

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: National Estuarine Research Reserve Graduate Research Fellowship Program FY12

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.420, Coastal Zone Management Estuarine Research Reserves

Dates: Applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov no later than 11:00 pm (EST) on November 1, 2011 or postmarked no later than November 1, 2011.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) consists of estuarine areas of the United States and its territories which are designated and managed for research and educational purposes. Each Reserve within the system is chosen to reflect regional differences and to include a variety of ecosystem types in accordance with the classification scheme of the national program as presented in 15 CFR Part 921.

Each Reserve supports a wide range of beneficial uses of ecological, economic, recreational, and aesthetic values which are dependent upon the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem. The sites provide habitats for a wide range of ecologically and commercially important species of fish, shellfish, birds, and other aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Each Reserve has been designed to ensure its effectiveness as a conservation unit and as a site for long-term research and monitoring. As part of a national system, the Reserves collectively provide an excellent opportunity to address research questions and estuarine management issues of national significance. For detailed descriptions of the sites, refer to the NERRS Web site at www.nerrs.noaa.gov or contact the site staff listed in Appendix I.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) research funds are provided to support management-related research projects that will enhance scientific understanding of the Reserve ecosystem, provide information needed by Reserve management and coastal management decision-makers, and improve public awareness and understanding of estuarine ecosystems and estuarine management issues (15 CFR 921.50).

The Reserve System's Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) Program offers qualified master's and doctoral students the opportunity to address scientific questions of local, regional, and national significance. The result is high-quality research focused on improving coastal management issues.

All GRF projects must be conducted in a National Estuarine Research Reserve and enhance the scientific understanding of the Reserve's ecosystem. While Graduate Research Fellows receive hands-on experience, Reserve managers and coastal decision-makers receive vital ecological data.

B. Program Priorities

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System is focusing on the following areas of research. Proposed research projects submitted in response to this announcement should address one of the following estuarine ecosystem topics:

** Eutrophication, effects of non-point source pollution and/or nutrient dynamics;

** Habitat conservation and/or restoration;

** Biodiversity and/or the effects of invasive species;

** Mechanisms for sustaining resources within estuarine ecosystems; or

** Economic, sociological, and/or anthropological research applicable to estuarine

ecosystem management

Proposals must:

1. address through master's or doctoral research programs, coastal management issues identified as having local, regional, and/or national significance within the "Research Focus Areas" identified above, and;
2. be conducted within one or more of the designated National Estuarine Research Reserve(s). A map with the designated National Estuarine Research Reserves can be found at www.nerrs.noaa.gov. Proposals must clearly specify which focus area is being addressed and how it relates to research needs and priorities of the Reserve or Reserve System.

Note: Although the areas of coastal and estuarine research interest identified above may be considered national in scope, they relate to and encompass regional and local issues unique to the environments of the individual reserves. It is strongly suggested that applicants contact the intended host Reserve(s) (see Appendix I) for specific information about the Reserve(s), including maps, as well as their accompanying research needs and priorities as they relate to this announcement. Applicants should determine whether their proposed projects are relevant to the Reserve's(s') site specific research needs.

C. Program Authority

Section 315 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended CZMA, 16 U.S.C. 1461, establishes the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS). 16 U.S.C. 1461 (e)(1)(B) authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to make grants to any coastal state or public or private person for purposes of supporting research and monitoring within a National Estuarine Research Reserve that are consistent with the research guidelines developed under subsection (c).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

The total project cost for a one-year Graduate Research Fellowship award is \$28,572. The federal funding amount of the fellowship is \$20,000, and at least 30% of the total project cost is required as non-federal match. To illustrate how the total project cost of \$28,572 is calculated - \$20,000 of this amount is supplied by the federal government as 70%, with a

minimum of 30% non-federal match (\$8,572) of the total funding provided by the student's eligible institution.

B. Project/Award Period

This program announcement is for one, two, or three-year periods of funding of GRF projects conducted by graduate students. The anticipated start date is June 1, 2012. If an application is selected for only one year of funding, the Estuarine Reserves Division has no obligation to provide additional funding for subsequent years. The student can, however, re-apply to the program at another time by following the same competitive process. A student cannot be supported for more than a total of three years under this fellowship. When a multi-year proposal (i.e., two or three years) is awarded, the student does not need to re-apply for the second or third year of the program. Initially, funding will be provided for only the first year of the program; for each subsequent year of a multi-year proposal funding will be made available based on availability of funds and satisfactory progress of research, as determined by the host Reserve's Research Coordinator and the student's faculty advisor, in consultation with NOAA's Estuarine Reserves Division.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for NERRS Graduate Research Fellowship awards will be a grant issued to an eligible institution as described in section III, Eligibility Information.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Awards are normally made to the fellow's graduate institution through the use of a grant. Therefore, students must work with an authorized representative from their institution's Office of Sponsored Research to complete the following required standard federal forms - SF 424, CD-511, and SF 424B. Institutions eligible to receive awards include institutions of higher education, other non-profits, state, and local governments. All Reserve staff are ineligible to submit an application for a fellowship under this announcement. Funds are expected to be available on a competitive basis to qualified graduate students for research within a Reserve(s) leading to a graduate degree. Students must be admitted to or enrolled in a full-time master's or doctoral program at a U.S. accredited university in order to be eligible to apply. Students should have completed a majority of their graduate course work at the beginning of their fellowship and have an approved thesis research program. Minority students are encouraged to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Requested federal funds must be matched by at least 30 percent of the TOTAL cost of

the project, not only the \$20,000 federal share. The total project cost for a one year Graduate Research Fellowship is \$28,572. To illustrate, \$20,000 or 70% of this funding is supplied by the federal government, with a minimum 30% non-federal match of \$8,572 supplied by the student's eligible applicant institution. Cash or in-kind contributions directly benefitting the research project may be used to satisfy the matching requirements. Waived overhead costs may also be used as match. Funds from other federal agencies and Reserve staff salaries supported by federal funds may not be used as match.

Requested overhead costs as well as institutional fees that do not qualify as direct costs under fellowship awards are limited to 10% of the federal amount.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

No more than two fellowships at any single reserve will be funded at one time. Based upon fellowships awarded in the 2011 funding cycle, we anticipate 9 openings for fellowships in 2012. The amount of each fellowship award is expected to be \$20,000, which will be available to all current and prospective Fellows. These funds are intended to provide any combination of research support, salary, tuition, supplies, or other costs as needed, including overhead. Awards are issued as grants to the recipient institution, and are not awarded directly to the Fellow.

Graduate student fellows who are selected for funding will be required to:

- 1) work with the Research Coordinator or Manager at the host Reserve to develop a plan that is relevant to the student's research and will allow for the Fellow's professional development as well as service to the NERRS. The Plan will describe how the Fellow will participate in the Reserve's research and/or monitoring, stewardship, education, or coastal training programs for up to 15 hours per week. Fellows conducting multi-site projects may fulfill this requirement at one or a combination of sites.

- 2) submit semi-annual progress reports to the Estuarine Reserves Division through NOAA's Grants Online system <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>, with the assistance of the applicant's Office of Sponsored Programs, or similar Office of Research at their graduate or other eligible institution. The Fellow will send a copy of the reports to their advisor, and host Reserve Research Coordinator via electronic copy at the end of each 6 month period.

- 3) acknowledge the support of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System

(NERRS) in all relevant scientific presentations and publications. In addition, Fellows are strongly encouraged to publish their results in peer-reviewed literature and make presentations at local, national, and international scientific meetings.

Fellowships are expected to be available at the following Reserves:

Fellowship Openings

Reserve

1 - Chesapeake Bay, MD

1 - Chesapeake Bay, VA

1 - Great Bay, NH

1 - Old Woman Creek, OH

1 - Rookery Bay, FL

1 - North Inlet-Winyah Bay, SC

1 - Sapelo Island, GA

1 - Tijuana River, CA

1 - Lake Superior, WI

The Estuarine Reserves Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, reserves the right to immediately halt activity under the award if award activities do not fulfill the mission of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in an immediate end of the award. For applicants awarded more than one year of funding, the Estuarine Reserves Division will annually review and approve each stage of the Graduate Research Fellowship work to provide assurance that studies will produce viable information on which to form valid coastal management decisions.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

For program and proposal information, contact Alison Krepp of the Estuarine Reserves Division at 301-713-3155 ext. 105 or via email at Alison.Krepp@noaa.gov. The text of the full announcement can also be viewed by selecting Program Application/Application Guidelines at the following website address: <http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/Fellowship.aspx>. For further information on specific research opportunities at National Estuarine Research Reserves, contact the site staff listed in Appendix I. All application materials noted below must be submitted via the Federal web portal at www.grants.gov. It is highly encouraged that all parts of the application be submitted through [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as one .pdf document, following the order specified below. Federal forms should also be submitted in [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), but should not be included in the .pdf document outlined below. As part of your submission materials please also provide a separate copy of the abstract. Students need to work with their Office of Sponsored Programs, or similar Office of Research at the graduate institution to submit an application. The institution must be registered with www.grants.gov in order to submit the application. Please see the www.grants.gov website for instructions if your institution is not registered.

B. Content and Form of Application

Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged via email from [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please note that [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) may take up to two days to confirm receipt of or reject an application so the applicant should allow time, ahead of the application due date, for these notifications to arrive from [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). All eligible applications will be merit reviewed and students will be notified via email as to whether or not their proposal is recommended for funding. The required elements for a complete application are outlined below. It is strongly encouraged that all pieces of the application be submitted through www.grants.gov as one .pdf document. Federal forms should be submitted in [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) but not included in the .pdf

document outlined below.

PLEASE USE THE ORDER SPECIFIED BELOW, ELEMENTS 2-10, WHEN CONSTRUCTING YOUR PROPOSAL.

1. Federal Forms

Federal application forms, including SF-424, SF-424A(s), SF-424B and CD-511, must be completed in conjunction with the authorized representative in the Office of Sponsored Programs or similar Office of Research for your graduate or other eligible institution. For all applications, the SF-424 form must include the full amount to be awarded during the course of the entire fellowship, and the associated non-federal match. For example: \$20,000 (1 yr), \$40,000 (2 yrs) or \$60,000 (3yrs). The match should be specified accordingly: \$8,572 (1 yr); \$17,143 (2 yrs); and \$25,715 (3yrs). The SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511 must be signed by the authorized representative in the Office of Sponsored Programs or similar Office of Research for your graduate or other eligible institution.

Applications must contain the SF 424A budget form(s). For a multi-year proposal (2 or 3 year award), a SF-424A must be submitted for each year of funding, and it must indicate the federal and non-federal amounts in section B columns 1 (federal) and 2 (non-federal). For example, a 3 year award requires the submission of three SF-424A forms, one for each year of funding, with each requesting \$20,000 for federal funds and each providing a minimum of \$8,572 in non-federal match. The budget narrative of the application and the SF-424a(s) must reflect the total amount of the award provided in the SF-424 form.

2. Cover letter

Cover letter indicating current the student's academic status, research interests, how the proposed research fits into their degree program, and a brief statement of how the research supports the student's career goals and objectives. It is strongly suggested that the results of discussions with the host Reserve regarding their proposal's contributions to the Reserve's programs be included in the letter.

3. Research proposal

Research proposal must be double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font with one inch margins. The proposal must include the following:

A. Title page which must include the items below in the following order:

**Project Title;

**Student Name, Address, Telephone/Fax number, Email Address, Date, and Signature

**Amount of Funding Requested; Number of Years Requested

**Name of Institution Providing Matching Funds and Amount of Matching Funds

**Degree being Sought; Field of Study

** Advisor Name, Address, Telephone/Fax number, Email Address, Date, and Signature

**Reserve (s) where research is to be conducted (if research is being performed at multiple reserves indicate which reserve is the primary/host reserve and which are secondary sites);

**Focus Area that Research Proposal is Addressing (see Section I. B)

B. Abstract. The abstract must state the research objectives, scientific methods to be used, and the significance of the project to a particular Reserve(s) and the Reserve program. The abstract must be limited to one double-spaced page. Please submit one abstract as part of your research proposal and another as an MS word document.

C. Project Description. The project description must be limited to 6 double-spaced pages excluding figures. The main body of the proposal must include a detailed statement of the work to be undertaken and the following components:

**Introduction. This section should introduce the research setting within the Reserve and, if applicable, identify sites outside the Reserve as well. It should include a brief review of pertinent literature and describe the research problem in relation to relevant coastal management issues and the Reserve research priorities. This section should identify the primary hypotheses, as well as any additional or supporting hypotheses which will be addressed by the research project.

**Methods. This section should describe the method(s) to be used to accomplish the specific research objectives, including a systematic discussion of what, when, where, and how the data are to be collected, analyzed, and reported. Field and laboratory methods should be scientifically valid and reliable and should be accompanied by a statistically sound sampling design. Methods chosen should be well justified and placed in the context of other methods employed for similar work.

Methods should be described concisely and techniques should be reliable enough to allow comparison with those employed at different sites and times by different investigators.

Analytical methods and statistical tests applied to the data should be documented and provide a rationale for choosing one set of methods over alternatives. Quality control measures should also be documented (e.g., statistical confidence levels, standards of reference, performance requirements, internal evaluation criteria). The proposal should discuss how data are to be synthesized, interpreted, and integrated into final work products.

Social science proposals should describe sampling and/or data collection methods, including surveys, evaluation metrics, interviews, participant observation, questionnaires, or other associated instruments.

****Map.** A map, clearly showing the study sites in reference to the Reserve designated boundaries and any other features of interest, must be included. Consultation with Reserve personnel to identify existing maps detailing Reserve boundaries is strongly recommended. Boundary maps may also be found on individual Reserve pages at www.nerrs.noaa.gov

****Project Significance.** This section should provide a clear discussion of how the proposed research addresses state and national estuarine and coastal resource management issues and how the proposed research will enhance or contribute to an improved state of knowledge of estuarine systems. This section must also discuss the relationship of the proposed research with the research focus areas stated in Section Ib. Applicability of research findings to other Reserve and coastal areas should also be described. In addition, if the proposed research is part of a larger research project, the relationship between the two should be discussed.

D. Milestone schedule. This schedule should show, in table form, anticipated dates for completing field work, data collection, data analysis, reporting and other related activities. Use "Month 1, Month 2, etc." rather than "June, July, etc.," in preparing these tables.

E. Personnel and Project Management. The proposal must include a description of how the project will be managed, including the names and pertinent expertise of faculty advisors and other team members. Evidence of ability to successfully complete the proposed research should be supported by reference to similar efforts previously performed.

F. Literature Cited. This section should provide complete references for literature, research, and other appropriate published and unpublished documents cited in the text of the

proposal.

4. Proposed budget

The amount of federal funds requested must be matched by the student's graduate or other eligible institution by at least 30% of the total project cost. For example:

One year project: \$8,572 match; \$20,000 federal funds; total project cost \$28,572;

Two year project: \$17,143 match; \$40,000 federal funds; total project cost \$57,143;

Three year project: \$25,715 match; \$60,000 federal funds; total project cost \$85,715;

Cash or in-kind contributions directly benefitting the research project may be used to satisfy the matching requirements. Waived overhead costs may also be used as match. Funds from other federal agencies and Reserve staff salaries supported by federal funds may not be used as match. Up to 10% of the federal share may be used for overhead or indirect costs. Requirements for the non-federal share are contained in 15 CFR Part 14, Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofit and commercial organizations and 15 CFR Part 24, Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants and agreements to state and local governments. The Estuarine Reserves Division strongly suggests that the student work with their Office of Sponsored Programs or similar Office of Research at their graduate or other eligible institution to develop their budget.

The applicant may request funds under any of the following categories as long as the costs are reasonable and necessary to perform the proposed research: personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect costs. The budget should contain itemized costs with appropriate narratives justifying proposed expenditures. Within their proposal, applicants must supply a budget table using the budget categories listed below that breaks out the federal funding and non-federal match into separate columns, side by side, for each year of requested funding. Please see below for further details.

****Personnel.** Salaries requested must be consistent with the institution's regular practices. The submitting organization may request that salary data remain confidential.

****Fringe Benefits.** Fringe benefits (i.e., social security, insurance, retirement) may be treated as direct costs, as long as this is consistent with the institution's regular practices.

****Travel.** The type, extent, and estimated cost of travel, and the name of the person traveling should be described and justified in relation to the proposed research. Travel expenses may only be associated with round trip travel to field research locations and professional meetings to present the research results, and should not exceed 40 percent of the

total award.

****Equipment (expenses over \$5000).** Fellowship funds may be approved for the purchase of equipment only if the following conditions are met: (a) for equipment that costs more than \$5000, where a lease versus purchase analysis has been conducted by the student or the applicant institution and the analyses indicate that purchase is the most economical method of procurement; (b) the equipment does not exist at the recipient institution or the Reserve site; and (c) the equipment is essential for the successful completion of the project. A letter of justification must address each of these criteria. It must also describe the purpose of the equipment and provide a justification for its use. Additionally, it must include a list of equipment to be purchased, leased, or rented by model number and manufacturer, where known. At the termination of the fellowship, disposition of equipment will be determined by the NOAA Property Administrator. **Supplies (expenses under \$5K).** The budget should indicate, in general terms, the types of expendable materials and supplies required and their estimated costs.

5. Requests for Reserve support services

On-site Reserve personnel may provide limited logistical support for research projects in the form of manpower, equipment, supplies, etc.. If applicable, any request for Reserve support services, including any services provided as match, must be approved by the Reserve Manager or Research Coordinator prior to application submission and this approval should be included as part of the application package in the form of written correspondence. Reserve resources which are supported by federal funds are not eligible to be used as match.

6. Coordination with other research in progress or proposed

The Estuarine Reserves Division encourages collaboration and cost-sharing with other investigators to enhance scientific capabilities and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Applications should include a description of how the research will be coordinated with other research projects that are in progress or proposed, if applicable.

7. Permits

The applicant must apply for any applicable local, state, or federal permits. A copy of any permit applications and supporting documentation must be attached to the application as appendices. The Estuarine Reserves Division must receive notification of the approval of the permit application before funding can be approved. If no permits are needed, please note this in this section.

8. Academic resume or curriculum vitae

Academic resume or a curriculum vitae that includes all graduate and undergraduate institutions (department or area of study, degree, and year of graduation), all publications (including undergraduate and graduate theses), awards or fellowships, and work/research experience.

9. Unofficial copy of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts

10. Signed letter of support and recommendation from the student's graduate advisor

Signed letter of support and recommendation from the student's graduate advisor including (a) a description of the advisor's contribution (financial and otherwise) to the student's graduate studies, (b) an assurance that the student is in good academic standing, and (c) any other recommendations that the advisor may offer for the applicant.

11. Two signed letters of recommendation from a source other than the student's graduate advisor(s)

Two signed letters of recommendation from a source other than the student's graduate advisor(s) must be submitted through e-mail (with electronic signature or scanned original) or hard copy to: Alison Krepp at 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM5, SSMC4, Station 10503, Silver Spring, MD, 20910. Please note that letters of recommendation from Reserve staff cannot be accepted. It is strongly encouraged that a signed electronic or hard copy of these letters also be sent to the Office of Sponsored Programs or similar Office of Research at your graduate or other eligible institution so that they can be included with the application package when submitted to www.grants.gov. Students may request by email confirmation that letters of recommendation have been received.

C. Submission Dates and Times

All materials must be submitted through www.Grants.gov no later than 11:00 pm (EST) November 1, 2011. Proposals will be blocked from submission through this online system after this time. Please note that grants.gov may take up to two days to confirm receipt of or reject an application so please allow time, ahead of the application due date, for these notifications to arrive from grants.gov

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants should contact their State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State's process under EO12372. The names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's Web site at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

E. Funding Restrictions

Requested indirect costs and institutional fees that do not qualify as direct costs under fellowship awards are limited to 10% of the federal amount.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Research projects proposed in response to this announcement must:

1) as part of a master's or doctoral research thesis, address coastal management issues identified as having local, regional, and/or national significance, described in the "Focus Areas" (Section IB); and

2) be conducted within one or more designated National Estuarine Research Reserve(s). A list of National Estuarine Research Reserves can be found at www.nerrs.noaa.gov.

No more than two fellowships at any one reserve will be funded at any one time.

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to be submitted through the www.grants.gov web site no later than November 1, 2011 at 11pm (EST). Electronic access to the full funding announcement for this program is available via the www.grants.gov web site. The announcement will also be available by contacting Alison Krepp with the Estuarine Reserves Division at Alison.Krepp@noaa.gov or 301-713-3155 x 105. If necessary, paper applications (a signed original and two copies) should be submitted to the Estuarine Reserves Division at the following address, and must be postmarked by November 1, 2011:

Attn: Alison Krepp, NOAA/Estuarine Reserves Division, 1305 East West Highway, Room 10503, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

A. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria at the indicated weights.

1. Quality of research and applicability to program priorities (90 percent): This 90 percent will be broken down as follows:

a) The quality of proposed research and its applicability to the NERRS research focus areas listed in Section Ib of this announcement (70%).

b) The research's applicability to specific Reserve research and resource management goals as they relate to Section I of this announcement (20%).

2. Academic record and statement of career goals and objectives (5 percent)

3. Recommendations/endorsements (5 percent)

4. Additional relevant experience (0 percent)

5. Financial need (0 percent)

B. Review and Selection Process

Once applications have been received by NOAA through www.Grants.gov, an initial administrative review will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Subsequently, all proposals will be evaluated for scientific merit by no less than three reviewers from the scientific community. The Research Coordinator and/or Reserve Manager or Estuarine Reserve Division Coordinator will oversee the review process. Efforts are taken to ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided. It is permissible for applicants to list those people whom they feel would have a conflict of interest and therefore are not appropriate to review their proposal. The merit reviewer's ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. The Selecting Official will award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one of the selection factors identified below. The Selecting Official will make final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute awards.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official may choose a proposal out of rank order based on the following:

1. Balance/Distribution of funds:

Across academic disciplines

By types of institutions

Geographically

2. Availability of funds

3. Program-specific objectives

4. Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Funding recommendations are expected to be announced via email by the end of February 2012.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

It is anticipated that students will be notified if their proposal has or has not been recommended for funding by the end of February 2012 via email. The graduate student's advisor and the Research Coordinator at the student's host Reserve will be copied on this correspondence. NOAA's Grants Management Division is the only entity authorized to provide a grant award. Therefore, once the applicant's above-mentioned federal financial assistance forms have been submitted and approved, NOAA's Grants Management Division expects to make the grant award to the recipient institution by June 1, 2012.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Pre-award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements - The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register Notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696) are applicable to this section.

** Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

** National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA Federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA Web site: www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA_ and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

The terms and conditions of NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve Graduate Research Fellowship awards are described in Appendix 2 of this announcement.

C. Reporting

Students recommended for funding will submit semi-annual performance reports via NOAA's grants online system at <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov> through the recipient institution's Office of Sponsored Programs or similar Office of Research. Reports shall be submitted 30 days after the completion of every six month period after the project start date

and a comprehensive final report shall be submitted via <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov> 90 days after the project period end date.

Please note that recipients who do not submit final reports within one year after the award end date may put their institution at risk for receiving future awards.

Recipients will be provided with the guidelines for these reports upon receiving the award. These guidelines are also located in Appendix 2 of this announcement and can be accessed online at <http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/GRFDefault.aspx?ID=327>. Financial status reports are also required every six months. These reports should be submitted by the recipient institution to NOAA's Grants Management Division.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding the program and application process, please contact Alison Krepp (301-713-3155 ext. 105) at NOAA/Estuarine Reserves Division, 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM5, SSMC4, Station 10503, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or via email at Alison.Krepp@noaa.gov, or fax at 301-713-4012. The program Website can be accessed at <http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/Fellowship.aspx> . If the Web page does not provide sufficient information and Alison Krepp is unavailable, please contact Erica Seiden at (301) 713-3155 ext. 172 or Erica.Seiden@noaa.gov.

For further information on specific research opportunities at National Estuarine Research Reserves, contact the site staff listed in Appendix I.

VIII. Other Information

Appendix I

NERRS ON-SITE STAFF

Alabama

Mr. L.G. Adams, Manager

Dr. Scott Phipps, Research Coordinator

Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

11300 U.S. Highway 98

Fairhope, AL 36532

(251) 928-9792

LG.Adams@dcnr.alabama.gov

Scott.Phipps@dcnr.alabama.gov

Alaska

Mr. Terry Thompson, Manager

Ms. Angela Doroff, Research Coordinator

Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Department of Fish and Game

95 Sterling Highway, Suite 2

Homer, AK 99603

(907) 235-4799

Terry.Thompson@alaska.gov

Angela.Doroff@alaska.gov

California

Mr. Dave Feliz, Manager

Dr. Kerstin Wasson, Research Coordinator

Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

1700 Elkhorn Road

Watsonville, CA 95076

(831) 728-2822

dfeliz@dfg.ca.gov

Kerstin.Wasson@gmail.com

Mr. Clayton Phillips, Manager

Dr. Jeffrey Crooks, Research Coordinator

Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

301 Caspian Way

Imperial Beach, CA 91932

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APPENDIX 2

Programmatic Special Award Conditions

1. Prior to initiating the project, the Fellow will contact the Research Coordinator or Reserve Manager to coordinate all on-site aspects of the project, including, where applicable, the location and establishment of sampling sites, projected field sampling dates, accommodation reservations, and the need and timing for personnel assistance.

2. As outlined in the program's guidelines, Fellows will be expected to participate in the Reserve's research and monitoring program, stewardship, education, or coastal training program for up to a maximum of 15 hours per week. The work plan should be devised cooperatively with the Reserve's Research Coordinator and relevant to the student's research. Fellows are responsible for meeting with Reserve staff to coordinate this work plan. Information about this component of the fellowship must be included in the semi-annual progress reports.

3. Semi-annual performance reports shall be submitted 30 days after the completion of every six month period after the project start date and a final performance report shall be submitted 90 days after the project period ending date via NOAA's Grants Online System at <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. Reports need to follow format and guidelines provided at <http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/GRFDefault.aspx?ID=327>

Fellows must also submit progress reports and their final report via email to their advisor and the Research Coordinator at their host Reserve.

4. Any final report, thesis, dissertation, or database developed under this award will be provided electronically as a pdf, other digital format, or transferred to a CD/DVD free of charge to the applicable National Estuarine Research Reserve and NOAA's Estuarine Reserves Division.

5. Manuscripts resulting from NOAA/OCRM-sponsored research that are submitted to refereed scientific journals for publication in open literature shall acknowledge that the

research was conducted in the National Estuarine Reserve System under an award from the Estuarine Reserves Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

APPENDIX 3

REPORTING GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Preparing Semi-Annual Progress Reports

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Graduate Research Fellowships

Graduate Research Fellows are required to submit Semi-annual Progress Reports to NOAA's Estuarine Reserves Division in Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) via <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. Reports must be submitted within 30 days of the completion of each six month period of the award. If the project is extended for a period less than 6 months, an additional Progress Report should be submitted at the end of the extension period. Semi-annual Progress Reports should not exceed two pages in length. The following format must be followed:

- 1) Fellow's name and date of report (Note: Fellows must provide a copy of this report to their graduate advisor and to the Research Coordinator at the host Reserve)

- 2) Time period covered by this report:

- 3) Expected graduation date

- 4) Fellow's address (indicate if this is updated contact information)

- 5) NOAA Award Number

- 6) Research Project Title

- 7) NERR site(s): List sponsoring Reserve, along with all other relevant Reserves if research involves more than one site

- 8) Starting and ending dates of reporting period (e.g., June 1, 2011 - November 30, 2011)

- 9) Project description: A short description of the fundamental research activities that were supported by the Graduate Research Fellowship during the performance period, and the expected outcomes and/or applications of the work.

- 10) Research progress and adherence to proposed research plan and timeline: Statement of whether or not the project is meeting its milestone schedule and brief description of research activities accomplished to during this six months of funding. Please include whether there have been any alterations to the procedures or focus of research as was originally described in the funded GRF proposal (Note: If the milestone schedule is not being met and/or if significant changes to the originally funded research procedures or focus have occurred, a brief explanation is required)

- 11) Professional development and service to the NERRS: Provide a brief (1-2 paragraphs) description of the activities you have completed to fulfill the agreed upon service component of your GRF award (see Special Award Conditions). Include activities and interactions that support your GRF research as well as those that occur with the Reserve's Research, Stewardship, Education, or Coastal Training Programs. If none have occurred during this reporting period, please provide a plan including timeline for meeting this award requirement.

- 12) Full citations for manuscripts or reports that resulted from, or involve this

fellowship. Note: include full citation for any manuscripts that are published or in review during this six month period. Electronic copies of all publications should be included.

13) Dates, venue, and title of any presentations or seminars that were made during this six month period, and that resulted from or involved this fellowship. Include teacher training workshops, community forums and festivals, volunteer training, coastal training program (CTP) presentations and all activities that disseminate information related to the GRF research to a broader audience.

14) Other notable events, significant research accomplishments, educational publications, news coverage, and posters, etc. related to this fellowship.

Please note that no additional subject matter or professional communications, other than those described above, should be included as part of the Semi-annual Progress Report. Communications related to grant requests (e.g., requests for extensions of research period, change of scope etc.) should be directed to the Program Specialist for your grant or the Graduate Research Fellow Program Coordinator. Additional subject matter or other professional communications can be sent to the National Research Coordinator and/or the Program Coordinator.

Guidelines for Preparing Final Reports

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Graduate Research Fellowships

Final reports are required for all research funded through grants and cooperative agreements by NOAA 's Estuarine Reserves Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. The purpose of the final report is to describe the activities and summarize the results of the Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) project that were funded by the GRF award. Electronic copies of a Master's thesis or Ph.D. dissertation, and any published

documents or reports, as a partial or complete product of the NERRS fellowship, should be submitted as a component of the final report. Note: please send the Estuarine Reserves Division and the Research Coordinator at the hosting Reserve an electronic copy of final theses and dissertations, even if completed after the required timeline. With permission of the fellow, these documents will become part of the GRF Final Report Library and may be posted on a NOAA web site.

Final reports must be submitted through <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>, and an electronic version must be sent via email (.pdf or MS Word document) or as a CD, to the address listed below, with a copy to the Research Coordinator at the Fellow's host Reserve. The final report is due 90 days after the expiration of the award. These reports should be submitted to Alison Krepp (Alison.Krepp@noaa.gov); NOAA's Estuarine Reserves Division; 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM5; SSMC4, Rm. 10503; Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Title page: The title of the project should be followed by the name and address of the Fellow, the names and addresses of any other collaborators, the date (month and year) of submission, the sponsoring Reserve and all relevant Reserves (if the research involved more than one site), and the grant number. The title may be different from the title that was associated with the project when the funding application was submitted, as long as it accurately describes the project.

Table of contents: The table of contents should list all the sections and sub-sections as they appear in the text, with the corresponding page numbers. Lists of figures and tables should also be provided.

Abstract and key words: An abstract (one paragraph, 200 words or less) should be included on a separate page. The abstract should summarize the project, and include the problem statement, methods, results, and conclusions, particularly as they apply to the Reserve's management priorities. A list of at least three and as many as ten key words should be listed at the bottom of the abstract page. The NERRS GRF focus area(s) that the research most closely supported (i.e., nutrient dynamics and/or effects of non-point source pollution and eutrophication; habitat conservation and restoration; biodiversity and/or effects of invasive species; mechanisms of sustaining estuarine ecosystems; economic, sociological, and anthropological research) should also be identified. Note: The abstract may eventually

be included in the Estuarine Reserves Division research synthesis document for the National Estuarine Research Reserves System, and may be posted on the NERRS website (www.NERRS.NOAA.gov). The final report will become part of the GRF Final Report Library.

Text: The main body of the report should provide a complete and thorough presentation of the work. Specifically, a full description of methods, in-depth literature review, an extensive elaboration of significance of results, and a discussion of the importance to management of marine and coastal resources should be included. The text should be divided into Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, Literature Cited, and Acknowledgment sections. Sub-sections may be used where appropriate.

All text should be double spaced. Technical terms, acronyms, and abbreviations should be explained in full when they first occur. Genus and species names should be provided in full when first mentioned, and should be italicized. All measurements should be expressed in SI units, as defined in Standard 1000, SI Units and Recommendations for the Use of their Multiples and Certain Other Units, available through the American National Standard Institute, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018.

Literature cited: Referenced literature should be cited in the text by author and year of publication (e.g., Smith, 1975). Multiple citations should be listed chronologically (e.g. Burbank, 1967; Crosby et al., 1990; Crosby and Roberts, 1990; Golde et al., in review). Journal titles should be abbreviated as recommended in the American Standard for Periodical Title Abbreviations, available through the American National Standard Institute, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018. Full citations in the Literature Cited section should be listed alphabetically using standard formats for peer-reviewed published literature.

Figures and tables: Figures and tables should be used to clarify text and summarize data. Figures and tables should appear on separate pages that are numbered in sequence with the text. Figures should appear immediately following the page where they are first mentioned. Each figure or table should be clearly labeled with an appropriate descriptive legend.

Appendices: Appendices should be used to present relevant tables of data and measurements made during the study. Only summaries of the data should be presented in the

text. In addition, additional materials not appropriate for inclusion in the main text, such as computer programs or model descriptions and documentation, should be appended to the report. All metadata and summary datasets that were collected or generated by this work should be provided as tables in the appendices.

Publication: To insure that the results of NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM)-sponsored research is accessible by the public and the scientific community, OCRM strongly encourages investigators to submit the results of their work to peer reviewed journals for publication. Manuscripts submitted for publication must acknowledge that the work was supported by a grant from NOAA's OCRM. The text that may be used for this acknowledgement is, "This research (or a portion thereof) was conducted in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System under an award from the Estuarine Reserves Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

An electronic or paper copy of each publication must be provided to OCRM at the address given in the beginning of this document. Electronic copies are strongly preferred. When submitting final reports, Fellows should indicate that they are submitting a manuscript to a journal.

Further information: Questions regarding submission of research reports should be directed to Alison Krepp at (301) 713-3155 extension 105 or Alison.Krepp@noaa.gov.