

MARYLAND COASTAL LAW AND POLICY ROUNDTABLE

Monday, December 2, 2019

Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Project Background

In 2018, Maryland Sea Grant College (MDSG) received a grant through the National Sea Grant Law Center (NSGLC) to explore the feasibility of building a collaborative law and policy education program to serve the state and its constituents. Together with the Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI) at the University of Maryland, MDSG began this work by conducting a legal needs assessment survey across the state. The results of this survey provided a firm idea of the legal and policy topics that Marylanders are most interested in. This project has also allowed MDSG and ALEI to explore how both institutions could benefit from a joint legal program in order to further our individual program goals. MDSG and ALEI also studied existing Sea Grant program models in order to understand what other states have found to be the best designs for their Sea Grant legal programs. Through these efforts, we hope to develop structural ideas toward a law and policy education model that would serve non-advocacy-based legal needs in the state of Maryland.

Project Partners

Maryland Sea Grant College is one of thirty-three existing Sea Grant programs spanning the coastal and Great Lake areas of the United States. Overseen by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the University System of Maryland, MDSG was started in 1977 to focus on extension, education, research, and community needs in Maryland related to the Bay, coasts, and the ocean. MDSG strives to increase science literacy, support economic efforts relying on ocean and coastal resources, help communities respond to environmental disruptions and changes, and fund scientific research relating to the protection of Maryland's water resources.

The **Agriculture Law Education Initiative at the University of Maryland** began in 2013 to help Maryland farmers increase their understanding of relevant laws and regulations, gain access to useful farming resources, and protect their livelihoods. ALEI makes use of various education initiatives and media outputs to ensure that Maryland farmers get the information they need to approach legal topics with confidence. ALEI recognizes the large role agriculture—including aquaculture—plays in Maryland's economy and strives to maintain its vitality for farming families across the state.

Maryland Sea Grant Extension, a joint effort between Maryland Sea Grant College and University of Maryland Extension, allows MDSG to connect with communities and people toward the end goals of creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between citizens, the natural resource economy, and the marine and coastal environment. Extension agents are problem solvers for governments, businesses, and citizens, amongst others. The extension program works on a variety of topics, including watershed health, seafood safety, aquaculture, nutrient runoff, and climate change and sea level rise impacts.

Why a roundtable discussion?

We want to hear from you. What are your coastal and marine law and policy needs? What are the needs of your stakeholders? What kind of legal resource structure do you think would be most conducive to a successful effort to increase the knowledge base of Marylanders pertaining to coastal issues?

With this one-day event, we gathered thought leaders from Maryland who can provide meaningful contributions to the conversation. We want to have thoughtful group discussions about what a Sea Grant legal program could look like in Maryland, which water-related issues it needs to focus on, and how best to move forward with implementing a program that will be useful to Marylanders.

The National Sea Grant Law Center, located at the University of Mississippi, has been in place since 2002 as the cornerstone of the National Sea Grant Program's legal efforts and network. The Center's efforts focus on bringing together law researchers and users in the Sea Grant network; performing coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes legal research; providing education and outreach to Sea Grant constituents and networks; conducting workshops, conferences, and publications in the realm of coastal and ocean law; and aiding in the development of the Sea Grant legal network. The Law Center often strives toward achieving this last objective by hosting requests for proposals such as the one resulting in this roundtable, and has been working on establishing and expanding the Sea Grant legal network for ten years.

Sea Grant Program-Based Legal Programs within the Sea Grant Legal Network

The **North Carolina Coastal Resources Law, Planning, and Policy Center** partners with North Carolina Sea Grant, the University of North Carolina School of Law, and the University of North Carolina Department of City and Regional Planning to address law and policy needs on the coast of North Carolina. The center hosts workshops and conferences, oversees events centered around legal outreach and education initiatives, and creates informational media ranging from annual reports to online resources. Student fellowships and internships are available at the center, allowing undergraduate and law students interested in coastal and ocean policy to work on issues such as offshore energy, coastal flooding, and waterfront access. North Carolina's coastal legal program, in addition to its staff team, has an advisory board to aid with strategic planning and program development, priority issues, and ensuring that a wide range of constituents are able to benefit from the center's opportunities.

The **Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program** partners with the University of Rhode Island and Roger Williams University. In addition to hosting several law student fellows each year, the program also offers a dual degree option for law students who wish to also receive a Master's in Marine Affairs degree. Constituents ranging from government officials to private citizens use the program for legal research, education, and outreach needs in the state, focusing on concerns such as public access, fisheries, and coastal zone management.

The **Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program**, like other programs, focuses on performing legal research and disseminating this research to constituents via education programs, online publications, and conferences. Though this program does not host student fellows, it does offer summer research assistantships, the opportunity for law students to be taught and trained by program lawyers, and law student professional development opportunities. As they are hosted in the same space, this program works in conjunction with the NSGLC.

The **Louisiana Sea Grant Law and Policy Program** employs attorneys, law clerks, and student interns and externs to perform legal research for government and university-based institutions, watermen, and others. The program provides law and policy publications online and also hosts education and outreach events for stakeholders. Like North Carolina, this program also makes use of an advisory board to ensure that it stays up to date with current issues and is meeting the needs of all its constituents.

Other Collaborators of the Sea Grant Legal Network

The **Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William & Mary Law School** partners with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and Virginia Sea Grant and offers education, advice, and science-based analyses for stakeholders wanting to learn more about coastal law and policy in the state. Rather than an official arm of a state Sea Grant program, this center acts as a clinic for law students at William & Mary. Students who choose to enroll in this clinic help perform legal and policy analysis on ecological issues relevant to stakeholders and constituents of VIMS and Virginia Sea Grant.

The **Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia** works on environmental policy and research efforts relevant to Sea Grant's missions, namely through the Planning and Environmental Services unit. This unit employs Shana Jones, who works with numerous Georgia communities on relevant legal and policy issues relating to the environment and use of its resources. Much of this work focuses on coastal issues. The Carl Vinson Institute aims to aid governments in their work through training, education, and outreach efforts, in order to ensure that governments are able to support the public.

The **University of Florida Conservation Clinic** was created by the Environmental and Land Use Law Program to expose law and graduate students to law and policy issues related to environmental and land use. Students in the clinic work on conservation efforts with clients in the private and public sectors and often collaborate with Florida Sea Grant on these efforts.