maui, Hawaii

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