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August 17, 2014

This summer I worked for the Texas Water Journal (TWJ), Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI), and the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources in College Station, Texas. TWRI is the designated water resources institute for Texas since the Texas legislature and governor passed the Water Resources Act (WRRRA) in 1964. TWRI is dedicated to water research to further policies that ensure reliable water resources for years to come. The Texas Water Journal, a journal published with the assistance of TWRI, is an online journal dedicated to educating the public in regards to Texas water resource management and policy issues. The journal takes a multidisciplinary approach when analyzing environmental issues and integrates science, law, planning, and key legislation into its publications. The goal of the journal and TWRI is to both educate and influence policy from an environmentally informed perspective.

As an intern, I contributed to the journal and TWRI by conducting edits and layouts for articles, editing and laying out technical reports, watershed protection plans, project reports and other related materials. I also assisted project managers with developing/finalizing final reports and other technical writing-related needs, wrote at least one story per issue for *txH2O*, *Conservation Matters* and *Drought in Texas*; assisted with writing news releases, project one-pagers and other informational and educational materials for the institutes; worked with the communications team, project managers, and researchers to develop communications materials that translate science information into language for specific target audiences. I also attended hearings at the capitol and reported on them.

During my ten weeks, I gathered many skills. I wrote stories about Texas land trends, the El Niño and its effects on Texas, automated meter infrastructure (AMI), the longleaf pine

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project, desalination, and TWRI's Stream Team volunteer monitoring project. The AMI story was in *Conservation Matters* (CM), and the others will be published in the next editions of CM and *TxH2O*. I also edited and laid out TWJ papers, such as *Observed trends in air temperature, precipitation, and water quality for Texas reservoirs: 1960-2010* and *A battle ends, but the fight for water in Oklahoma continues*. For TWRI, I edited a State's Water Recommendations manuscript, Arroyo-Educational Needs manuscript and Attoyac Watershed manuscript (both approved by the EPA), and over 10 one pagers and brochures. These stories helped me draw connections between science and policies. For my land trends story, I attended a hearing where TWRI presented the information to encourage policies that would help maintain agricultural land.

On top of writing stories, part of my goal this summer was to develop a marketing plan for TWJ. Submissions to the journal come from a variety of sources, and my thinking was we could increase submissions and increase awareness on water issues if TWJ had more of a presence online. To do this, I created a LinkedIn Company Page for TWJ, managed the TWJ Facebook page, and created traffic to the various sites. To do this, I created a "This Week in Texas Water News" component to the LinkedIn and Facebook where I managed an excel document of all legislative notices and funding updates each week. At the end of the week, I posted these updates. To help future interns manage the news aspect of TWJ, I created a Feedly account and Hootsuite account for TWJ use, both sites that help filter through and make news updates easier. Additionally, I managed the Texas water events calendar, which I updated to consolidate all water events monthly in one place, as to make that information more easily accessible.

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To increase submissions and create more traffic to the TWJ website, I came up with the idea of adding a tab to the website where readers could read the bios of TWJ authors. I sent all the authors an email asking for either a written bio or information so that I could write the bio for them. By the time I left this summer, I had at least 27 completed bios. I left TWRI and TWJ with a plan to post one new bio on the website each week and include a link on Facebook and LinkedIn as an “Author Spotlight,” as to thank our authors for their submissions and encourage others to submit as well. By highlighting the prestige of our authors, we not only drew attention to the journal but also added to the legitimacy of the journal, which will increase its ability to be indexed in other indices.

To increase the legitimacy of the journal, I also drafted and sent a nomination for an award for the journal. To help interns and TWJ in the future, I saved a draft and created an excel document with possible awards for the journal to apply for yearly.

To increase submissions, I also thought it would be useful to ask a target group for submissions. Since many professors in Texas do research of their own about water issues and since many professors also have graduate students doing the same, I drafted and sent a letter encouraging submissions to the journal to all relevant professors at universities in Texas. When I left after ten weeks, I left TWJ with a Marketing Plan PowerPoint, which Todd Votteler, president of TWJ, sent to the editorial board.

I learned a lot this summer, especially at the hearings. I attended a hearing on desalination and another one of natural resources in Texas. During these hearings, I had many useful conversations that furthered my career goals. I talked to many lawyers, some very much

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in favor of law school, and others saying if they could start over, they would run the other way, which was a low of the experience. However, the insight and exposure I received from working where I did this summer allowed me to practice working with environmental policy. I learned how to sit through 8-hour hearings and maintain (for the most part) interest in the subject matter and come away with useful things to say. I also learned the importance of lawyers in the water field. It is a topic that is becoming more relevant every day. The work I did this summer allowed me to practice taking scientific material and translating it in a way that is understood by people without a background in science, a skill useful for my future law career.