

## **World Wildlife Fund Internship**

Over the 2012 summer I interned for the World Wildlife Fund in their Conservation Science Program. The World Wildlife Fund or WWF is a non-government organization with locations all around the world. The World Wildlife Fund is one of the world's leading conservation organizations, working in over 100 countries and supported by close to five million members globally. Its mission is to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on earth. In light of this goal, the WWF will conserve fifteen of the world's most ecologically important regions – including the Congo Basin, Madagascar, the Amazon, and the Galapagos Islands – by 2020. At these many locations, they protect and restore species and their habitats, strengthen local communities' ability to conserve the natural resources, transform markets and policies to reduce the impact of the production and consumption, ensure that the value of nature is reflected in decisions made by individuals, communities, governments and businesses, and mobilize hundreds of millions of people to support conservation.

As a Fuller Science for Nature Intern, this summer I worked on three separate programs: the Fuller Fellowships for doctoral and postdoctoral research support of early-career scientists working on issues of exceptional importance and relevance to conservation; the annual Science for Nature Symposium, which convenes world leaders in science, policy, and conservation for presentations and discussions around an emerging scientific issue in conservation; and a bi-monthly series of Science for Nature Seminars that brings distinguished scientists from a variety of fields to Washington, DC to present cutting edge research of central importance to international conservation. During my internship I focused on assisting the Fuller program manager, Kate Graves a '04 Sewanee Alumni, with the tasks related to the three programs stated above, with a primary focus on the 2012 Fuller symposium. This included researching

and communicating with the symposium and seminar speakers and fellows, developing website content, assisting in symposium marketing and outreach, helping with symposium logistics, and assisting with workshop planning.

At the beginning of the summer, my internship primarily focused on research for the Fuller Symposium that is being held this November. I was tasked with researching potential speakers and their qualifications, symposium topics, future seminar topics, as well as targeting markets for future Conservation Science Network expansion. As the summer progressed, I moved into preparation and planning for the 2012 Fuller Symposium and this included event planning, communications, and publicity research. Some of the research I conducted was researching other non-government organizations that would be interested in attending the symposium in November, important conservationists, and potential cover photos and advertisement videos for the symposium this fall. In the final weeks of my internship I began working with Robin Abell, a scientist for the World Wildlife Fund, and created a schematic for one of her future scientific papers. I helped develop and create a schematic depicting a watershed, its High Conservation Areas, High Concentration Value Areas, potential threats or production sites, as well as the watershed's Areas of Influence. At the end of the summer I was unable to fully complete the schematic, but I was able to give Robin a working schematic that she is going to be able to develop and hopefully use in her paper, which is going to be published in the *Conservation Letters* journal. I also was able to complete multiple tasks in regards to the Fuller Symposium and seminars. Over the summer I developed my researching and communication skills. I developed these through researching potential speakers for the symposium and reaching out to all the necessary parties involved in the planning of the 2012 Fuller Symposium.

As an intern for the World Wildlife Fund I was able to learn some of the ins and outs of non-government organizations and conservation organizations. I was also able to learn what it would be like to live in a large metropolitan area. I was able to learn about some amazing research the World Wildlife Fund conducts and how much they truly contribute to the scientific community. I was also able to meet scientists from all around the world, including Ron Leidich, a scientist based out of the small island nation of Palau. He came to the World Wildlife Fund this summer to talk about the unique island and his work with the reefs around the island. He discussed his work with the reef and the actions he has taken to deal with the crown-of-thorns starfish, a giant starfish that eats coral reefs. Along with Ron there were many different guest speakers that came to the World Wildlife Fund to talk about their experiences and how they have made differences in our world. These were very enlightening talks that provoked conversation amongst WWF employees and other non-government organizations.

Interning for the World Wildlife Fund has influenced my possible career path in a multitude of ways. Going into this past summer I was focused on graduating from Sewanee and either going to graduate school for Ecology or going directly into research and fieldwork. After my summer with the World Wildlife Fund, I am considering going into Environmental Policy or Environmental Law. While I am still considering research and going to graduate school for Ecology, currently I am focused on finding out more about potential Environmental Policy/ Law graduate schools and career opportunities. I realized after this summer that the environmental policy would interest me more than fieldwork and research. I also feel like I could have a greater impact and more success going into policy rather than research. I also realized that after pursuing future degrees in Environmental Policy or Law, instead of going back in non-government type work, I would like to make the switch over to government work, working for

either the Environmental Protection Agency or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. I would like to end up back in Washington, DC and both of these organizations are based out of there, doing terrific work protecting our nation's environment. Overall my summer at the World Wildlife Fund was a huge success and I cannot wait to find more opportunities like I had this summer.