



2024

Kulshan Carbon Trust Communications Intern

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COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title: Communications and Outreach Intern

Organization Worked For: Kulshan Carbon Trust

Student Name: Sidra Miller

Internship Dates: January 2024 - June 2024

Faculty Advisor Name Kate Darby

Department ENVS 

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Student Signature:

Date: 6/12/24

Section 1: Summary

The [Kulshan Carbon Trust](#) is a locally-based 501(c)(3) non-profit focused on natural climate solutions in northwest Washington. Our mission is to safeguard carbon in marine and land biomes through such natural solutions. These projects aim to be intentionally collaborative by connecting the carbon market, landowners, farmers, environmental organizations, businesses, and communities with one another. Kulshan Carbon Trust's primary focus over the past year has been conducting a biochar field trial and subsequent field trial scale-up.

Biochar is a carbon-rich material created through pyrolysis (low oxygen burning) of organic materials. Once mixed in the appropriate ratio with materials such as compost, the resulting biochar mixture can be applied to farm fields. This step is essential, as biochar on its own takes years to inoculate properly with farm soil. Biochar has a diversity of practical benefits for growers: increased micro-productivity of soil, enhanced yield, reduction of synthetic fertilizer use, re-use of organic material, and carbon sequestration. The introduction of biochar to northwest Washington's fields will ideally enhance local climate resilience and regenerative agricultural practice. Kulshan Carbon Trust is facilitating the field trials to produce quantitative data regarding the amount of carbon sequestered in farm fields post-application. This data will then be considered in terms of eco-credits and carbon-credits as means of establishing incentive for local farms to participate in our biochar programs.

As an intern from January-June of 2024, I worked in communications and media outreach. Kulshan Carbon Trust operates several online platforms: a [website](#), a [Facebook](#), and an [Instagram](#) account. Each platform serves a different purpose for the organization. My primary responsibility was managing our Instagram account.

Instagram represents the face of the organization most accessible to youth, and offers unique opportunities to interact with stakeholders on a personalized scale. Each post was designed with the organization's branding, desired online aesthetic, and audience in mind. As the Kulshan Carbon Trust appeals to a broad range of stakeholders- anyone from farmers in the more rural Skagit county to Bellingham mountain bikers - rhetoric of posts was important. In addition to Instagram posts, I was responsible for outreach and communications with partner organizations. The majority of these were potential event hosts, as community engagement is an essential aspect of Kulshan Carbon Trust's work. My goal was to increase such engagement by scheduling at least one Pint Night-esque event per month of my internship.

Each week was scheduled around a Wednesday content crew meeting. Initially, attendance consisted of several founding members and myself. This changed during spring quarter as several new content, outreach, and grant-related members were onboarded. With the influx of volunteers and interns came a necessary change in meeting organization and task delineation. I continued in my role while facilitating the onboarding and integration of new members online. Again, the work of this internship took place online with the exception of events.

Section 2: Reflection

Course Preparation

Several environmental studies courses I've taken created a solid preparatory foundation for this internship. Environmental Studies 451 (Public Land Policy & Collaboration) prepared me well for this internship. In ENVS 451, we discussed political tensions regarding public and private lands, primarily in the western United States. We spent a great deal of time discussing the extent of federal power in land disputes and how nonprofits can act as an alternative avenue to collaboration. Successful collaborative efforts, we concluded, typically originate at the community level, include a diversity of ideas and backgrounds, and take advantage of nontraditional methods of change. I found this to ring true in my experience with the Kulshan Carbon Trust. Our stakeholders represented a wildly diverse coalition, many of whom may have not been willing to work together without the pathway Kulshan provided.

Environmental Studies 467 (Power Privilege and the Environment) additionally was helpful in my work with Kulshan. In PPE, we discussed the forces contributing to and reproducing environmental injustice. I considered these lessons in my outreach efforts with the KCT, primarily in regards to our events and social media features. Kulshan Carbon Trust had primarily only hosted events in the Bellingham area before, and we determined it was important to move to where our participating farmers are - Skagit county. This move facilitated accessibility of the events for said farmers. In addition, it was important to carefully consider the phrasing of event announcements.

There is a substantial difference between advertising a climate resilience focus vs. crop yield focus vs. wildfire resistance on paper, as each one appeals to a bit of a different audience. This was underscored in PPE, as we discussed different “tables” of power. Rather than inviting people to “our table,” we determined it was best to go to theirs. In addition, I had a goal of posting a series of interview spotlights with our field trial participants. This, while it never came to fruition, was intended to put faces to our mission. Purely “environmentally” oriented organizations often can fail to reach the very demographics which they intend to serve, rural communities among them. My intention was to combat this through inclusivity of language and event location.

Areas of Deficiency

This internship was not without its challenges. A significant portion of Kulshan Carbon Trust’s work occurs in the scientific arena - including field tests of carbon sequestration, determining compost ratios, and evaluating potential crop yield increases. I experienced some frustration in wishing I could have contributed more to this aspect of their work, as it felt quite separate from the outreach components. In addition, I found that I often wished I had more time to contribute to my projects (such as the proposed interview series described above) in order to best support and represent Kulshan Carbon Trust. On this same note, I went into this internship with very few social media skills. Instagram, it turns out, requires a great deal of work to increase and maintain audience engagement. Kulshan Carbon Trust has a business account, which entails post “boosting,” post collaboration, and content engagement. I spend an inordinate amount of time finding, following, and engaging with local farmers’ platforms - while worthwhile, this aspect did not feel especially productive.

Contribution to Personal & Professional Goals

I chose to apply to Kulshan Carbon Trust because their work is in line with my planned career pursuits. Interning with Kulshan Carbon Trust was my first official internship with a nonprofit. While the atmosphere was generally casual, I enjoyed working in a professional, practical setting. I enjoyed learning the inner workings of an environmental nonprofit; I intend to pursue social and environmental justice, and believe this early exposure will be invaluable down the line. I found that the reality of an environmental nonprofit's inner workings was not quite what I had imagined, and the experience assisted in the alignment of my visions of future work to be more realistic. I attribute this primarily to feelings of disconnection due to the online nature of the work. Kulshan Carbon Trust attends to multiple complex and developing concepts, including the carbon credit market. I was also exposed to the intersections between environmental economics, scientific data, and rhetoric, all of which have been discussed at length in my Environmental Studies classes. I believe that observing other team members apply for grants to fund our work was additionally of value, as grant writing is a practical skill in nearly any setting.

Acquired Skills

This internship required the development of a couple new skills. I was required to create communications materials for a range of stakeholders and a variety of audiences. These represented an exercise in choosing appropriate tone and presentation of materials. In addition, I had to integrate myself into a new workplace and learn to primarily self-direct my projects. Another skill I gained was learning to lead meetings as

our outreach team grew; this skill changed over the internship as I became one of the more experienced voices in content meetings. Hand in hand with leadership went brainstorming: I was responsible for bringing in new ideas regarding media content, style, and presentation and discussing them at meetings. Finally, I was responsible for reaching out and organizing our community Pint Night Events, which was a task I had never completed solo before.

Skills Improved

Over the course of this internship, I honed existing practical skills. These included meeting leadership skills, my presentational skills, and public speaking skills. Over the internship, I was responsible for presenting about why my work was important to the Kulshan Carbon Trust Board during monthly board meetings. This required eloquent and succinct speaking, a skill additionally honed during community events. During said events, I was often responsible for holding raffles, answering questions, and chatting with community members about Kulshan Carbon Trust's work. I enjoy presenting in front of crowds, but it was challenging to do so whilst representing an organization I was fairly new to. I also improved my Canva proficiency and learned to efficiently import a variety of designs and pictures. Overall, since the internship occurred nearly all online, my main areas of improvement were in learning to navigate online programs, meetings, and processes.

Workplace Lessons

Kulshan Carbon Trust operates in a dynamic, majority online environment. I quickly realized that original plans of action and deliverables were constantly in flux, as

were our partners, participants, and events. This fluidity can additionally be attributed to Kulshan Carbon Trust's relatively new status as an organization. I began this internship quite apprehensive of what would be required of me, and over time understood that perfection or high output was not the goal: the nonprofit primarily needed helping hands and new perspectives. I found that I enjoyed feeling as though I was contributing to an organization with tangible output and a mission I'm passionate about.

Section 3: Materials

- i) Materials I created are available in the appendix.

Appendix

i) Internship Weekly Hours Log: Kulshan Carbon Trust, Spring Quarter

Week of April 1	Hours
Meetings	3
Social Media Management	2.5
Communications	3.5
Design	3
Onboarding Information	0

total: 12

Week of April 8	Hours
Meetings	2
Social Media Management	6
Communications	1.5
Design	2
Research	

total: 11.5

Week of April 15	Hours
Meetings	1
Social Media Management	5
Communications	2
Design	2
Research	2.5

total: 12.5

Week of April 22	Hours
Meetings	1.5
Social Media Management	2
Communications	4
Design	4.5
Research	2

total: 14

Week of April 29	Hours
Meetings	2.5
Social Media Management	3
Communications	2
Design	2.5
Research	0

total: 10

Week of May 6	Hours
Meetings	4
Social Media Management	2.5
Communications	3
Design	2
Research	0.5

total: 12

Week of May 13	Hours
Meetings	2.5
Social Media Management	1
Communications	3
Design	2
Research	3

total: 11.5

Week of May 20	Hours
Meetings	1
Social Media Management	1.5
Communications	5
Design	2.5
Research	2.5

total: 12.5

Week of May 27	Hours
Meetings	3.5
Social Media Management	1.5
Communications	3
Design	2

Research	2
----------	---

total: 12

Week of June 3	Hours
Meetings	4
Social Media Management	.5
Communications	3.5
Design	1.5
Research	2.5

total: 12

Quarter total:

120

ii) Designs

Below are a few examples of Instagram post designs for Kulshan Carbon Trust. Each one represents a different category of content.

Kulshan Carbon Trust



Celebrate Healthy Soils

Kulshan Carbon Trust x District Brewing



Sunday, April 28th, 1-4pm

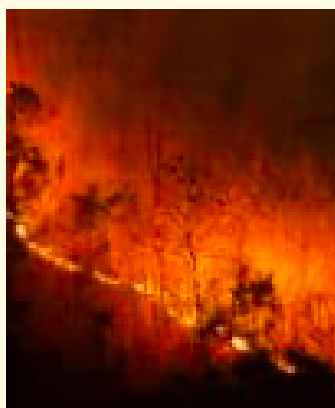
520 S Main Street, Mount Vernon

UPCOMING EVENTS

KULSHAN CARBON TRUST

UPCOMING EVENTS

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP



MAY 15

6:30-8

SUDDEN
VALLEY

Sudden Valley Community Dance Barn
8 Barn View Ct, Bellingham, WA

KCT Team Member Spotlight

OUTREACH VOLUNTEER



Laura Raufi she/her

Laura recently graduated from Western Washington University and will be supporting us in graphics design!





Kulshan Carbon Trust

FIELD STUDY

The KCT is looking for **participants** in our biochar-enhanced compost **field study**!



LOCAL GROWERS!

Our product:

- may reduce the need for irrigation and fertilizer
- can restore the soil microbiome and increase water retention
- stores carbon safely in the earth
- is Organic Certified

Participants Recieve:

- 50% discount on biochar-enhanced compost (\$17.50/cubic yard before delivery)
- Technical assistance for compost application and follow-up monitoring performed by KCT



kulshancarbontrust.org/biochar-scaleup



NEXT STEPS

Complete this **form** on
our website indicating
your interest

1

2

Attend our virtual info session on
Friday, March 8th at 10:00 am
learn more & have your questions
answered. We can't wait to hear
from you!

Meeting link: meet.google.com/sbz-xhzu-twd

Have questions? Send a
message to
gabe@kulshancarbontrust.org
or
call 360-230-8035 to speak
with us directly

3