



2023

Salish Scientists Summer Camp Internship

Jayden Lehner
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/cenv_internship



Part of the [Environmental Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lehner, Jayden, "Salish Scientists Summer Camp Internship" (2023). *College of the Environment Internship Reports*. 164.

https://cedar.wwu.edu/cenv_internship/164

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of the Environment at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of the Environment Internship Reports by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title:

Organization Worked For:

Student Name:

Internship Dates:

Faculty Advisor Name

Department

I grant to Western Washington University the non-exclusive royalty-free right to archive, reproduce, distribute, and display this Report document in any and all forms, including electronic format, via any digital library mechanisms maintained by WWU.

I represent and warrant this is original work, and does not infringe or violate any rights of others. I warrant that I have obtained written permissions from the owner of any third party copyrighted material included in this document.

I acknowledge that I retain ownership rights to the copyright of this work, including but not limited to the right to use all or part of this work in future works, such as articles or books. Library users are granted permission for individual, research and non-commercial reproduction of this work for educational purposes only. Any further digital posting of this document requires specific permission from the author.

Any copying or publication of this document for commercial purposes, or for financial gain, is not allowed without my written permission.

STUDENT SIGNATURE Jayden Lehner

DATE: _____

Introduction

This summer I completed an internship with Sound Salmon Solutions (SSS) which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit based out of Mukilteo, Washington. I worked as a camp counselor for the Salish Sea Scientists camp for 4th-8th graders that they ran for 3 weeks. I began on July 24th, 2023, and wrapped on August 4th, 2023. It is run and supervised by Kaelie Spencer, the Hatchery Program Manager, and Brittany Ahmann, the Education and Stewardship Specialist for SSS. I was one of two college interns along with two high school volunteers helping run the camp.

The non-profit is one of the fourteen Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEs) in Washington State. They work to foster a community that cares about bringing awareness to salmon and giving everyone opportunities to contribute to the success of salmon. Salmon are an essential part of the Pacific Northwest, for people and the environment. During the summer, they run a Salish Scientists Summer camp held at the Willow Creek Salmon and Watershed Education Center in Edmonds, Washington. The center is a hatchery that they raise salmon fry to release into Willow Creek. The wetland on site is incorporated into many of the lessons to help campers understand its importance to the area. The summer camp is one of many community events that include: education, stewardship, and restoration projects that protect and improve local salmon habitat. The summer camp just concluded its second year in the summer of 2023. During the camp, campers completed different activities that taught them about the environment of the Pacific Northwest and how to be good stewards of their environment.

My Role at Camp

I aimed to get many different things from this internship which includes developing new professional relationships, understanding what it is like to be an environmental educator, and further expanding my experience working with youth. With these objectives in mind, I led different activities over the different weeks of camp along with the other counselors. Kaelie and Brittany taught the rest of us about inquiry-based learning which would be the guide for how we run activities and lessons for the campers. We task them with producing answers to their own questions. They would improve over the week as they got familiar with the material.

One activity I led was the macroinvertebrate activity along with another one of the counselors. We would go into Willow Creek; I agitated the sediment on the bottom of the creek and caught macroinvertebrates(macros) in a net. These macros are food for salmon in the early part of their life cycle. After catching the macros, we would split the catch between different trays for the campers to analyze (Figure 1). I taught them about all the different macros that live in Willow Creek. We looked at the species diversity and split the species into groups based on their own pollution tolerance. We found that Willow Creek borders on excellent water quality in late July/early August. I helped the campers find the reasons the score was not excellent. The reasons they produced were that we were out of season for most of the macros, and that the dissolved oxygen content we tested the day before of the creek was a little low. This activity teaches the campers about the biological factors that make salmon successful. In the fall of 2022, I took ESCI 361, water quality. This course familiarized me with the chemical side of water quality testing which impacts the species that use the water. Before camp, I was not as familiar with the biological aspects of water quality. Connecting my coursework with my hands-on

experience working with the creek species helps me apply the two together to better teach others. While I have other experience teaching youth, it has been separated from my coursework in environmental science and other sciences.



Figure 1 Campers viewing and identifying macroinvertebrates in the tray with their magnifying glass and identification sheets with guidance from me.

Other activities were also led by me throughout the week such as the fair test activity, this was a game that used different textured balls being dropped from different heights where we analyze the scientific method and the importance of controlling variables to achieve a significant result. Another activity I led was the senses of a salmon activity. Where campers were tasked with perceiving the world through the eyes of a salmon returning to its spawning stream. These activities involved discussions where ideas were shared between campers, and it

made me appreciate the work that environmental educators do. For one of the activities, they learned what quadrats were, so I used my knowledge of how to use them from ESCI 325. At the end of every day of camp, the campers would get to work on their project that they would present on the last day to all their parents. This was the most rewarding for me because I got to see the creativity between all the projects and help them in their own ways. Some projects I was helping them build dioramas of forests and oceans. For other projects I was giving them information about the pacific northwest ecosystem.

Reflection

I am glad that I was able to volunteer for this camp and help youth learn more about science and the pacific northwest. The largest lesson I have learned from leading youth throughout my experience with boy scouts and this internship is patience. Patience and understanding of the different people and how to meet their needs. While struggles arose during camp, the feedback we received makes it more than worth it. Statements like "My son came home from camp everyday telling me ALL about the things he learned. He was so excited to attend every day," make it more than worthwhile. It makes me see the value of being an educator of youth. The people I met at this camp and the connections I have made will help me transition into my career post-college. Kaelie and Brittany were happy with the help I was able to give throughout the camp and I would be happy to volunteer with them again.

Acknowledgements

I am thankful for Kaelie and Brittany from SSS who were so helpful and supportive in giving us the tools to succeed when going through the activities with the campers. During the

weeks of camp, I had to miss some time due to illness. Kaelie, Brittany, and the other counselors covered for me and worked with me to make up for some of the lost time. They kept the camp fun for everyone involved. I want to extend a thanks to Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for providing the No Child Left Inside grant that provided stipends for counselors and scholarships for campers.