



American Samoa Coral Reef Management Fellowship 2013-2014 Position Description

Project Location

American Samoa, located some 2,600 miles southwest of Hawaii, and is a group of five volcanic islands and two coral atolls that total 76 square miles, inhabited by approximately 55,000 people. The Samoan way of life, called “Fa’asamoa”, defines the basic structure of local communities and is based on family, tradition, and respect. The traditional way of life promotes village welfare over that of an individual. Extended families, or aiga, communally own lands extending from the mountaintop to the outer edge of the coral reef; 92 percent of lands in American Samoa are still owned by aiga. All resource management activities in American Samoa must accommodate this existing cultural framework.

Program/Agency Background

American Samoa coordinates all of its coral reef management activities through the Governor’s Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG). The group is a partnership of five local agencies: the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR), the Department of Commerce (DOC; including American Samoa Coastal Management Program & Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary), the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), and the National Park of American Samoa (NPAS). Member agencies work together by mutual consensus to manage coral reefs with the vision “to protect and conserve reefs for the benefit of the people of American Samoa, the United States, and the world”. The group works toward this vision by collaborating to plan and implement actions related to the management of American Samoa’s estimated 296 square kilometers of coral reefs.

Project Description

The responsibilities of the 2013-2014 Fellow are wide-ranging, but the Fellow is primarily expected to play a pivotal role in the development, coordination, and implementation of sustainable development and community resilience projects and programs, focusing on the human aspect of coral reef ecosystem management, including sustainable development projects and climate change adaptation. By addressing human use of the Territory’s limited resources (specifically the goods and services provided by coral reefs upon which American Samoan communities depend), the Fellow will concentrate on actions and efforts that will increase the Territory’s ability to sustainably adapt to an ever-changing environment. In addition to empowering communities to conserve the health and sustainability of their coral reef resources, the Fellow will work to enhance community resilience to climate change via sustainable development and planning.

The Fellow will be involved in several CRAG initiatives, specifically through the Local Action Strategy (LAS) (a territorial management plan to adequately address the impacts on coral reef ecosystems) and associated inter-agency working groups.

The Fellow will also work closely with the CRAG Climate Change Specialist, sit as a member of the Territorial Climate Change Advisory Group, collaborate with the CRAG Education and Outreach Coordinator to build an informed public, contribute to climate change-related perspective to ongoing community intervention programs (such as the Participatory Learning and Action management process), and contribute to the development and implementation of strategic plans (i.e. Territorial Climate Change Framework).

The Fellow will work closely with mentors and other agency personnel to complete projects and to further CRAG's long-term management goals. S/he will be integrated into the existing CRAG team, housed at the American Samoa Department of Commerce. S/he will be expected to network with partner organizations and agencies as needed in order to complete this multifaceted fellowship. S/he will be involved in each of the tasks below, some of which will be accomplished concurrently.

Task 1: Orientation (2 months)

The fellow will be introduced to the staff and management of CRAG and its partner agencies. The fellow will review background information regarding American Samoa's Coral Reef Initiative, ongoing projects, and status reports. After participating in these activities, the fellow and CRAG management will write a project work plan that will subsequently be reviewed and revised after the first year of the fellowship. **Outcomes/Deliverables:**

- Gain familiarity with staff, operations, and resources of CRAG and member agencies;
- Integrate into CRAG and clarify his/her role in ongoing and planned projects;
- Conduct background research on the existing and potential projects;
- Meet and interview CRAG staff and member agency staff involved in the Fellow's projects; and
- Develop a detailed, action-based project work plan with objectives, deliverables, and a timeline (to be completed by April 2013).

Task 2: Sustainable Development and Planning (40 percent of time)

Sustainable development and planning are the next logical and tangible steps towards reducing American Samoa's vulnerability to the impending impacts of climate change, while addressing the Territory's own contribution to global greenhouse emissions. The Fellow will play a role in developing, coordinating, and implementing projects articulated in the LAS documents by encouraging sustainable development, addressing climate change adaptation, population pressures, waste management, and promoting "green" technology and infrastructure. The Fellow will work with community members to decrease vulnerabilities due to climate change and look for opportunities to create more sustainable communities and development throughout the territory including liaising with local development and planning staff to share best practices and further support sustainable development planning and implementation and working closely with the Territorial Planning Division to consider the current status of population size and growth, and develop and implement planning-based projects that enhance the quality of life in American Samoa.

Outcomes/Deliverables

- Collaborate with NOAA PIRO on expansion of Community based resiliency planning to increase sustainability of coastal communities and ensure environmental considerations are being incorporated into decreasing vulnerability. This will entail working with communities to create community resilience plans, as well as education and awareness on increasing reef resilience, (based on the recommendations from the June 2012 Reef Resilience Workshop).
- Act as Coordinator for on-island recycling initiatives. Create and sustain a multi-agency Recycling Task Force to support the new recycling initiatives in the Territory, and expand programs to a larger audience, including the outer islands.
- Coordinate implementation of Sustainability Executive Order and support compliance with the General Memorandums within local government agencies and businesses including new ASG purchasing requirements for Cars and Energy Star appliances, ban on importation of phosphates in detergents and soaps and light bulb upgrades. The Fellow will assess the mandatory reporting requirements in the GM and work with relevant agencies to increase awareness of and compliance to the EO and GM's.

Become a member of the AS Renewable Energy Working Group and support the development and implementation of projects that decrease American Samoa's carbon footprint.

Task 3: Climate Change Planning and Development (15 percent of time)

The Fellow will work closely with the CRAG Climate Change Specialist as well as members of the Climate Change LAS working group to advance the goals and objectives of the strategy, address critical scientific and community knowledge gaps, improve monitoring and predictions, evaluate strategies, and translate information into active management actions. The fellow will play an active role in implementing actions derived from Climate Change initiatives as identified by the CRAG Climate Change Specialist. In addition, the Fellow will play an active role in the Territorial Climate Change Advisory Group by representing coral reef management needs. The Fellow will serve as an active member within the Climate Change LAS working group to develop, coordinate, and implement CC LAS actions and efforts.

Outcomes/Deliverables

- Synthesize, review, and develop management plans relevant to sustainable development and community resilience to climate change.
- Administer, coordinate, and implement resulting action items from the developing Territorial Climate Change Framework regarding, coral reef resource management and sustainable development related action-items specified in the Territorial Climate Change Framework.

Task 4: Education and Outreach (25 percent of time)

The Fellow will develop sustainable development, climate change adaptation- and resilience-focused education and outreach projects and programs, specific to American Samoa, with the goal of building local capacity to understand and adapt to impending environmental change and to promote sustainable living. S/he will work with the CRAG Outreach and Education Coordinator and Le Tausagi to identify and implement appropriate community-level projects and programs to cultivate an informed public, build capacity, and empower community members. In addition, the Fellow will assist in the planning, coordination, and implementation of the ongoing Participatory Learning and Action community-based resource management process (a bottom-up approach to natural resource management), with emphasis in the implementation of the resulting actions items as identified by local communities.

Outcomes/Deliverables

- Increase awareness of and campaigns in support of sustainable development and living through lessons and activities for use in schools, villages and churches, including recycling, ecosystem and community resilience, and carbon footprint reduction.
- Integrate climate change adaptation- and resilience-based lesson plans and activities into the science/health curriculum for use in schools, villages, and churches.
- Contribute to the implementation of a Community Resilience Guide based on the information provided in the Territorial Climate Change Framework. This guide will be used by local Managers, and be a tool to be used by communities who wish to increase their resilience.
- Assist promoting CRAG projects in the media through quarterly press releases and articles in local media outlets

Task 5: General CRAG Program Support (20 percent of time)

The Fellow will provide support for ongoing CRAG initiatives and projects, and will work closely with local resource managers to implement long-term management goals. Within these areas, CRAG expects issues such as capacity building, project management, education and outreach, general planning, and interagency activity coordination to be priorities.

Outcomes/ Deliverables

- Support CRAG planning and reporting activities by working closely with mentors and other agency personnel to further CRAG's long-term goals and ongoing projects.
- Assist Coral Reef Initiative (CRI) Coordinator and CRAG Chair with participation in regional cooperation and policy initiatives.
- Provide comments and attend meetings, as necessary, on local, regional, and international developments in coastal zone and coral reef management and policy.
- Assist in tracking CRI-funded projects, the research of funding and partnership opportunities, and provide assistance with other projects as needs arise.
- Assist with the implementation of the LAS for fisheries management, land based sources of pollution, global climate change, and population pressure.
- Assist implementation of recommendations from the June 2012 Reef Resilience Workshop.
- Assist in coordination efforts between the CC LAS and Fishery LAS and integrated in deliverables, avoiding duplication and overlapping efforts that will help support and improve resiliency in coral reef management in communities.