

Environmental Innovations Initiative Project

Funded by: Penn Environmental Innovations Initiative

Co-Project Leads: Howard Neukrug, Executive Director; Ellen Kohler, Director of Applied Research and Programs

Job title

Water Policy Graduate Research Fellow (2 positions)

Contract type

Start date: September 3, 2024
Contract type: Monthly Stipend
Length of contract: 4 months, with potential to extend through spring semester 2025
Hourly rate: Up to 8 hrs/wk at \$19/hr

Project description

In April 2025, the Water Center at Penn will hold its Second Annual Spring Water Policy Forum. The forum will bring together the Center's network of academic, community, government, and corporate partners to help inform, prioritize, and advance water and climate-related solutions for local, regional, and global communities. The theme of the 2024 Water Policy Forum was "**The Nexus of Climate Change, Nature-Based Solutions, and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Remediation in the Northeast Mega Region.**" The theme for the 2025 Water Policy Forum will be determined over the course of this project.

Project outcomes

- Finalize the 2024 Water Policy Forum Brief.
- Determine 2025 Water Policy Forum theme.
- Plan and execute on the 2025 Water Policy Forum.
- Complete two white papers on related topics.

Job description

The Water Center is an applied research and policy center that partners with communities to find integrated solutions to the challenges facing their built and natural water systems. We use an interdisciplinary approach to our projects. To support this specific work, the Water Center is hiring **two** graduate research fellows to provide project coordination. The positions will be hybrid positions and include regular project team meetings. The position will report to Ellen Kohler, Director of Applied Research and Programs.

List of responsibilities

- Support staff in finalizing the 2024 Water Policy Forum brief.
- Identify a research topic related to the 2024 water policy forum and develop a 10-20 page white paper. Topics could include:
 - Whether and what kinds of nature-based solutions are most effective in urban settings based on analysis of implemented projects

- What kinds of nature-based solutions are best used to address combined sewer overflow challenges and what kinds are best used to address flooding.
- Whether and how natural capital accounting help drive the implementation of nature-based solutions.
- Before the 2025 Spring Water Policy Forum:
 - Conduct key-person interviews to develop a forensic review of the 2024 Forum with recommendations for changes or improvements.
 - Conduct a literature review of current trends in the water sector and work with Water Center Staff to develop the theme for the 2025 Forum, along with a short briefing report for the attendees for their consideration.
 - Work with Staff to engage collaborators, students, and other key stakeholders via convenings, discussions, and/or webinars on advancing water research at Penn.
- During the 2025 Forum:
 - Serve as rapporteurs (modeled after the Perry World House’s model of student rapporteurs).
 - Take detailed notes of key research ideas and priorities as they develop throughout the event.
 - Network with attendees.
 - Support day-of event management efforts as assigned.
- After the Forum:
 - Compile notes from staff and volunteers as the basis for a post-Forum report.
 - Work with Staff to develop a finalized list of research themes and transform them into actionable policy recommendations in a Policy Brief.
 - Create a communications and outreach plan to ensure a high level of impact for the Policy Brief.
 - Work with Staff to Identify key recommendations that the Center and its network of partners will advance to project proposal development and full research funding.
 - Support staff in finalizing the 2025 water policy brief. The Graduate Research Fellows will be credited as co-authors of the 2025 water policy brief.

The ideal candidate will:

- Be a current University of Pennsylvania student.
- Hold a B.S. in environmental studies, civil engineering, environmental policy, governmental policy, environmental economics or other related fields.
- Be pursuing a graduate degree in environmental studies, environmental policy, law, civil engineering, applied engineering, public policy, environmental economics.
- Be able to work independently but also as part of a team.
- Be passionate about water issues.

To apply

Submit a cover letter and resume via email to Emma Denison at emmade@sas.upenn.edu with a subject line of “Water Policy Graduate Research Fellow”. Review of applications will occur on a rolling basis; applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Questions can also be sent to the email address above.