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Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, Seguin, TX

I worked for ten weeks with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority in Seguin, Texas, while living in San Marcos, Texas, just 22 miles away. The organization I worked for is a river authority, meaning they are in charge of the Guadalupe River, the Blanco River, and the San Marcos River, as well as their smaller tributaries, until the Guadalupe enters the San Antonio Bay. The authority acts as an intermediary agency that sells water to different entities such as municipalities, industrial facilities, or agricultural operations. These rights offer a certain amount of water and are valid for a given amount of time. The GBRA internship is not a business or political endeavor, however, but instead has its hand in several aspects of the environment, both indoor and out.

Among many other opportunities offered, I was able to work for a few days on the Gulf Coast with the San Antonio Bay Foundation, an organization dedicated to the conservation of the beautiful San Antonio Bay. I also worked closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, especially regarding the endangered plant, Texas Wild Rice, which grows solely in the San Marcos River, and depends on the San Marcos Springs to be consistent in temperature and flow. First I participated in a survey that located and measured each single plant, a task involving diving into the water with at times a fairly strong current. I also worked with the nursery that grows Texas Wild Rice plants as refugium in case something happens to the wild population. As a team project, I also worked on the editing of a document which will be available to the public and contains information regarding “Low-Impact Development” in the Edwards Aquifer region. What was most needed was simple wording reconstruction or spelling corrections, but the other intern and I provided a big service by adding two extra pairs of eyes to a manual that

will help the area retrofit the existing large population and be sure that new developments have a resource to be more aware of non-point pollution of the aquifer and rivers.

There was so much to learn about the water policy in Texas, since it is so different from most other states. Everyone I worked for, of which there were many, taught me a lot about biology, policy, and even public relations, which was very important for the GBRA and its River Trust and Bay Foundation. The most valuable part of the internship was not the raw knowledge I was taught or the connections I made with wonderful, bright and positive people. I believe the most important part of the internship was to be immersed in environmental policy, seeing both sides of the argument, as well as similarly immersed in the practical and biological side of the issues, seeing how they interact and are codependent in order to be successful.

This internship was the most important career opportunity I have ever had, and I highly recommend it to any student interested in biology, public relations, some chemistry, and most of all environmental policy-making.