

Nancy Niedowski

Coastlines editor Barbara A. Branca interviewed Nancy Niedowski, a former NYSG Coastal Management Fellow who is now working for the Department of State in our capital city, Albany.

Q: You were a Coastal Services Center Coastal Management Fellow supported through New York Sea Grant for two years starting in the fall of 1997. Could you elaborate on the nature of the fellowship and what qualified you to receive it?

A: The CSC fellowship is open to recent graduates of Master's or PhD programs in coastal management related disciplines. For the fellowship, coastal states develop special two-year projects addressing state-level priorities for the coastal zone. Both states and students are competitively selected for the program. The fellowship benefits recent graduates by offering applied training in the field and benefits state agencies by providing the extra manpower needed to accomplish special projects in important issue areas.

The New York State project, sponsored by the Department of State Division of Coastal Resources and administered through New York Sea Grant, focused on coastal habitat issues in several areas. These included updating *Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats* in eastern Long Island and developing a guidance document for salt marsh restoration and monitoring projects.

I came to New York State from the Environmental, Coastal and Ocean Science Program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, from which I received a Master's degree in the policy track. Coursework included coastal and ocean law, environmental economics, policy analysis, physical oceanography, biological oceanography, aquatic chemistry, aquatic toxicology, applied statistics. My master's thesis was on *"The Role of Impact Assessment in the Evaluation of Integrated Coastal Management."*

Photo by Gary Gold



Nancy Niedowski at the state capital.

Q: What were the highlights of your activities during the fellowship's two-year duration?

A: Seeing the great variety of coastal environments in New York State and experiencing the diversity of coastal resource issues has been great. I like getting out and seeing significant habitats and restoration sites, although I get to do that only a fraction of the time. I did some field work with a NY Natural Heritage Program person in Southampton last summer that reminded me of how I really love the salt marsh and how fascinating the natural environment is.

Q: What is your present position and what are your primary responsibilities?

A: I was offered a permanent position in the DOS's Division of Coastal Resources even before the CSC fellowship was officially completed. I've since taken the appropriate Civil Service exam and now hold a Coastal Resource Specialist position in the Division's Habitat Unit. I continue to work on several initiatives started during the fellowship, including participating in our National Estuary Programs (New York/New Jersey Harbor, Long Island Sound and the Peconic Estuary). I co-chair the Habitat Restoration Workgroup for the Peconic Estuary Program. Also, I now participate in

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the Environmental Protection Fund and Bond Act project review and oversight, respond to *Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat* information requests, and provide technical assistance to our Consistency Bureau and Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan team on coastal habitat issues.

Q: How did your fellowship prepare you for your current job?

A: Well, as you can see, it prepared me quite well for my current job, which is more or less an expansion on the fellowship work although I had other job leads and interviews both in the NGO sector and in the Federal government. The fellowship is phenomenal preparation for a career in coastal management in terms of the "real world" experience provided: the development of problem-solving skills, use of multi-disciplinary knowledge, and the ability to successfully coordinate your activities with other

coastal agencies and stakeholders. It was often extremely challenging—just like all work in this field!

Q: The motto of New York Sea Grant is "Bringing Science to the Shore." Its mission is to provide information vital to the wise use of our coastal resources through research, education and extension. In your experience, how is Sea Grant helping to prepare coastal managers of the future?

A: Sea Grant is involved in the critically important area of bridging gaps between science education, research and coastal management. Integrating scientific information with management is often quite difficult and yet critical for effective protection of natural resources. Sea Grant helps develop research programs that meet the information needs of coastal managers, needs that are very different from standard academic research. Sea Grant also supports and develops educational programs that train future coastal managers. Participation in the Coastal Services Center fellowship is just one example of this.

Hudson Roditi

Sea Grant Scholar Becomes Knauss Fellow

Marine Sciences Research Center doctoral candidate, Hudson Roditi, became a Knauss Fellow as of February 1, 2000. Roditi's assignment is with a program known as the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE), a worldwide network of students, teachers and scientists working together to study and understand the global environment. Students and teachers from over 7,000 schools in more than 80 countries are working with research scientists to learn more about our planet. As of the springtime, Hudson has relocated to Washington, D.C. to take part in the GLOBE program. Previously, as a Sea Grant Scholar based at SUNY Stony Brook, Roditi worked on the bioaccumulation of metals in zebra mussels under the direction of principal investigator Nicholas Fisher.

Photo courtesy of Hudson Roditi



Hudson Roditi in our nation's capital.

—Barbara A. Branca