On the Right Track
Edited by Emily Pritchard

Sydney Young, a Sophomore majoring in Wildlife Biology with a minor in Ecological Restoration, recent finished an internship with Trout Unlimited. “Participating in my internship has been rewarding, and I’m now more motivated to get my degree and pursue a career in Wildlife Biology.”

Who did you intern with?

“I interned for Trout Unlimited, an organization whose mission is “to conserve, protect and restore North America’s coldwater fisheries and their watersheds” (TU.org). More specifically, my internship was with the Yakima Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (my contact was Gabriel Temple).”

What were some of your tasks as an intern?

“I worked with the Conservation Chair of the Chapter, my supervisor, Nathaniel (Tamarack) Rowley. My tasks included presenting data to chapter members, supervising work days/ angler science days, installing and maintaining water monitors in the Teanaway River, and collecting and recording water flow measurements. I also got to electrofish and relocate sculpin, minnows, and rainbow trout stranded in pools in dewatered sections of the Teanaway.”

Why did you decide to intern with Trout Unlimited?

“I knew this internship would give me real world experience that I wanted, as well as get me in contact with potential employers in my field. I was excited to take my in-class learning and apply it to real-world issues.”

How did you get connected with this opportunity?

“I conversed many times with my advisor, Windsor Lowe, and he encouraged me to build my dream internship. With my goals in hand, I was able to reach out to the Chapter and create an internship that would benefit myself and them. Trout Unlimited was very open to helping me create an internship. I contacted the local chapter directly.”
What do you have in your hand in the photo below?

“In my hands is a sculpin, specifically a torrent sculpin. When we rescued and eletro-netted fish from a dewatered channel on the west fork of the Teanaway, we saved approximately 30 or so speckled dace, a handful of sculpins (torrent juveniles and Paiute adults), and 4 rainbow trout.”

The internship was in Washington, did you need to find your own housing?

“I did not have to find my own housing, I lived with my parents (but another student interning with them would have had to find housing).”

What has been the most rewarding part of this experience?

“Applying all the knowledge I gained in the classroom to biological problems happening in the real world was both gratifying and rewarding. I was able to impress those I worked in tandem with by both my knowledge and eagerness to learn. It is also very rewarding to be able to know the work I am doing will benefit the ecosystems I’m working in.”

What about challenges?

“Getting an internship can seem intimidating, especially if you need one to graduate and you have no idea where to start.”

What advice would you give other students considering opportunities like this?

“My advice would be to talk to your advisor about internship requirements, get on Griz eRecruiting and look for internships actively. Ask others where they are finding internships, especially upperclassmen- their advice is very useful!”
Has this experience reaffirmed your career goals or has it changed your mind in any way?

“My internship confirmed that I am in the correct degree program, and that I will have a competitive advantage in the job field I’m interested in. Being able to see professionals in my field working; it’s been motivating to see what I could be doing in a couple of years.”

How has your participation in this AE experience impacted your life as a student and as a person in general?

“I feel that I will be prepared to help others find internships, and give my experience and knowledge to help others. I’m more focused on my goals and what I would like my career path to be.”

What’s your next step?

“I will be seeking an internship or paid position this summer in Montana, to gain more job experience and make more contacts.”