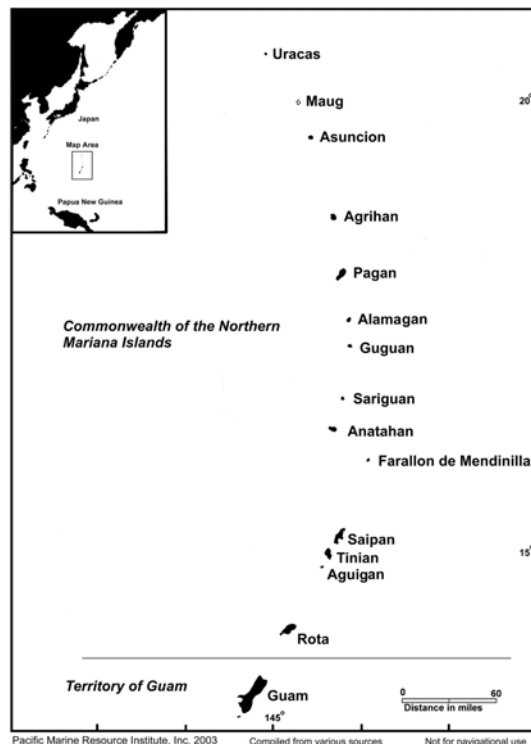


2008-2010 Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Statement of Work

Project Location

The project will take place principally on the southern populated islands of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), a territory of the United States. The fellow will reside and carry out much of the project on the island of Saipan. However, the fellow will also work closely with partners and programs located on the islands of Rota and Tinian, CNMI. The lead host agency for the 2008–2010 Coral Management Fellowship in CNMI is the Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) located in the Office of the Governor. In addition to DEQ, the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the Coastal Resources Management (CRM) Office will co-host the CNMI Coral Management Fellowship. The main offices of all three agencies are located on the island of Saipan; however, each also has a regional office on Rota and Tinian.

CNMI is a chain of 14 tropical islands in the Western Pacific totaling less than 185 square miles, but stretching over 375 miles north to south. Only three of the islands—Saipan, Rota, and Tinian—have sizable human populations, with approximately 75,000 people on Saipan, 3,000 on Rota, and 3,000 on Tinian. Made of coral and volcanic rocks, the islands have developed rugged rocky cliffs, and white and black sand beaches. Inland areas are forested. The islands have a tropical climate with year-round sunshine and an average temperature of 84°F. All the islands have coral reefs, with those off the southern populated islands being the oldest and most well developed.



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Program/Agency Background

The people of CNMI value coral reefs and are dedicated to their conservation. Coral reefs are important to CNMI because they provide traditional and subsistence uses, production of commercial food products, recreational opportunities for a healthy tourist economy, physical protection of the coastal zone from storms, diversity, rarity, and uniqueness of life forms, and, educational and research uses. Coral reefs also are an important part of CNMI's cultural heritage.

Increased population and development over the past decade in the CNMI has exacerbated the threats to the coral reef ecosystems and has led to the destruction and reduced health of coral reefs and coral reef-associated habitats. These effects are most noticeable on the island of Saipan, where approximately 90 percent of CNMI's population resides. Therefore, most coral reef management efforts have focused on Saipan. However, the other southern populated islands also have important coral reef ecosystems that are threatened by human impacts. From a long-term perspective, the decline in coral reef coverage and marine health threatens CNMI's cultural heritage, traditional ways of life, and physical protection from storms. This decline, however, also immediately impacts CNMI's tourism and fisheries industries, and thus its economy. The CNMI government considers coral reef ecosystem conservation and management a high-priority concern.

DEQ, CRM, and DFW are the three primary agencies involved in coral reef-related issues and activities in CNMI. DEQ is the primary environmental regulatory agency on CNMI. It is responsible for developing, implementing, and enforcing programs and regulations designed to protect human health and the environment. Its mission is to "develop, implement, and maintain programs that eliminate or minimize threats to CNMI's land, air, and water." Among the government agencies, DEQ is a leader in environmental outreach and environmental (including marine) monitoring.

DFW enforces regulations governing hunting, fishing, and the conservation of fish and wildlife in the islands. To this end, DFW works to develop and enforce hunting and fishing regulations, license requirements, and minimal licensing fees, and conduct biological research and education programs. DFW was established to provide for the conservation of fish, game, and endangered species.

CRM was established to promote the conservation and wise development of coastal resources. CRM works to encourage land-use master planning, floodplain management, and the development of zoning and building code legislation. It also promotes, through a program of public education and participation, concepts of resource management, conservation, and wise development of coastal resources, and more efficient resource management.

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DEQ, DFW and CRM conduct a variety of coral reef projects and activities, and acquire coral reef funds through collaborative grant proposals generated by three interagency coral reef committees.

To address immediate key threats to CNMI's coral reef ecosystems, the coral reef committees, in collaboration with multiple diverse stakeholders, developed a three-year Coral Reef Protection Local Action Strategy (LAS). The LAS provides a road map of projects focused on the four major threat areas of land-based sources of pollution, public awareness and involvement, recreational use, and fisheries management. The LAS is currently wrapping up its third year of funding, and many projects have already been completed and there are a few still underway.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goal of this fellowship is to assist in the implementation and development of the new Coral Reef Initiative Local Action Strategies, with primary focus on the Land-Based Sources of Pollution (LBS) LAS. The fellow will secondarily assist with the development of the CNMI's Micronesia Challenge (MC) Plan, and will be broadly involved through the Public Awareness and Involvement LAS in education and outreach efforts related to the CNMI Coral Reef Initiative.

The fellow will assist in some or all of the following activities:

- Implementation of ongoing Land-Based Sources of Pollution Local Action Strategy (LBS LAS) projects
- Coordination of the revision of the LBS LAS for the CNMI
- Watershed management activities, including volunteer coordination for a watershed erosion control and monitoring program.
- Improvement and expansion of current Public Awareness and Involvement LAS efforts
- Coordination and development of MC stakeholder involvement plans
- DFW Marine Protected Areas Program outreach and stakeholder involvement activities

Project Description

The fellow will be primarily tasked to work with the DEQ Nonpoint Source Pollution Branch to assist in the implementation of current LBS LAS projects and coordinate revision of the LBS LAS in 2008.

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Ongoing projects include:

- The LauLau Bay and Obyan Beach restoration projects, which include volunteer-supported revegetation efforts and implementation of erosion control best management practices.

Through the revision of the Public Awareness and Involvement LAS, the fellow will be involved in:

- Agency-contractor coordination of the development of a Coral Reef Curriculum
- Placement and evaluation of education and outreach materials previously developed by past coral fellows and other LAS projects.

The fellow will broadly support the Point of Contact (POC) and the MC Marine and Terrestrial working groups in the development of the CNMI Micronesia Challenge Plan with a focus on Public Involvement projects.

The fellow will communicate and collaborate with DEQ, DFW, CRM, and other partner organizations and agencies to complete these projects. The fellow will be based in Saipan, and will address the above tasks concurrently.

Orientation (3 months)

The fellow will be introduced to staff members and management of DEQ, DFW and CRM, as well as other partners on Saipan including non-governmental agencies such as the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance and Beautify CNMI. The fellow will review background information regarding CNMI's Coral Reef Initiative LAS, the Micronesia Challenge, CNMI's Nonpoint Source Pollution plan and other coastal management issues, such as fisheries management and marine protected areas. 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 that will be reviewed and revised after the first year of the fellowship.

Outcomes:

- Development of a specific project work plan for LBS LAS and MC projects
- Familiarity with staff, operations, and resources of the state coastal program
- Integration into the DEQ office and other resource agencies offices on Saipan
- Incorporation into DEQ, DFW and CRM outreach and education programs, marine and watershed monitoring programs, and conservation planning programs

Research existing projects and plan coral reef protection efforts (1 month)

The fellow will identify needs and collaborate with staff members to develop plans for the coordination and implementation of the LAS and MC outreach and stakeholder involvement involving both government staff members and the public. The fellow will also establish contacts with schools and community groups that may wish to become part of coral reef protection efforts.

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Outcomes:

- Familiarity with existing programs
- Database of potential partners, volunteers, and outreach target audiences
- List of potential fellowship specific projects

Implement LBS LAS, Micronesia Challenge and other coral-related projects (20 months)

Working with input from DEQ, DFW, CRM, staff, and other project partners, the assistant will assist with coordination of ongoing LBS LAS projects and revision of LBS LAS. The fellow will further develop appropriate materials and messages for the public and other audiences related to LAS projects, some of which may include contributing to ongoing awareness campaigns and community participation in watershed projects.

Outcomes:

- Implementation of LBS LAS projects in Saipan
- Development of LAS revisions
- Increased community involvement and understanding of the Micronesia Challenge project
- Completion of a coral reef-focused LBS campaign with follow-on and transfer of information plans

Evaluate fellowship program, pass on relevant information to new fellow (3 months)

The fellow will evaluate the successes and challenges of the programs implemented during the fellowship program. (S)he will prepare documents outlining lessons learned, important projects and programs to continue, and information to pass on to partners on Saipan and the next coral management fellow.

Outcomes:

- Guidance documents for partners and future coral reef fellow
- Evaluation of programs

Fellow Mentoring

The fellow will be mentored by the NPS Manager and Coral Reef Point of Contact at the Division of Environmental Quality.

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In Kind Support

The fellow 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.

In addition, DEQ will provide funds for administrative travel, purchases of supplies and software, as well as printing, photocopying, mailing, and incidental costs for project products

Eligibility Requirements

- Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's degree with 2 years of experience in outreach and education, marine monitoring, or conservation planning AND 2 years of experience living and working in Micronesia
- Valid driver's license

Desired Background and Skill Sets

- Demonstrated oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills
- A proven ability to be well organized, and to manage and prioritize multiple tasks
- Public speaking, events planning, and meeting facilitation experience
- Ability to work independently
- Experience working with multiple user groups
- Experience, through an internship, fellowship, or part-time job, in tropical ecosystems and coral reefs
- SCUBA certification, or comfort in the water and willingness to become certified
- Experience in marine and watershed monitoring and data collection
- Experience developing environmental education and outreach materials
- Experience with PowerPoint, Excel, and Microsoft Word