

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Beaufort, South Carolina



The Nature Conservancy Nashville, Tennessee

(Hannah is on the far left)

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

The Nature Conservancy is a world-renowned nonprofit, environmental organization that works to conserve the world's land and waters. This organization is a non-confrontational and nonpartisan organization that focuses on protecting lands, waters, oceans, cities, and climate in order to sustain resources, while maintaining human life. The Nature Conservancy's Tennessee Chapter has protected over 300,000 acres of land, along with protecting a number of different waters throughout the state. As a communications intern, my tasks involved a wide array of projects. For my internship, I worked on various communications projects including marketing with blog posts, creating and writing web pages, writing media alerts and participating in press releases in order to help promote The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee. I primarily worked in the office in Nashville; however, I also travelled to onsite projects throughout the state. These projects provided direct exposure to environmental conservation as well as experience in nonprofit communications.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

During my internship, I was given several long term projects, and I was able to complete all of these. These projects included researching, writing, and building animal profile webpages for The Nature Conservancy's website

(<https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/tennessee/explore/tennessee-animals.xml>); writing and building a bat house webpage

(<https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/tennessee/explore/bat-h>

ouse-information.xml); working on the TenneSwim project with multiple organizations, including Sewanee (www.tenneswim.org), as a team member I participated in frequent conference calls, travelled onsite to the project, and wrote blog posts for their website and Facebook page; and I helped build a narrative for the chapter's upcoming 40th anniversary by creating a library of files from different land agreements dating back from the 1970s and up until now. Because these projects were long term and I worked on them for the time span of 12 weeks, I largely strengthened my time management skills, balancing these various projects at the same time. I also strengthened my writing skills, learning to write in a different format. Instead of writing an analytical paper for a class, I learned to write easy-to-read but informative webpages and blog posts. This learned skill seems invaluable in the professional world, particularly for my career interest in marketing.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

My first task given to me was to go through The Nature Conservancy's Tennessee Chapter's entire website and make changes as needed. This involved reading through hundreds of webpages and documenting typos, and sentences, or even entire pages that needed to be rephrased or reworded. This was a huge task, and at first I felt overwhelmed by reading through these webpages to make edits. However, I met this challenge by using my writing and editing skills, which I have learned through Sewanee's liberal arts education. In every course I have taken at Sewanee, whether it be English or even Math, I have been required to write papers. I felt prepared to take on my first task given to me at my internship thanks to Sewanee's persistence of writing and editing.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

Communication is a key skill to succeed in teamwork. One of the long term projects assigned to me was to research, write, and build animal profiles for The Nature Conservancy's website. This project involved a significant amount of teamwork. Each step of the way I had to communicate with people of all different areas, including the director of communications, the director of science, the caves and karst program manager, the agriculture and stewardship manager, and the director of protection. This project took a lot of teamwork to get it completed, and along the way I learned how to effectively communicate with people of all different areas, who all had different schedules, projects of their own, and were generally very busy. Learning how to effectively communicate with everyone involved, largely strengthened my teamwork skills.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

My internship gave me direct exposure to a number of different professional areas including environmental conservation, nonprofit organization, and a career in communications and partially marketing. I learned a lot about all of these areas and I really enjoyed it. As an English and Art History double major, I have never really considered working in environmental conservation until this summer. I found both the knowledge about environmental conservation and seeing the work of The Nature Conservancy to provide valuable insight into a career I might be interesting in pursuing, which previous to this summer, I had never considered. In addition, working as a communications intern and working directly for the communications director for The Nature Conservancy's Tennessee Chapter, gave me an idea for what a career in a communications looks like. I really enjoyed it and I feel confident I would like a job in the communications world, which again I really did not know much about until this summer. So, my internship largely affected my career plans and has guided me to consider a career in communications and even environmental conservation.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

As an English major working for an environmental conservation organization, I was concerned I wouldn't have enough knowledge or background on science-oriented topics. For several writing projects, I was asked to research specific environmentally based topics, such as the animal profiles. I had to combine my English major skills with my research skills of these topics. After writing a rough draft for these various projects, I had to then communicate with people holding a wide array of positions with The Nature Conservancy, which I mentioned in the teamwork question above. This gave me the opportunity to communicate with several people who have an enormous background in science. They gave me extremely helpful information about these various subjects, and I took their advice and wrote and constructed web pages. Learning to take the information they gave me and make it into an easy-to-read but informative webpage was a challenge. I had to decide which information was the most important for the webpage. I think learning to find that balance based on a combined knowledge of writing and science was a valuable lesson for me.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?

Figure out housing EARLY-- finding furnished housing for a short time span can be hard to come by. It's best to call and communicate with people early on to figure out the best price and deal for your living situation.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

The Nature Conservancy is an incredible, world-renowned organization. Organizations like The Nature Conservancy, are more important now than ever before, and I am so lucky I had the opportunity to see their work first hand. Everyone I worked with over the summer was incredibly welcoming, kind, and extremely knowledgeable, and I felt so lucky to work with such an amazing group of people. I would like to thank both The Nature Conservancy's Tennessee Chapter and the internship funding donors for making this opportunity possible. It was an invaluable experience that has given me a better idea of what kind of career path I want to pursue.