



2022

## Chris Morgan Wildlife Intern

Sierra Perea  
*Western Washington University*

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# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



**Internship Title:** Social media/editing assistant for Chris Morgan Wildlife

**Student Name:** Sierra Perea

**Internship Dates:** September 21 2022 - December 10 2022

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**STUDENT SIGNATURE** *Sierra*

**DATE:** January 30 2023

Sierra Perea

12/27/2022

## Internship Self-Evaluation

*Chris Morgan Wildlife (3 Credits)*

*September 21 2022- December 10 2022*

### Introduction/Overview of Internship

The internship I took part in for the duration of fall quarter was with Chris Morgan Wildlife. Chris Morgan is an ecologist who works in the field (mountains, wetlands, deserts, beaches...etc) making podcasts alongside wildlife-advocating for their safety and preservation. I came across this internship opportunity via an email sent out by Kathryn Patrick along with other local internship opportunities. The moment I saw the description of the duties the future intern would take on I immediately applied. They had never hired an intern before, let alone a college student. They wanted someone who could work their social media and assist in the creative aspects of the job, such as coming up with eye-catching posts and articles, and helping connect his work to younger generations. I was told I would be working in the field with them as well as remotely. The application required a couple of pages on why this opportunity is a good fit, why I would like to work with them, and any relevant experience that could benefit the team. I wrote about my summer adventure living in my car traveling around the Western US to experience new cultures and immerse myself into the outdoors as much as I could by hiking, climbing, and biking my way through the mountains. I guess my writing caught their eye and I was hired! My duties as an intern did not exactly follow the parameters of what they said would happen. I ended up working completely remote, which I was alright with because I was steadily busy with school, my other two jobs, and a young puppy. Each week I would create one to two social

media posts, shuffling through hundreds of photos of bears, wolves, and other various regional animals. I'd upload the most impressive photo and formulate a 100 word caption or 1000 word article blog. I'd help transcribe scripts and do research on varying subjects Chris was interested in doing podcasts on. I never got to experience accompanying Chris on his journey to find bears in the Cascades or wolves in the Eastern section of the state but I did get to spend my time writing about these fascinating adventures on my own schedule, which was something I truly valued. I learned a great deal about myself and my ideal work style through this internship. It reaffirmed my love for writing and learning about species in their environments but it also made me realize that I don't want to go into a field where I am someone's social media creator. I learned that this doesn't bring me as much joy as physically working alongside others in the outdoors would. I wasn't aware of this prior to this internship so I feel grateful for this opportunity to help myself figure out what I like versus what I don't like in a work environment. I think that this internship would be ideal for a student or post-grad who is looking to get into a field focusing on environmental media and journalism. While I love to write and have considered journalism, I have never really been passionate about the world of social media so this type of job would fit someone who is tech savvy and interested in media the best!

### Tasks I Took On

For the duration of my time in the internship my work consisted of creating blog posts, Instagram and Facebook posts/stories and general research on topics I was asked to post about.

For example, here is a section of a blog post I put together:

## Orca Recovery Day



Today is orca recovery day! For those who aren't familiar, it occurs every fall and is a fantastic way to connect with your local communities to educate yourself on the conditions of the endangered orcas and ways to help with the preservation of these creatures and the waterways they occupy.

These are some behind the scenes photographs from the 'Eba + the Orcas' episode that's a part of the Seattle Aquarium's Salish Sea series, which was beautifully created by my friends at Soulcraft Allstars. Last spring we set out on a research expedition around the San Juan Islands to learn about the vast ecosystems these magnificent orcas are a part of and how they contribute to the larger systems of the Salish Sea.

By our side was Eba the wonder dog, a rescue pup adopted by Dr. Deborah Giles of Wild Orca, one of the worlds leading experts on Southern Resident killer whales. Eba uses her incredible senses to scout out orca poop that lies on the surface of the water. Once it's located it can be used for many fascinating researching purposes, and is a critical way to learn more about these creatures without invading their space.

The process of creating posts such as this one went like.....

Chris would start out by sending a message asking me to make a post whether it be a blog, Facebook, or Instagram post. He would give me the general idea of the concept and things he wanted me to mention in said post. I would then formulate a draft and find photos that seemed fitting in our shared google photos doc that he would upload photos to. Once I send him my draft, he and Darcy (his assistant) would review it and suggest edits if they felt the need to. Once I received the thumbs up I would upload the post and check back every couple hours that day to see how his followers were engaging with it. We then would chat about the post a few days after and review the reach the post received. Generally I would do two posts a week and a couple of instagram stories sharing small snippets of Chris' day-to-day life such as a photo of him hiking on a local trail or sharing a fun species fact. I did a lot of research in order to have a better understanding of what I would be posting about, for example when I was making a post for

Indigenous Peoples day I was asked to find photos and an article of a ceremonial dance that was done locally. I spent a good amount of time researching to make sure I could find the most respectful and reflective photos and source for this assignment.

I helped aid in transcribing podcast episode scripts for a project they were working on regarding curriculum design for a school they partnered with. Transcribing the episode scripts was also done for the benefit of listeners with accessibility issues in hopes of making Chris' work reachable to everyone. Towards the end of my internship I put to life two different project ideas Chris and I would chat about. The first one was a survey I created regarding people's relationship with nature and what draws them to environmental conservation as well as some questions regarding podcasts and different styles of responses to crises. This survey was designed to be done quickly to get short and concise answers from students in various areas of study here at WWU. I received approximately 20 responses from peers and plotted the results in a doc and shared it with Chris and Darcy. The point of this project was for Chris to gain insight on how the "younger generation" views current environmental issues and the ways they respond to them. He wanted to use the feedback to help format his podcasts in a way that they would connect with people of this age because his general group of listeners tend to be a bit older. We thought of this idea towards the very end of my internship period so time was a limiting factor thus is why I was only able to get a handful of responses from students.

The final project I came up with was to create a flyer promoting Chris' podcast/blog and post it up around campus and areas surrounding. I knew personally that flyers are always a hit on campus and grab people's attention. I also knew my "generation" of students love podcasts and care about the environment so I thought this would be a great way to share the word! I used canva to create a design that highlighted one of Chris' adventures along with his brand logo,

some fun words to excite people and a QR code to make it super easy to just scan and listen to right away! I printed 30 of these and spent the day putting them up in various locations. I opted for a more environmentally friendly way of printing by using only black and white. I thought it contrasted well from the other flyers and just made it look cool.



### How This Experience Related to my Coursework

When searching for an internship I was intentional about finding one that had something to do with environmental issues so I could apply the material I was learning in school to the work I was going to do. This internship was advertised as a workspace that was primarily focused on wildlife ecology and environmental issues which was exactly what I was searching for. They also mentioned there would be lots of focus on journalism which wasn't something I did much in

school but I love to write so it seemed like a good way to practice my skills. Most of the work I did throughout the internship was based around journalism and interpersonal connections with nature but all surrounding environmental issues. Such as the posts I would create about wildlife or the survey figuring out people's outlook on the environment. This gave me a better appreciation for writing professionally and has inspired me to take a journalism class. Prior to this internship I took my first ecology class which was incredibly insightful for what I was learning from Chris. Having a base level understanding of ecological terms and the role it plays in the environment made understanding his work much easier. Throughout my time here at Western I have taken other classes that gave me better insight into what we were doing as well, such as a Salish Sea studies course I took last year and multiple geography classes. Overall this internship was closely related to what I am learning about in school currently and what I want to do career wise post-graduation.

### Conclusion of Internship

Overall, I really did enjoy my time working along with Chris and his assistant, Darcy, who is his full time manager, skilled social media runner, and great friend all in one. I learned so much from Darcy about how to manage all of what I did. Both Chris and Darcy were very communicative and direct with what they wanted from me and my role working with them. I felt very listened to. I felt that my work and time I put into our projects was valued and appreciated. They both told me from the start that they wanted to learn from me just as much as I learned from them. Throughout our time together they expressed that and it made me feel that our relationship was very reciprocal and thus we were both gaining new skills and new insights from each other. My interest in working in an outdoor setting was reaffirmed over and over again while witnessing all the amazing work Chris did.





January 25, 2023

WWU Internship Report for Sierra Perea from Chris Morgan Wildlife

To Whom It May Concern,

Sierra Perea served as an intern with Chris Morgan Wildlife for Fall quarter of 2022. During that time she performed a number of duties for our organization. Sierra helped promote our podcast, THE WILD with Chris Morgan, by creating and posting to our social media channels and developing, printing and posting a flyer to spread awareness of the show.

She helped with transcribing episode scripts so that we can use them for a new school curriculum we are developing and also so they can be emailed to listeners with accessibility challenges.

Sierra put together a survey at WWU to gather input from her peers about what draws them to environmental change and conservation and how they respond to podcasts about environmental issues, as well as their awareness of our podcast.

Sierra was very energetic and excited to help out wherever she could. This was our first intern from WWU and we had to adapt the duties from what we had initially planned due to changing timelines with our production. Sierra was wonderfully flexible and understanding about the adjustment and willing to chip in on any projects asked of her.

Please let me know if you have any questions by contacting me at [darcy@chrismorganwildlife.org](mailto:darcy@chrismorganwildlife.org)

Sincerely,

*Darcy Riggins-Schmidt*

Darcy Riggins-Schmidt  
Manager of Operations  
Chris Morgan Wildlife