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Recommended Citation

Zeiber, Rebecca, "UNH Graduate Student Receives Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship" (2008). *UNH Today*. 309.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/309>

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UNH Graduate Student Receives Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

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NH Sea Grant

January 17, 2008

DURHAM, N.H. - University of New Hampshire graduate student Aaron Kornbluth has been awarded a Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship for 2008. Sponsored by the National Sea Grant College Program, the year-long fellowship matches current and recent graduate students with hosts in the legislative and executive branches of government.

"I've always been interested in environmental policy but it took a long time for me to realize that it was the perfect career choice," Kornbluth says.

Beginning in February, Kornbluth will spend one year in Washington, D.C. serving on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Ecosystem Research Program Management Team to help coordinate ecosystem research.

"I have diverse interests, and my experiences in D.C. will no doubt help hone my skills and direction and assist me in building important connections in this field," he says.

Kornbluth, who hails from the small town of Hamilton, N.Y., received his undergraduate degree in biology and communication in the life sciences from Cornell University. His interest in environmental policy began when he studied abroad in New Zealand as part of the UNH EcoQuest Program, a 16-credit, semester-long course where ecological topics are taught in the classroom and outdoors. Kornbluth notes that this experience continues to drive his career interests and environmental philosophy.

"I like studying the big picture: the best way to solve real-world problems is to understand the links between people and their environment," he says.

Kornbluth is pursuing his master's degree at UNH with his advisor Mimi Larsen Becker, chair of the department of natural resources. His research will help determine how best management practices are employed in the restoration of the Cains Brook watershed in Seabrook.

In addition to his master's research, Kornbluth is involved in numerous volunteer organizations that utilize his skills in natural resources, citizen education and communications. His computer savvy allows him to be the web site designer for the Durham Neighborhoods Association and for the regional newspaper The Senior Times. Kornbluth is a co-director for The Yankee Coastal Rangers, a group dedicated to creating an intelligent public presence and watchfulness over New Hampshire's coast and estuaries. He is also on the executive board of LifeWise Community Projects, which advocates for citizen participation in numerous community activities.

"My scientific background prepared me to use that knowledge and go out into the world where politicians, journalists and the average layperson don't understand science but need to," Kornbluth adds. "Washington, D.C., will be the perfect place to learn how to put all that knowledge into action."

The Knauss Fellowship Program is named in honor of John A. Knauss, a former administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a founder of the Sea Grant program. Sea Grant is a national network of more than 30 programs that provide support, leadership and expertise for university-based marine research, extension and education.

Sea Grant is now accepting applications for the 2009 Knauss fellowship. The program is open to graduate and professional students in the marine- or aquatics-related fields. The deadline for applications is Feb. 28, 2008. For more information, visit <http://www.seagrant.unh.edu/fellowships.html>.

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