

Kathryn Deppe
Summer Internship 2010 with Rayonier, Inc.

My internship with Rayonier was set up by Charlie Pringle, an alumnus of The University of the South, in collaboration with the University's Forestry and Geology Department. My main goal for the summer was to work for an influential company within the scope of my major, Natural Resources. In selecting an internship position I was seeking a position that would give me a view of the day-to-day inner workings of such a company and through which I would be able to accomplish meaningful projects.

The internship consisted of two main projects. Both of these endeavors were self-chosen, which gave me the opportunity to work on topics that I would enjoy. My work with Rayonier was overseen by Charlie Pringle, who acted as both an advisor and a mentor.

The first project focused on reviewing the EPA's new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program, which is expected to go into effect in the Spring of 2011, and researching the effect this new permitting system will have on Rayonier's current and future business practices. The result of this work was a memorandum, which acted as both a summary the extensive amount of information on the permitting system as well as an evaluation of the potential impact on Rayonier. Generally, the EPA requires NPDES permitting for all pesticides that result in direct discharge to U.S. waters from a point source. Rayonier uses herbicides on a maximum of 52,500 acres of their intensively managed pine plantations and uses insecticides merely for their 150 acres of productions seed orchards. During pesticide application, certain preventative measures are taken to avoid entry into U.S. waters. Due to these preventative measures, it seems that NPDES permitting should not be necessary for any of Rayonier's pesticide applications.

The second project focused on creating customer profiles for 25 bioenergy companies, both domestic and international. All of these companies are potential customers to whom Rayonier may sell forest products. The companies include five wood pellet producers, ten large utility companies, seven biomass power

developers, three ethanol producers, and one large mineral company that is entering into the combined heat and power industry. Each customer profile included categories such as company size and structure, bioenergy strategy, project status, biomass consumption (green tons of wood/year), production capacity (either in megawatts of heat and power or gallons of ethanol), and other information on company background, finances, et cetera. These companies are all seeking wood products for their business endeavors and Rayonier must evaluate the companies in order to select successful business partners.

Through my work with Rayonier, I provided the company with the insight of a recent graduate of a liberal arts college. Because Rayonier generally hires interns from specialized programs at state universities, it was relayed to me that my insight was highly valued and appreciated.

Personally, I learned a number of things from this internship. Not only did I have the opportunity to immerse myself into the topics of the research, but I also reached the intended goal of learning about the structure and function of a large forestry business, both day-to-day and long-term. The employees at Rayonier were friendly, supportive, and more than helpful during my time with the company. This is a wonderful opportunity for Sewanee students and recent graduates and I hope that it will continue to be available in the future.