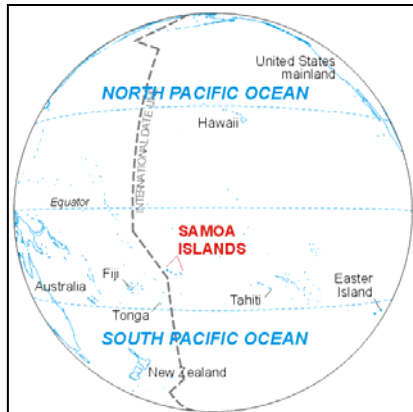


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Location of the Project

The host agency for the 2003-2005 Coral Management Assistantship in American Samoa is the American Samoa Coastal Management Program (ASCMP), which is housed in the American Samoa Government Department of Commerce. The ASCMP office is located in Utulei, near Pago Pago, American Samoa.

American Samoa, located some 2,600 miles southwest of Hawaii, consists of a group of five volcanic islands and two coral atolls that total 76-square-miles and are inhabited by approximately 62,000 people. The Samoan way of life, called Fa'a Samoa, is based on family, tradition, and respect, and it continues to govern many aspects of life in American Samoa today. The Fa'a Samoa defines the basic structure of local communities based on ancient traditions. For example, the traditional way of life promotes village welfare over that of an individual. Extended families, or aigas, identify with the lands owned by their ancestors, which extend from the mountaintop to the outer edge of the coral reef. Ninety-two percent of communal lands are still owned by aigas. All resource management activities on the islands must be adaptive to the existing cultural framework.



Program/Agency Background

American Samoa coordinates all its coral reef management activities through the Governor's Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG). This group is comprised of territorial and federal agencies including the American Samoa Government Department of Commerce which houses ASCMP and Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary. CRAG also includes the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, the American Samoa Community College, and the National Park of American Samoa. These agencies collaborate to plan and implement actions related to the management of American Samoa's estimated 296 km² of coral reefs.

The American Samoa Coastal Management Program was established in 1980 with a mission to "ensure the wise use, management, protection, and enhancement of the territory's land and water resources." The coastal zone in American Samoa includes all land resources and marine waters within 3 miles of the coast as well as the Special

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Management Areas of Pago Pago Harbor and Pala Lagoon. ASCMP is a network of various government agencies having the collective responsibility and technical expertise to manage coastal resources, including coral reefs. ASCMP has seven program areas; the Project Notification and Review System (PNRS), which is a land use permitting function, Community Based Wetlands Management Program, Cumulative and Secondary Impacts Program, Ocean Resources Management Program, Public Awareness Program, Geographical Information System Program, and Nonpoint Source Pollution Program.

Coral reefs in American Samoa are in a long recovery phase after numerous challenges ranging from poor water quality in the harbor, crown of thorns starfish outbreaks, hurricanes, and coral bleaching. Although many of the more remote reefs have recovered, those impacted by human activities have been slower to improve. The reefs in Pago Pago Harbor remain the most affected by human activities. Population density, commercial activity on and near the water, and historical dumping of civilian and military industrial waste in the inner harbor area are all contributing factors to the ecological damage and slow improvement of coral habitats.

Many of the threats to coral reefs here are due to ignorance of the fragility and importance of coral reefs. CRAG believes that many of these threats could be eliminated or minimized with better public and governmental understanding. CRAG identifies ongoing and new problems for the reefs, has developed and actively updates a Coral Reef Initiative Plan, and is developing a local action strategy for four recently identified focal areas. These include over-fishing, unregulated development, global climate change, and population pressure. CRAG plans to continue to build capacity for their coral reef efforts by funding ongoing projects, as well as new ones.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goal of this assistantship project is to help develop and implement the local action strategies for over-fishing, unregulated development, global climate change, and population pressure in American Samoa. Within these areas, CRAG expects issues such as coral reef monitoring, education and outreach, transfer of knowledge and skills, general planning, and interagency activity coordination to be priorities.

Project Description

Below is a description of the overall project. The assistant will be integrated into ASCMP and will network with partner organizations and agencies to complete this multifaceted project. The assistant will be involved in each of these tasks and some of them will be accomplished concurrently.

Orientation (4 months)

The assistant will be introduced to staff and management of ASCMP and partner agencies. The assistant will review background information regarding American Samoa's coral reef initiative as well as other coastal management issues. The assistant will participate in a management evaluation (i.e. gaps and needs) with program staff, field visits, interagency meetings, and outreach activities. After participating in these

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activities, the assistant, with input from their mentor, will write a project work plan that will be reviewed and revised after the first year of the assistantship.

- Familiarity with staff, operations, and resources of state coastal program
- Integration into ASCMP and clarification of role in project
- Develop a project work plan

Support implementation of CRAG initiatives (remainder of assistantship)

The assistant will work closely with mentors and other agency personnel to complete projects and to further CRAG long-term goals in the following areas:

Education and Outreach

- Assist the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Coordinator with workshops and management plans designed to encourage village leaders to be actively involved in managing their coastal resources
- Aid the Education Coordinator in developing a three-year education campaign
- Ascertain which Pacific and international organizations might lend material support, advice, or other expertise
- Develop and participate in outreach programs targeting government, schools, and villages
- Assist the Coral Reef Initiative (CRI) Coordinator and the American Samoa Community College Marine Science Program Director in developing mechanisms to involve local marine science students in projects and events that CRAG participates in, or assumes leadership on. This may involve mentoring, helping with grants, and liaising with outside project managers to find suitable tasks for students to complete, etc.
- Assist the CRI Coordinator in developing and maintaining a coral reef science and management library to be housed at the CRI Center in the American Samoa Department of Commerce

Coral Reef Monitoring

- Assist the monitoring subcommittee in developing and finalizing the CRAG Territorial Coral Reef Monitoring Program
- Foster and assist as needed in individual agency monitoring efforts
- Assess data to determine any needed changes to BMPs arising from monitoring data
- Aid in the design of fisheries management effectiveness studies with project partners
- Provide input to revise existing management plans as necessary

Nonpoint Source Pollution Program

- Provide input on the implementation of the American Samoa Nonpoint Source Pollution Program Plan as it relates to CRAG's goals and objectives

Support CRAG reporting and planning activities (remainder of assistantship)

The assistant will work closely with mentors and other agency personnel to further CRAG long-term goals and to work on the following reporting and planning projects:

- Track the activities of agencies and organizations whose work is relevant to CRAG and make the members of CRAG aware of them in a timely manner

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- Assist in tracking CRI-funded projects
- Provide logistical support to the office of the CRI Coordinator
- Develop overviews of various Territorial and CRAG programs such as MPA efforts, monitoring efforts, and water reduction efforts

Assistant Mentoring

The assistant will be mentored by Gene Brighthouse, who is the manager of the American Samoa Coastal Management Program. The assistant also will work closely with Chris Hawkins, the Coral Reef Initiative Coordinator at the Department of Commerce. The assistant will be located in the same offices as ASCMP/DOC staff. Gene and Chris will be the primary points of contact for administrative questions and project guidance. Gene, Chris, and the assistant will communicate regularly to review timelines and evaluate progress.

The assistant will be considered part of ASCMP and by extension, the Coral Reef Advisory Group, and will be expected to attend staff meetings and participate in program discussions. He or she will be provided opportunities to join staff on field visits and in internal and external meetings. The assistant will have ample opportunities to meet education and outreach staff within all levels of government, nonprofit groups, and academic institutions. This project will provide an exciting opportunity to learn about aspects of an island coastal program and a wide range of island management issues.

The assistant will receive assistance in identifying key individuals with whom to meet and important sources of background information. They will be provided with the necessary resources to carry out the project.

Project Partners

The ASCMP actively works with other agency staff, community organizations, government agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations.

Potential partners include:

- American Samoa Community College (Sea Grant/Land Grant)
- American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group (ASCRAG)
- Department of Commerce
 - Coastal Management Program
 - Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources
- American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- National Park of American Samoa
- National Resource Conservation Service

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In Kind Support

The assistant will have access to all of the amenities and services of agency staff, including office space and equipment, personal computer, telephone, fax, and e-mail access. Use of agency vehicles will be permitted for official purposes.

In addition, ASCMP will provide funds for logistical and administrative office support which includes purchases of supplies and software, as well as printing, photocopying, mailing and incidental costs for project products.

Eligibility Requirements

- Bachelor's degree in natural resource management or environmental-related fields with 4 to 6 years experience OR a master's degree in natural resource management or environmental-related fields with 2 years experience. Coastal or marine management preferred.
- Valid driver's license

Desired Background and Skill Sets

- Demonstrated oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills
- A proven ability to be well-organized and able to manage and prioritize multiple tasks
- Experience, through an internship, fellowship, or part-time job, with Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Knowledge of tropical marine ecosystems
- Public speaking, events planning, and meeting facilitation experience
- Ability to work independently
- Creative, flexible, adaptable
- Experience living and working in another culture or in an island community
- Experience working with different user groups
- Experience with Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, or similar graphic design software
- Desire to be involved with many aspects of coastal resource management (e.g. fisheries, coral reef monitoring and management, nonpoint source pollution, vessel groundings, recreation, etc.)