

2015 SUMMER INTERNS AT WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

This year, the DNR Human Resources resumed its paid summer internship program for enrolled students. After a competitive application process, the two positions were awarded to monitoring projects lead by Forest Resources Division scientists Teodora Minkova and Richard Bigley. They hired two students from The Evergreen State College - Rebekah Korenowsky and Michele Boderck - to help with the ongoing status and trends monitoring of riparian and aquatic habitat in the Olympic Experimental State Forest. Rebekah's work focused on processing and analyzing hydrology data and Michele collected riparian vegetation data and supervised volunteer crews.

The students and their supervisor share internship experiences below.



Rebekah Korenowsky



Michele Boderck

What are your career and educational goals?

Rebekah: Throughout my career, I aim to continue to research in the fields of biogeochemistry and hydrology with a focus on headwater streams. My current MS thesis at The Evergreen State College focuses on leaf litter and organic matter flux within the hydrologic network of the OESF. I hope that my work will influence the general understanding of aquatic ecosystem functioning and streamflow dynamics.

Michele: After four years as a seasonal Forest Service employee, I decided to pursue graduate school as a way to become more involved in the science/research aspect of natural resource management. Just as valuable as the degree I'm getting has been the experience I've gained while interning with DNR. With these two boosts to my resume, I'm hoping to obtain a permanent position in natural resources (broadly speaking because I'll take any opportunity that comes up!)

What has the internship taught you so far?

Rebekah: Through this internship, I have gained a deep understanding of hydrologic concepts presented in headwater streamflow. I have learned basic coding and statistical analysis in R and SASS, as well as fundamentals of data management. I have also gained considerable insight into the planning and implementation of long-term research.

Michele: During this internship I've learned a wide variety of skills involved in research including plant identification, data management, and youth crew supervision. The end of my time here will be spent turning the data into summaries of riparian vegetation conditions and I'm excited to see how everything fits together to report on the overall habitat conditions of the OESF. Being involved in the different phases of a research project like this has been an invaluable experience to complement my graduate school coursework, not to mention a really fun summer!

Supervisor observations about the interns

Teodora Minkova, OESF Research and Monitoring Manager: For the short period of 3 months, Rebekah and Michele accomplished tons of work in hydrology and vegetation monitoring while at the same learning the scientific and implementation aspects of the project. They successfully took on challenges ranging from learning and applying complex technical concepts to intense field work and supervision of high-school volunteers. This internship benefitted DNR by bringing bright, highly-motivated, and hard-working students and by enhancing the OESF research partnership with The Evergreen State College.