

This summer I worked with the City of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management within their GIS and Planning and Engineering Divisions. The internship ran from June 10th to August 2nd, working from Monday to Thursday from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., although I ended up working several Fridays as well. I alternated each week working in each division, working on various tasks and projects as well as routine day-to-day tasks. Among my responsibilities were the following: reviewing computer data and plans, cross-checking plans, checking and revising location data, highlighting location of various utility lines in plans, working with GIS and CAD software, and assisting in field outings, along with other responsibilities.

With my previous experience in GIS, I was thoroughly prepared for working in the GIS division, as I was already familiar with the software. It didn't take long to re-familiarize myself with the software, and I was even able to assist some of the other interns in understanding the basics of the software. The originally assigned work was not ready in time, so while I didn't get a chance to work on a major GIS project, I did have the opportunity to expand some of my GIS knowledge such as learning to use GIS mobile software and using the City of Atlanta's new internal GIS database, known as ARCIS, which I used later for cross-checking data in a Planning project.

While my work in the GIS department was limited, I was able to get some experience in the Planning division. Their projects allowed me the chance to learn to use AutoCAD, the design software suite ubiquitously used by the division. While difficult at first, working alongside a recently-hired employee allowed me to quickly grasp the mechanics of the complex software, which I was able to use in a project working the new employee. The project plans dealt with improvements to a pumping station at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Using the

skills I had learned in AutoCAD, I assisted in highlighting and noting all the improvements to be made to the pumping station, along with cross-checking and refining the plans throughout the process, as it was sent back and forth between the other employees and members of this project. It gave me a great chance to really apply my new skills with AutoCAD, which I believe will be an advantage later on in my career.

Another project I worked on was working on the plans for a Permeable Pavers project in Downtown Atlanta. My job was helping to identify and highlight the water, waste, and storm water lines and pipes on the paper plans. While it involved some intense and focused written work, it also dealt with some frequent back and forth with other planners, all done within a constrained and impending deadline. This project required me to cross-check working with old paperwork such as platcards, as well the previously mentioned ARCIS online GIS database to make sure that the lines match up with where they are located on the plans and if not, revising and noting those location changes. I learned to balance completion of the project and working and communicating my progress, and meeting the deadline. When it was completed one day before the meeting deadline, there was a nice feeling of accomplishment, especially since we only learned of the project about a week before.

In between these projects, I had the opportunity to accompany several of the engineers out into the field for an assessment on a storm water improvement project along Cascade Road in southwest Atlanta. While out there, I helped in assessing whether the current stormwater setup was not adequate for the stormwater that was being taken into the system and whether a bio-retention pond was needed for compensation. I was excited to be able to out in the field, something I thoroughly enjoyed, and being able to begin applying my newfound geological and

hydrological knowledge in a practical situation. I was repeatedly consulted during the field outing, which was a great experience.

This internship also gave me a chance to navigate working actively a professional office environment, including lunch. During work, I became well-connected with both employees and interns, as we opened up to each other about our lives and backgrounds, and found that some of them had my same interests. The best time for this was during lunch. Several times during my weeks at the Planning division, the other interns and I would meet up either to eat together in the break room when we brought our own lunches, or heading out to eat at the various restaurants around downtown Atlanta. This is more of a challenge to me than most since I have a number of debilitating food allergies that make it very difficult to find places to dine out. Yet, despite this, my fellow interns and employees helped me out and help find some nearby places where I could eat. We all quickly became good friends and I thoroughly enjoyed looking forward to lunch for more than just satiating my hunger.

I enjoyed this internship more than others in previous years. Going into the internship I was concerned that I would not be allowed to work on actual projects or contribute my geological interests. Despite any issues, I felt this internship was extremely successful because I did contribute to some important projects that have an effect on the city, the same city I also call home. I was also proud of the relationships I developed with my colleagues, as it is often not easy for me as an introvert to begin opening up to people, but the friendly people and environment helped make this easier and more enjoyable than I could imagine. While more interested in areas of structural of geology, my hope is to eventually work with a governmental organization like this one, which gave me a glimpse of some of my future options. As I begin this year looking toward graduate studies, I feel this internship with the City of Atlanta's

Department of Watershed Management more than anything gave me an experience of possible future career choices, and a great deal of enthusiasm about my future career path. I plan to maintain my contacts with this group, and if I choose to attend a graduate program in Georgia, I know that this group would be a fit for possible future employment.

I appreciate the Sewanee internship program funding my internship which supports my geology major and my future career in this field.