

## Summer Internship Report

I worked and managed 400 acres of property for the Indian Creek Hunt and Timber Club this summer, and worked a brief stint at Louisiana Pacific for one of the Internship supervisors. The owners, and supervisors, of the land that I oversaw this summer were Sewanee grads, all from the mid-to late nineties, and had purchased an unmanaged and wild property from an entangled estate sale with hopes of turning a profit logging and managing the property soundly. I arrived shortly after the logging ended, and acted as the cleanup manager and property supervisor for the summer.

My responsibilities were pretty wide ranging; I supervised the installation of electricity, managed controlled burns, cut lanes through the forest for power lines, among many other tasks. My general work mandate was to manage the property with ecological foresight, respect for the environment and a hope to make the property livable and hunt-able in the future.

During the internship, living in camo-painted 8x16 trailer without electricity or plumbing, I really learned what it means to live in primitive conditions and continue to do effective work while surviving in the wilderness. I learned how to deal with a rural culture, and how to supervise my own work direction. The work I was doing was mandated by week, and I had to organize the projects for the week, figure out the details, purchase the necessary supplies to complete the project, attain the skills to complete the project, then personally perform the labor myself, and then do my own performance assessment at the end of the week. I really learned how to work in all aspects of a management crew, from supervision to labor, as I was performing all those

tasks simultaneously.

Skills that I learned specifically are pretty wide ranging. I learned to become a very adept off-road 4x4 vehicle driver, as a large portion of the property I managed was only accessible by some high-skill driving. I learned how to properly fell large trees, to limb and buck them, and how to manage burning/disposing of the scrap wood. I learned how to watch for snakes, and listen for 'yotes at night. I learned how to effectively use a pitchfork, and how to build rudimentary roads. I figured out how to build benched mountain biking trails down steep hill faces, and make them as hikable and rideable as possible, among many other valuable outdoor skills.

The greatest times on the job were when I could work from 9-7 and accomplish more work than a gung-ho work crew of 5 or 10 could have, due to my experience, skill and extremely hard work ethic. In one day I could eradicate invasive plants from a section of the property, fell, limb and buck a problem tree or snag, move a ton of bricks, and clean wasps and trash out of a section of a neglected barn. Other high points of the summer happened toward the end of the management experience, when I employed skills that I lacked confidence in at the ability of the summer with great proficiency at the end of the summer, like managing burn piles or felling trees very close to structures that had become problems.

The most difficult aspects of this summer's work was in dealing with isolation inherent to living on the property I worked on. I worked in the middle of absolute nowhere, with no neighbors and only my work partner to keep my company. I returned from the summer a social dunce, having not associated with many other people than

the Lowe's cashier and the occasional Nashville Electric Service representative. It was also very hard to work in Tennessee summer outdoor conditions, performing some fairly hard labor, while recovering from illness. Of course my boss was very understanding, but I constantly wanted to push myself and work as hard as I could. Overall I learned how to gain from an outdoor experience like this one, and figured out what aspects of working outdoor are truly worth the hard conditions, and what circumstances you gain nothing from by putting up with.

I absolutely loved working in the heat, outdoors, managing a property on the ground, but I also learned just how absolutely difficult it is to lug a chainsaw around in jeans, boots, chainsaw chaps and a long sleeve shirt in hundred degree weather all day. This internship certainly affirmed my desire to be outside in the future, and to find a job that allows me to express both my technical outdoor skills, as well academic and intellectual abilities. I hope to continue working in Land Management, working outdoors,