

9-22-2009

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Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Dean Logan's Blog: Sea Grant Law Fellows Tackle Marine and Coastal Law Projects" (2009). *Law School Blogs*. 84.
https://docs.rwu.edu/law_pubs_blogs/84

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Dean Logan's Blog

Sea Grant Law Fellows Tackle Marine and Coastal Law Projects

Posted by David Logan on 09/22/2009 at 12:00 AM

In partnership with the Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program, the RWU Marine Affairs Institute hires law students as Sea Grant Law Fellows to conduct legal research and analysis for government agencies, industry and non-profit organizations like local governments. Fellows work on timely legal issues, honing their legal research and writing skills while acquiring hands-on application of classroom knowledge. Constituents benefit from receiving balanced, neutral research while also providing students with real world experience. Below are summaries of summer, 2009 Law Fellow projects:

Kirby Aarsheim, 3L

Kirby worked with the [Quonset Development Corporation's](#) Port Director, in Davisville, Rhode Island, reviewing and analyzing the permitting process for marine construction and dredging projects. Kirby stated: "While reviewing and analyzing agency documents, I learned how difficult it can be for a business to engage in marine construction and dredging projects. There are many factors to consider and agencies to seek approval from before putting a shovel into the ground."

Chris Connolly, 2L

Chris's summer as a Law Fellow for [Pacific Energy Ventures, LLC](#), a consulting firm based in Portland, Oregon., introduced him to offshore energy projects. His research on offshore wave and tidal energy projects along the eastern seaboard contributed to a forthcoming publication entitled "Siting Methodologies Handbook for Advanced Water Power Projects." Chris stated: "The knowledge gained about the individual states' approaches to the Coastal Zone Management Act and their respective coastal zone management programs will have a lasting impact on my career. The Marine Affairs Institute's professional network enabled me to work with key players involved in the future management of our shores and submerged lands."

Pamela Cunningham, 2L

Pam worked with the University of [Rhode Island Cooperative Extension](#), [University of Rhode Island Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials](#), and [Save the Bay's](#) legal counsel to complete "A Local Official's Guide to Regulating Land Use in Wetland Buffers and High Water Tables to Protect Water Quality." Pam's research contributed to a publication that will enable local zoning board officials make decisions regarding land use to protect wetland resources and drinking water quality. She said, "It was a

rewarding experience to speak with town planners and scientists regarding the legal issues their towns face and to provide viable solutions to help them protect their water resources. I was able to utilize all the skills that I had mastered in my first year of law school and apply them to real problems.”

Alastair Deans, 2L

Alastair conducted research for The [Ocean Renewable Energy Coalition](#) to analyze a more coordinated licensing process for offshore renewable energy projects using memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between governmental agencies. Alastair stated: “I realized that MOUs fit perfectly into the development scheme, and that MOUs build strong cooperative relationships within government, at times stronger than contracts.”