



2023

Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program Intern

Zeppelin Poole
Western Washington University

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COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title: Parks Volunteer Program Intern

Organization Worked For: Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program

Student Name: Zeppelin Poole

Internship Dates: 4/1/23 6/10/23

Faculty Advisor Name: Andy Bunn

Department: ESCI

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STUDENT SIGNATURE Zeppelin Poole

DATE: 6/15/23

I. STUDENT/INTERN INFORMATION

Name: Zeppelin Poole	W#: W01564988
Major: Environmental Science	Concentration: Terrestrial and Freshwater Emphasis
Internship Title: Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program Intern	
Period of Internship: April – June	
Avg. Hours per Week: 14 Hours per Week	Total Hours Worked: 150 Hours

II. HOST INSTITUTION INFORMATION

Institution Name: Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program
Institution Address: 1400 Woburn St Bellingham WA 98229
Institution Mission: The mission of the Parks Volunteer Program is to help local wildlife, increase the biodiversity of our ecosystem, make our community healthier, and make our parks a better place for everyone by hosting volunteer-based work parties and educating volunteers.
Supervisor Name and Title: Sky Hawk Bresette, Parks Volunteer Program Restoration Educator
Supervisor Contact Information: Email: shbressette@cob.org Phone: 253-225-9631

III. DESCRIPTION

Provide a brief description of the project or program on which you worked, the objectives of that project or program, and your role as an intern within that project or program:

The Bellingham Parks volunteer program is a part of the Bellingham Parks and Recreation department. The volunteer program is responsible for four main volunteer-based events/roles. The first is to set up and host volunteer work parties at different parks throughout Bellingham, which includes prepping the work party, setting everything and all required materials up, teaching volunteers how to carry out the work, maintaining a safe and fun environment, making sure people enjoy the work party and that everything is being done properly, and then cleaning up the work party once it is finished. The second is help set people up as Park Stewards. A Park Steward can be anyone who wants to adopt a park and are willing to devote time to caring for these areas. The volunteer program will provide these people with the application to be brought on as a park steward volunteer, provide them training, and can also provide some materials (such as plants, mulch, and gravel), tools (although these are usually provided by the volunteer), and pick up of invasives and weeds (if the volunteer can not do so themselves). The volunteer program also works with park stewards to help set up and host volunteer work parties at their park. The third is to help anyone who wants to host their own community work part with the setup, volunteer training, materials, and cleanup. The fourth is to provide and help schools schedule school stewardship events for their classes. This involves the volunteer program teaching kids beforehand about restoration, stewardship, and native and invasive species. Then, the class is brought to a park, where kids are able to remove invasives and weeds, plant native species, and mulch. Students are provided with a survey before and after the event to determine how much they learned from the event. Through all of these events, the objective of the program is to further education for students and volunteers regarding restoration, invasive species, native species, promoting a healthier environment and community, and the role we all play in restoring our ecosystems to a healthier state, especially in the face of global change. As an intern, we primarily help and work in the volunteer work party aspect. This includes helping to prepare and set up materials, provide guidance and education to volunteers on the purpose for the work party and how to carry out the work, helping with the work and maintaining a safe and fun work party, and cleaning up/putting things away once the work party is finished. It also involves many background tasks, such as maintaining the nursery for the plants that are used at work parties, and keeping tools cleaned and sharpened for volunteer use.

IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide a list of your specific duties and responsibilities as an intern:

I worked three days of the week during my internship: one weekday of my choice, Friday, and Saturday. On the weekday, I worked for three hours, and did any work that was needed. This included weeding the nursery, filling out paperwork, cleaning and sharpening tools, organizing the tool shed, folding gloves, helping with school stewardship work parties, and unloading supplies from vehicles. On Friday, I worked for four hours with the other interns to prepare for the Saturday work party. This included taking tools and materials out to load in the truck, restocking and folding gloves, and loading plants into the truck. After this, we would then drive out to the work party site. On site, we would walk around and determine where the welcome table and tent would be set up, where signs should be placed, where tools should be set up, and which zones each of us interns would be working in, and how to split up the groups between us. After returning from the site visit, if there was any time remaining, we would do miscellaneous work including weeding in the nursery and organizing the tool shed. On Saturdays, we would typically work from around 7 to 5. This involved setting up the work party before it started at 9, which included getting coffee from Woods coffee, taking everything out of the trucks, placing tools, setting up the welcome table, putting out snacks, drinks and parks educational flyers, setting up the parks canopy cover for the table, and making sure that we all understand which zones we are working in and small group leading. Once enough volunteers had arrived and signed in, we called everyone over and formed a circle. Us interns would introduce ourselves, explain what our goals for the day were, and why we are doing what we are doing (how it is helping the park, the community, and the environment). We would also make sure volunteers

were informed of any site-specific details, including potential hazards such as needles and their handling, any specific invasives present and how to properly remove them, and if there are any invasives that have to be placed in trash bags due to their invasiveness. After this, we would provide a tool demonstration on how to safely use each tool and would also provide a planting demonstration so that all volunteers would know how to properly plant for healthy growth. Once volunteers were fully informed, we had each grab gloves, the tool of their choice depending on the task they wanted to do, and a bucket if needed for invasives and weeds. During the work party, we interns would answer any questions, help with the work, keep the work organized, and check up on how the volunteers were doing, along with just having conversations. Once invasives were removed and the area was cleared up, we would plant native species that we brought along. Once everything we brought was planted, we would then have some volunteers grab sleds or wheelbarrows and fill them with mulch from a mulch pile, which would be brought to the site to cover any area where invasives were removed or plants were planted. Around 15 minutes before the work party finishes at 12, we would have people start to bring everything back to the welcome table and tool bins and put anything they took back where it was initially found. To finish off, our supervisor would give a congratulatory speech, outline what we got done today, and mention any other upcoming work party events. Afterwards, we would pack everything up into the trucks and head back to the headquarters. Once we got back, we would unload everything from the trucks, wash/brush tools to clean them, put everything away, throw any trash into the dumpster, and dump all plant material into the yard waste container, and return the welcome table materials to the office. Once all cleanup was finished, if there was any time left we would again help with any miscellaneous work. My other duties included keeping track of the dates and times that I worked on a timesheet, completing my Americorp time sheet submissions on a bi-weekly basis, and filling out the quarterly progress report required by Americorp when needed.

V. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe what you learned from your internship and how this experience contributed to your educational goals:

My goals going into this included learning more about Washingtons ecosystem, native plants, and the impact of invasive species. I also wanted to get better and more comfortable with leading groups of people and educating others, as I have not had much experience in this area. In the future, I want to have jobs focused on environmental science and working with others, so experience in both of those areas will be very helpful to me. Through my internship, I have learned more about Washingtons native plant species and how species are selected for a restoration site. I learned that this is partially based on the existing native species present, but also includes other native species, and is primarily based upon which plants are predicted to work best based on site characteristics (sun exposure, soil type, water availability). I've learned about new planting techniques, including how to plant on a hill, installing wood beams for stabilization, and mulching in a donut around a plant so as to not cause rot on the stem. I've been able to learn more about how volunteer work is organized and carried out, including different organizations working together, local stewardship programs and the role a steward has in maintaining a local park, the materials and effort required to make a work party happen, and the impressive amount of progress that can be made in a park in a few hours with a small group of volunteers. It has shown me that even a small number of people can start to make a sizeable impact on what appears to be a daunting issue, and lends more hope to the vast array of environmental issues we face today. I have also been growing in my group leadership skills by becoming more comfortable speaking to and guiding large groups of people (and being able to crack a joke or two) and seeking advice from the other interns and supervisors when I don't know the answer to someone's question.

APPENDIX I. SUPERVISOR LETTER

Attach a signed letter from your supervisor, on the host institution’s letterhead, stating that you have completed the internship according to the organization’s expectations and confirming the dates and number of hours of your internship work.



**Parks and Recreation Department
City of Bellingham**

June 14th, 2023

To whom it may concern:

This letter certifies Zeppelin Poole has completed **150 total hours** as an Environmental Restoration Intern with the City’s Parks Volunteer Program. Zeppelin has been a fantastic intern and we are looking forward to continuing working with him through the summer. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Sky Bressette

Bressette, Sky H. (shbressette) Digitally signed by Bressette, Sky H. (shbressette)
Date: 2023.06.14 16:33:13 -07'00'

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