

Press Release



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For Immediate Release

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PENNSYLVANIA SEA GRANT ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP & STAFF TRANSITIONS

Putting Science to Work in Communities throughout Pennsylvania

(HARRISBURG, ERIE, CHESTER, PA) – Pennsylvania Sea Grant College Program, one of 33 National Sea Grant College Programs, is proud to welcome new staff, and announce leadership transitions. Pennsylvania Sea Grant’s team of researchers, educators, and outreach and communications staff are dedicated to promoting the importance of sustainable coastal and river ecosystems, and ensuring healthy coastal communities and thriving economies.

Pennsylvania Sea Grant offers environmental education and training for students and adults, invests in cutting-edge watershed research, promotes the protection and restoration of coastal and river ecosystems, and supports investments in workforce development. The program, a partnership of Penn State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is administered by Penn State Erie, The Behrend College.

Pennsylvania Sea Grant announces the appointment of Ms. Sarah Whitney, as the new Director. Ms. Whitney follows Dr. Robert Light, senior associate dean for research and outreach at Penn State Behrend, who founded and led the program from its inception in 1998. Dr. Light retired from Penn State and the Pennsylvania Sea Grant program on June 30, 2017.

Ms. Sarah Whitney, Director has more than twenty years of experience in the policy, research, and outreach aspects of natural resource management. Whitney has been with Pennsylvania Sea Grant for thirteen years, in capacities focused on aquatic invasive species prevention and watershed planning, as associate director for the Susquehanna River office, which focuses on improving water quality in the Susquehanna River Basin, and as the extension leader.

“Pennsylvania Sea Grant has grown to be a respected leader in Pennsylvania on coastal and watershed issues,” said Ms. Whitney, Director. “The staff is highly motivated, and I look forward to working with them to build on the success and move the program into its next chapter.”

Additional staff changes include the appointment of Mr. Sean Rafferty as Research Director, Ms. Sara Stahlman as Extension Leader, and the hiring of Ms. Kelly Donaldson as Communications Lead.

Mr. Sean Rafferty, Research Director has been on the Pennsylvania Sea Grant team for sixteen years, and now leads the research program, which invests in cutting-edge science to address ecological challenges. Rafferty provides expertise and leadership in several key areas, including watershed monitoring and planning; aquatic biology; geospatial technologies; fisheries science; ecosystem health; and coastal communities.

MORE

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Ms. Sara Stahlman, Extension Leader builds on eleven years with Pennsylvania Sea Grant as a Senior Coastal Outreach Specialist, and now leads the extension program. In this capacity, she provides statewide leadership and management for Sea Grant’s outreach efforts, and continues to conduct outreach in several key areas including water quality, climate change, fisheries, and invasive species.

Ms. Kelly Donaldson, Communications Lead is the newest staff member to join the Pennsylvania Sea Grant team. Donaldson promotes programs, engages audiences and stakeholders, and increases awareness about the need for increased commitment to coastal and river ecosystems throughout the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania Sea Grant Promotes the ecological and economic sustainability of Pennsylvania’s coastal resources through the development of science-based research, education, and extension programs. These efforts are led by a team of researchers, educators, and outreach and communications professionals working statewide, with offices located in Erie, Chester, and Harrisburg. Learn more at www.seagrant.psu.edu

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