



2023

NSEA Intern

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Western Washington University

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COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title:

Organization Worked For:

Student Name:

Internship Dates:

Faculty Advisor Name

Department

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STUDENT SIGNATURE

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

DATE: _____

COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Section 1 – Student Identification			
Last Name, First Name:	Varela, McKenna	Western ID:	W01527355
Email Address	varelam@wwu.edu	Major/PreMajor	Env. Science

Section 2 – Registration Information			
Total Credits:	2	Faculty Advisor:	David Wallin
Internship Start Date:	02/04/2023	Internship End Date:	06/09/2023
Number Credits Per Quarter (F/W/S/Sum)	(0/0/0/0) (0/0/3/0)		
<i>Note: You must be registered for credits during quarters you perform <u>any part</u> of the internship work (Including Summer Session) to include writing of reports...this can be spread over multiple quarters. You are expected to register an appropriate number of credits based on anticipated hours worked BY Quarter (Example: Working 120 hours during Summer = 4 Credits Summer Enrollment)</i>			

Section 3 – Organization for Internship	
Organization Name:	Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
Intern Supervisor Name:	Aidan Hersh and Anna Arensmeyer
Mailing Address:	3057 Bakerview Rd, Bellingham, WA 98226
Email Address:	ahersh@n-sea.org; aarensmeyer@n-sea.org
Phone Number:	(360)715-0283
Description of Duties (Or Attach Job Description): <small>Responsibilities: * Educate fourth grade students in salmon ecology topics during Students for Salmon field trips * Lead and educate volunteers in salmon ecology and habitat restoration at Community Work Parties * Work collaboratively with fellow interns to plan and organize for upcoming needs * Assist in all aspects of programming, including set-up, clean-up, and supply/tool maintenance * Assist with facility needs, if applicable * Other duties as assigned as neededAs part of the Future Leaders of Whatcom Waters (FLOW) Program the Community Program Internship provides real-world experiences and professional development opportunities for the future leaders of the environmental and educational fields</small>	

Section 4 – Learning Objectives

What do I intend to learn from this experience:

Through this internship, I am hoping to further develop my knowledge surrounding the salmon/freshwater streams of Washington. So far, most of my skills and experiences are specific to Alaska. A great deal of my skill set is easily translated into conservation work here in Washington, and I want to leave a positive mark on the streams that surround Bellingham. In doing so, I expand both my conservation knowledge and my connections within the field. A large aspect of the natural science field is knowing the right people; NSEA will provide a great deal of opportunities for networking throughout the internship program.

By completing this internship, I will gain experience in a leadership/small group management position. This will benefit any future teammates I will have, whether they be professional, academic, or personal.

How does this experience contribute to my educational goals:

Right now, I am completing the Climate Leadership Certificate offered through WWU. This is a program geared towards developing leadership skill sets to create change in the natural sciences, which fits perfectly within the goals of NSEA. By working the Saturday event with small groups of volunteers, I can practice and solidify the skills being developed through the CLC.

These skill sets will better prepare me for research teams with professors here at Western, which only benefit me as a student. I'll have management experience, which will open many more doors for me here with the staff.

If Faculty require any additional Learning Objectives, they should be listed here:

Section 5 - Deadlines, Evaluation, and Assessment (Completed by faculty advisor)

	Yes	No
Meet with Advisor: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First Draft Due: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final Draft Due: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional Learning Objectives (as assigned by faculty)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Presentation Required	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daily/Weekly Log Require	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 6 – Students Certification

I certify that I have read the University Policy on Risk Management Considerations for Student Internships and I will report any injuries suffered while performing internship promptly to WWU.

[http://www.wvu.edu/bfa/Risk_Mgmt/documents/Internship%20Considerations%20\(14\).pdf](http://www.wvu.edu/bfa/Risk_Mgmt/documents/Internship%20Considerations%20(14).pdf)

I will endeavor to represent myself and my college well and will abide by the relevant policies, procedures and ethical standards of the university and the internship organization.

I understand that **30-hours of work per credit earned is expected** for an internship. I understand that I am expected to enroll in a number of credits commensurate with hours worked each quarter.

Student's
Signature/Date

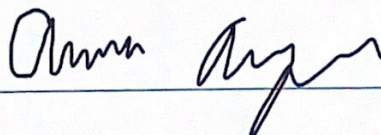


Section 7 – Internship Site Supervisor Certification

I have reviewed the student's indicated learning objectives and on behalf of my organization agree:

- To enrich the Student's knowledge by orienting him/her to the occupation, the work setting, and the responsibilities relating to the assignment
- To regularly evaluate/provide feedback to student on progress, projects and areas of growth
- At or near the completion of the assignment to provide an evaluation of the student's performance
- To review and approve the Student's Learning Plan and communicate with the college if areas are not going to be met.
- To supply the student with, and abide by the organization's policy against discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace
- To contact the instructor or the College of the Environment Internship Coordinator (360) 650-3646, ed.weber@wvu.edu should any problems arise

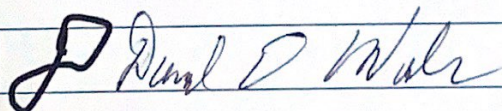
Internship Site
Supervisor
Signature/Date



Section 8 – Faculty Advisor Certification

I certify that the student intern and I have reached agreement on the learning objectives and academic expectations for this experience. These objectives are challenging and enriching to the student's academic and/or career goals. I will award grades after satisfactory completion of all learning objectives/tasks/reports assigned.

Faculty Advisor's
Signature/Date

 5/22/2023

Section 9 – College of the Environment Internship Coordinator

Actions:

1. Review Agreement
2. Update Course Override
3. File Agreement in Student Records
4. Communicate with Employers as necessary during internship

McKenna Varela
Internship Report
David Wallin
Spring '23

Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association Internship Report

The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, otherwise known as NSEA, is a non-profit organization based here in Bellingham, Washington, with the goal of protecting wild salmon for future generations. The organization does this in a multitude of ways, including educating both adults and young children, hosting “Work Parties” that involve riparian zone restoration, and partnering with local companies to spread awareness within the community.

I chose to work for this organization because its morals and goals lined up exactly with mine: to protect and conserve the Pacific salmon in the Pacific Northwest. I have spent time working in the field of fisheries management back in Alaska, and wanted to find an organization here in Bellingham that would bring me to working with salmon in the Lower 48. I knew that in engaging with the members of NSEA, I would learn more about the ins and outs of how fisheries and hatcheries are managed here in Washington, as well as make connections with professionals in the field.

The main focus of my position throughout this internship was to engage with the community members who volunteer on Saturdays from 9am - 12pm. Usually, there were only a handful of volunteers, maybe between 30 - 40; they would all have questions about the work we do, the importance of the riparian buffer along streams, and how each intern found their way to NSEA. I would arrive at NSEA's campus early to pack up gear, arrive at whichever site was previously planned, and then set up the tools and outreach gear throughout the worksite. These tasks all involved a great deal of teamwork, communication, and proactivity. The quicker we could pack/unpack gear, the smoother the Work Party would go. Normally, I would be assigned to tool packing, and would take on a leadership role throughout the packing process by organizing the bed of the truck or by driving the vehicle to the site.

Once volunteers arrived, I would intercept them as assigned, usually with another intern, and we would run through land acknowledgements, tool safety, and a demonstration of whatever was necessary for the site before sending the volunteers off to achieve the goal of the Work Party. At the beginning of the season, between February to about mid-March, the main focus was

planting native species, like douglas fir, maples, cedars, and other shrubs. From mid-March until June, the main focus was removing the invasive Himalayan blackberry. Once the volunteers were trained on whichever skill was necessary for the site, my tasks would evolve into a casual engagement with the volunteers. Some common questions we were prompted to ask by our supervisors were, “How did you hear about NSEA?” or “Is this your first Work Party?” Volunteers would either eagerly engage back to me, or hyperfocus on reaching the goal of that Work Party rather than speaking to me.

During my shift, I was allocated break times; even during these, I would hang out around the outreach table we set up near the work site. There, I spoke with the volunteers about their own careers and whatever they were willing to share about their personal lives. It was a great way to connect with the regulars we saw every weekend and to begin building a connection with the other volunteers. Although, many times the community members were more interested in being around those they came to the Work Party with.

In general, I am the type of person to naturally fall into a leadership role in both professional and personal settings. That being said, it takes me a while to assess a situation and to gauge my knowledge and experience to others around me. In general, once I feel as if I’ve gained enough experience to comfortably guide those around me, my growth into a leadership position feels exponential. Throughout this internship, it has been so rewarding to watch myself go from an uneasy, new intern and into a confident, experienced leader while working with the community volunteers. When I first started with NSEA, I felt very intimidated by the veteran interns who could teach and lead the volunteers with such ease. I remember feeling so insecure at my first Work Party in my ability to hold the volunteer’s attention, yet every time I was listening to my coworkers, they had my full attention! It just took some time to gain the confidence necessary to truly embody the type of leadership I wanted to exude.

Throughout this entire internship, I was simultaneously taking a class geared towards sustainable leadership. Although the content of that class is not directly related to conservation work, like the NSEA’s goal, I was still able to apply the leadership skills I learned about in class. For example, I learned about the worldviews people already carry with them as they walk through life; I would spend so much time dwelling on how I can’t change people, yet that class period focused on how I can create formative experience for others, which won’t change any they’ve had in the past, but can potentially change their future narrative. So, throughout the

internship I tried to engage with the community, especially younger members, as a way to generate experiences tied to conservation work. Usually, I would put this into practice by asking the younger volunteers to tell the group what they knew about Pacific salmon and their habitat; that is, if they seemed interested in sharing. Many times, they were proud to show off what they know, and the other volunteers were supportive of them. This aspect of my job was my favorite, and I will continue to practice this in the future.

For the most part, the volunteers I worked with were already enthusiastic about restoration and conservation, and didn't need extra motivation to do the work necessary to reach the end goal of the Work Party. It was always refreshing to be surrounded by members of the community who share my love for the environment, so much so that they volunteer their weekend time to the cause. Although this position was technically "work," I often left the Work Party feeling better than when I arrived. My ability to make a difference, on top of the volunteer's passion, left me with a feeling of hope. This feeling is hard for me to come by ever since working in the natural sciences, and I've made an effort to start conversations surrounding climate anxiety in my classes. I hope that I can create the space to validate the worries of the public through my professional positions, and remain positive for those newly interested in participating in conservation work.

This experience with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association has been priceless, and I have learned so much about myself as a leader and Washington fisheries throughout my time with them. I hope to continue working with organizations geared towards conservation and restoration, and to work with the community to increase engagement with the surrounding environment. Even if I can't change the experiences and viewpoints of the public's past, I've learned that I can create better interactions in the future. NSEA taught me how much change a community can make, and has proven to me that a small change is better than no change at all. I will continue to maintain this mindset as I move forward in both my professional and personal careers.