

Four to Join Coastal Science Assistantship Program

Four students pursuing master's degrees in the fall will be new participants in the Coastal Science Assistantship Program (CSAP), a partnership between the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and Louisiana Sea Grant that provides graduate students with up to three years' financial support.

CSAP students receive \$25,000 annually while working on applied coastal ecosystem restoration research important to CPRA. The program also creates a pool of researchers and scientists from which CPRA can recruit.

Meagan McCoy is working towards her master's degree in Department of Biology at the University of Lafayette. Her research will explain the interactive effects of hydrology with levels of nutrient introduction relevant to restoration activities on plant community composition and growth responses, as well as soil physico-chemical properties of fresh water and oligohaline marshes. This will address knowledge gaps that currently limit the refinement of predictive modeling efforts on key wetland species that are targeted in Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan. After earning her master's degree, Meagan plans to find a job working in wetland restoration.

Sujan Baral is studying in the Department of Engineering and Science at Louisiana Tech University. He will be doing research as a research assistant for Associate Professor Jay Wang of Louisiana Tech University in the area of Geotechnical Engineering. His research is about how to evaluate the anti-erosion ability of vegetation (grasses and trees, etc.) for the protection of coastal line of Louisiana. After earning his master's degree in Civil Engineering, his goal is to be a researcher in the field of civil engineering and search sustainable solutions for several engineering related problems.