This summer I interned in Waring, TX with the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas at Camp Capers. Another intern and very close friend of mine, Mollie Rochelle, and I held the title of Land Management Team (aka “Sewanee Interns”) at Camp Capers. I arrived in the Texas hill country at the end of May and after extensive staff training I began my responsibilities as a land management intern. Mollie and I were responsible for implementing an environmental education curriculum into the daily camp routine. Every morning twenty or thirty kids came down to the Camp Capers garden for a lesson about fruits and vegetables growing in the garden, compost, native plants, and a plethora of other fun environmental games and activities. Our other intern responsibilities included being on the Camp Capers Adventure Team. As members of the Adventure Team we had to pack gear, food, fire starters, etc. for every cabin of campers before their camp-out on one of the Camp Capers nine camp sites on an 108 acre property behind camp (aka “The 108”). We also had to lead campers on hikes to their campsites, build fires, supervise, etc.

Another major aspect of our internship was running the weekly farmer’s market that was held on closing day of each session. Mollie and I made homemade pesto using the fresh basil grown in our garden, homemade mozzarella, and many more yummy items that were a huge hit! We also sold cucumbers, squash, carrots, garlic, tomatoes and anything else that was ready to be harvested on the day of the market. The farmer’s market was one of the highlights of my internship because customers would come back each week asking for our delicious homemade pesto. The farmer’s market would not have been such a great success without the culinary excellence of our friend Graham McKim, Director of Food Services. Additionally, Mollie and I had to do daily maintenance on the enormous garden that sometimes seemed like a never-ending battle against weeds. We also did several sustainability projects around the camp property. Our largest accomplishment of the summer was planning the improvement of the front gates to camp. Mollie and I met with John Troy and Billy Long, a well-known landscape architect team out of San Antonio, and
drew up a plan to beautify the front gate to Camp Capers. I am happy to say that the project turned out great and the entrance now looks much more vibrant and inviting.

When Mollie and I were not doing something relative to our responsibilities on the Land Management Team, we could be found lifeguarding at the pool or on the river. We also spent a lot of time facilitating the ropes course, zip line, giant swing, etc. This was a nice change of pace from garden work and it was great to spend more time with the campers while they were climbing or swimming. Not only did I learn a lot about gardening, native plants of Texas and lifeguarding, but I learned a lot about myself. This summer pushed me outside of my comfort zone and into an environment full of people who are very secure in their faith. It was truly a privilege to work with people who put God first and value their faith so much. This job gave me the opportunity to find faith in God and be a part of something so much bigger than myself. For me, this internship validated my unsure decision to major in Environmental Arts and Humanities. Although I do not predict I will spend the rest of my life working at a summer camp, but I do know that this internship and the classes within my major are preparing me for my future.

My advice to future interns is to keep an open mind. Mollie and I both spent countless summers at camp, but neither of us attended Camp Capers as kids. Keep an open mind to the new traditions you will learn. Talk to every single person on staff at least once even if you think you have nothing in common. Go to chapel… it’s worth it. Keep maintenance on the front gate… we worked so hard! Come up with activities for garden time that the kids will enjoy. Flip the compost. Ask camp alumni about meeting their spouse at camp. Talk to Sewanee Seminarians; they are the best people you’ll ever meet. Most importantly, NEVER forget to pack ketchup for campout or else you’ll have some really unhappy campers.