

2005–2007 Coral Management Fellowship The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Statement of Work

Location of the Project

The host agency for the 2005–2007 Puerto Rico Coral Management Fellowship is the Natural Reserves and Wildlife Refuges Division (NRWRD) under the Bureau of Coasts, Reserves, and Refuges within the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER). DNER's office is located in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, located 1,000 miles southeast of Florida, is almost rectangular in shape and is the smallest and the most eastern island of the Greater Antilles. Puerto Rico is very mountainous, except for the lowland coastal areas. It is part of the same volcanic island platform that includes the Virgin Islands. Surrounding the main island of Puerto Rico are two inhabited islands (Culebra and Vieques) to the east and three uninhabited islands (Mona, Monito, Desecheo) to the west. The coastal plain comprises 80 percent of Puerto Rico's readily developable land, and the coastlines of the main and offshore islands and keys measure approximately 620 miles.



Program/Agency Background

DNER was created on June 20, 1972. Its mission is to protect natural resources to guarantee their enjoyment by this generation and future ones. The agency administers more than 20 laws and regulations, including the Coral Reef Conservation Act Number 147 of July 1999.

The main goal of NRWRD is to administer and manage marine reserves, natural reserves, and wildlife refuges to conserve important marine and terrestrial ecosystems under its jurisdiction. This division administers and manages three wildlife refuges, two marine reserves, and eleven natural reserves (nine of them include a marine component).

The Puerto Rico Coral Reef Program administers all coral reef grants and oversees the development and implementation of the Local Action Strategies (LAS) for the protection of Puerto Rico's coral reefs, as well as the development of a long-term coral reef management plan for Puerto Rico. Another high-priority objective of the program is the

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development and revision of management plans for marine protected areas (MPAs) in Puerto Rico. In October of 2002, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and DNER announced a joint initiative to establish new MPAs and to strengthen the management of existing MPAs with significant coral reef resources. Being that none of Puerto Rico's natural reserves have approved management plans, the revision of existing draft plans and the development of new plans is an essential first step in the effort to strengthen the natural reserve system.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goal of this fellowship assignment is to support the NOAA and DNER management plan development initiative in achieving the short-term objectives of preserving biodiversity through the effective implementation of MPAs under the administration of NRWRD.

Project Responsibilities:

- To support the development of the site management plans already in progress
- To initiate the planning process for site management plans in other protected areas
- To gather all available information about targeted protected areas
- To promote the active participation of all relevant partners in the different phases of the management plan preparation process, as appropriate
- To coordinate all phases of document preparation
- To ensure that the management plans comply with requirements
- To strengthen communication with and commitment from all stakeholders

Project Description

Below is a description of the overall project, with general milestones and outcomes. The fellow will be integrated into NRWRD and will network with different DNER units and partner organizations to perform the identified duties. The fellow will be involved in each of these tasks, and some of them will be accomplished concurrently.

Orientation

The fellow will be introduced to the staff and management of NRWRD, DNER, and its partner agencies. The fellow will review background information regarding Puerto Rico's coral reef initiative and other coastal management issues. The fellow will participate with program staff members in field visits, interagency meetings, and outreach activities. After participating in these activities, the fellow, with input from the mentor, will write a project work plan within the first month of the fellowship that will be reviewed and revised after the first year of the fellowship.

Outcomes:

- Familiarity with staff, operations, and resources of state coastal program

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- Integration into NRWRD and clarification of role in project
- Development of a project work plan

Gather all existing information for the targeted protected areas

The fellow will use existing resources to compile information about the protected areas of interest and update the bibliographic resources accordingly. The fellow will review the existing geographic information system (GIS) database, including aerial and satellite photos, assess the information, and identify any gaps in the information. The fellow will also coordinate meetings with specialists to discuss and review the different planning processes for the MPAs.

Outcomes:

- Compilation of information for each protected area
- Updated directory list of stakeholders for each protected area

Strengthen communication with and commitment from stakeholders

The fellow will organize meetings with all appropriate parties involved in developing the management plan, including contractors, stakeholders, nongovernmental organizations, academics, community groups, DNER, and NOAA staff members. The fellow will work with the steering committee to get approval for some of these meetings, depending on the participants. The fellow will assist in the development of an MPA database and information system, which will help the fellow to provide technical and administrative support to both DNER and stakeholders.

Outcomes:

- Identification of stakeholder groups
- Meetings among appropriate parties
- Assistance in the development of an MPA database

Evaluate and participate in all phases of document preparation and ensure the development of effective and implementable management plans

The fellow will oversee the preparation of the management plans throughout the entire process. The fellow will provide support in designing conservation strategies within these plans to reflect the management objectives of conservation, restoration, and preservation. The fellow will ensure that all document preparation complies with DNER policies and requirements. The fellow will also work to ensure that the plans allow for the effective implementation of management actions which address the goals and objectives for each site. Once the management plan is complete, the fellow will assist in moving the plan through the approval process and follow up on any final revisions.

Outcomes:

- Final management plans for a select number of marine protected areas

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Eligibility Requirements

- Bachelor's degree in resource management planning or related area of study with 2 to 4 years experience OR master's degree in resource management planning or related area of study with 2 years experience
- Proficient in Spanish and English
- 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 working on coral reefs and in tropical climates
- Experience working on management plan development and with general marine resource management issues
- 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 in natural resource planning and policy implementation
- Project management experience
- Proficient with Microsoft Office