

Postdoctoral Scholar

Examining the Role of Community and Citizen Science in California and Oregon Marine Protected Areas

Position Overview

The Center for Community and Citizen Science seeks an accomplished environmental social scientist to lead a project examining the role that community and citizen science (CCS) has played in marine protected areas (MPAs) in California and Oregon. This is a full time, 18-month position, beginning in Fall, 2021. There is a possibility of extension, pending further funding. The Scholar will lead a research team for this project, and join a growing community of colleagues spanning natural and social sciences and diverse problem areas at the Center.

Project Background

Community and citizen science (CCS), through which members of the public collaborate on science and monitoring, has become a common feature of ocean conservation efforts. In California and Oregon over the last decade, thousands of volunteers have participated in diverse forms of CCS as part of marine protected area (MPA) implementation. Investments in CCS are about more than just gathering data; involving volunteers in MPA monitoring can support multiple implementation goals such as outreach and education, enforcement, and compliance. But we currently know very little about how CCS has met that potential.

This project will use social science methods such as surveys and interviews to deepen our understanding of the role CCS is playing, and could play, in MPA implementation. The research activities will be highly collaborative, including careful coordination with state partners (agencies and other funders), and iterative engagement with CCS program staff and participants.

The **goals** of the project are to:

1. Improve understanding of how CCS has helped meet (or not) goals for MPA implementation (as represented in founding legislation and current implementation plans).
2. Support CCS programs and MPA partners in planning the future of CCS in MPA implementation activities.
3. Advance research and practice related to CCS in conservation.

The project will address four **focal areas**, which align with the priorities and interests of stakeholders:

- **Participant contributions and outcomes.** This includes the “who, what, where, and how” of CCS in MPAs. We aim to understand the nature of the overall contribution that

volunteers have made to support the MPA program (e.g., scale of effort, roles played, demographics of volunteers, etc.), and identify opportunities to expand, diversify, and deepen participation

- **MPA program priorities and goals.** This includes impacts of participant activities on MPA program priorities (e.g. science and monitoring, education and outreach, policy and permitting, and enforcement and compliance), and how this relates to goals of founding legislation. Understanding the different types of contributions that CCS programs are making will also be useful in shaping funding priorities and practices in future years.
- **CCS program approaches, evolution, and needs.** Understanding successes and challenges for the programs themselves can help to plan for ongoing support for CCS in the coming years, and support dialog among programs about improving practices.
- **Cross-Cutting Theme -- Diversity, equity, and inclusion.** This includes how CCS has (and has not) been a factor in expanding participation in ongoing MPA implementation, with particular emphasis on understanding participation of underrepresented groups.

Roles and Responsibilities

Under the oversight of the PI, the Scholar will lead the team in all aspects of the project. The scholar will facilitate and attend to a variety of important collaborative processes and accountabilities to CCS programs, and to other stakeholders, with the end-goal of delivering useful results for all involved. Responsibilities include:

- development of social science qualitative and quantitative research methods and instruments;
- data collection and analysis;
- reporting to academic and practitioner audiences;
- coordination of and communication with partners and stakeholders; and
- managing the UC Davis team, including the Executive Director, Faculty Director, graduate student researcher, and undergraduate intern.

Required Qualifications, Knowledge & Skills

- Ph.D. in environmental or natural resource social science
- Excellent organizational skills and project management experience
- Excellent writing skills:
 - Ability to write independently and collaboratively on deadline, and documented evidence of scholarly publications
 - Ability to write for various audiences, including policy and general public
- Strong knowledge of and experience with at least one of the following:
 - community and citizen science, including experience as a researcher, leader, or a participant;
 - environmental conservation and natural resource management and policy, with a preference for ocean and coastal topics; and
 - issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion related to environmental science and conservation

Preferred Qualifications, Knowledge & Skills

- Experience with interactions between science and management
- Demonstrated capacity to lead a social science team in highly collaborative research
- Demonstrated ability to mediate and facilitate a process involving multiple stakeholders with diverse interests

To Apply

Send a CV and cover letter to ccs@ucdavis.edu with subject line MPA Postdoc. This position is open until filled; however to receive full consideration, please submit materials by Friday, July 9.

Compensation

Salary is commensurate with experience. The position includes full benefits, as well as funds for project-related travel, equipment, and other research-related expenses.

Organizational Background

The Center for Community and Citizen Science helps scientists, communities, and citizens collaborate on science to address environmental problems as a part of civic life. Our research and programming span a wide range of environmental issues and scientific disciplines, and include many different collaborators, such as natural history museums, schools, nonprofits, and government agencies. The Center is based at the School of Education at UC Davis, and collaborates widely across campus and beyond. Read more at <https://education.ucdavis.edu/ccs>