

NRCS VISALIA INTERNSHIP

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Table of Contents

Page 1: Table of Contents

Page 2: Acknowledgements

Page 2 and 3: Executive Summary

Page 3 and 4: Project Objectives

Page 4: Project Approach

Page 4 and 5: Project Outcomes

Page 5: Conclusion

Page 5: Presentation Link

Final Report

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

First and foremost, I would like to thank the individuals responsible for giving me the opportunity to learn and advance my knowledge in the area of conservation in which I hope to create a future career around. This project was supported by Hispanic-Serving Institution's Education Program Grant no. 2015-3842224058 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Without this grant and others like it, individuals like myself wouldn't have the opportunity of learning real life techniques and experiences in the natural resources and conservation world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

I would also like to thank all the professional individuals who helped me become even more excited about my future goals by giving me the tools to understand how an NRCS office functions and what they do to make the surrounding areas aware of conservation. Individuals such as the Visalia office's Engineer Tech Bradley Pannet, who let Isabel Lambert and I shadow him during his many conservation adventures. These hands-on visits to different areas not only gave me real positive experience, it also showed me how much hard work is behind each individual project. I would also like to give thanks for the supervisors behind the hiring of my internship such as NRCS Branch Engineer Kelli Woods, District Conservationist Joe Williams, MESA Advisor Duane Goodwin and SURGE Program Director Dr. Larry Owens. Without these professional individuals, the experience and knowledge I have attained could not have been possible.

For this summer internship, Isabel and I did not have an individual project where we took the time given and put forth all our efforts into one project. The circumstances of this summer instead led us to a more hands on approach to many projects that we could observe and see from a student's view as well as a future professionals view. We were sent out in many instances where our primary objective was to check pipe lengths and widths, checking soil moisture boxes, functioning irrigation systems as well as filter systems, flow meter readings, measuring flow rates on micro-sprinklers and drip emitters, testing for distribution uniformity on fields, making sure pre-existing irrigation systems were in place, and went out to understand as well as use survey procedures with the Trimble survey system.

Many would be disappointed to find out they wouldn't have an individual project for their internship but I'm thankful for the great amount of experiences we were able to work with. I felt it gave us an overall more rounded internship in which these diverse projects gave us insight on many different issues and how to solve them in a professional NRCS manner.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

As stated previously, the project objectives varied on a day to day basis which set us up for an all-around knowledge of many different projects. We began to understand terminology of different reports and projects that led us to be overall better interns. For me personally, it created an insight to a possible career I could attain in the near future. As a Wildlife Biology and Conservation major, my overall goal was to get my foot in the door with the Department of Fish and Game. Whether that be with the law enforcement side as a Game Warden or in the sciences side as a Wildlife Biologist. I want to be an overall rounded professional in a

conservation field where I feel I will make a true difference, that's my true goal and I believe the steps I'm taking will lead me there.

PROJECT APPROACH:

Every day our approach to each project differed which made our internship interesting as well as challenging. For example, some days we could begin our day with field inspection visits to various fields across the county in which would then put us at the end of the day inputting information on the trickle sheets at the office. Other days we would complete surveys at different locations with concrete slabs used for protecting the water table from different substances to then visit an almond field to perform distribution uniformity testing on the farmer's irrigation system. Every day was different which made us better interns as well as better future professionals. Our experiences made us fully aware of the way NRCS operates on a daily basis which made us fully understand the amount of hard work each individual at the office has to abide by to get contracts done.

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

I have learned many lessons during this internship whether it be at the field or inside the office, and it all begins with listening and asking questions. If you don't fully understand something, don't just expect yourself to eventually find out but to ask for help to make you a better overall knowledgeable individual. I learned to ask more questions and it already has affected me in a positive way. Such as when it had to do with irrigation designs in a field, the more questions I would ask about the equations regarding the systems functionality the more I

began to understand the concepts. This internship has taught me skills that I didn't believe I would need in my career path yet already I see them helping me in many ways.

CONCLUSION:

NRCS has begun to expand my knowledge on a potential career path in the conservation field of careers and it has positively affected me in knowing I chose correctly. I took this internship to help me understand how to become a professional conservationist and it has told me exactly that. If I could explain what I learned about the professional field of conservation throughout this internship in 3 ways I would say It takes hard work, knowledge of the field and the passion to make a difference. With these 3 important things, I don't believe you can fail as a conservationist in a dying world. To sum this project up, I can't thank CSUSB, COS and NRCS enough for giving me the tools and the knowledge to become a better future professional.

PRESENTATION LINK:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1tFZVOcaDdC4KVx4xj2A9rVV2KfN-VgQOGAYSr_S-dgU/edit?usp=sharing_eil&ts=597f6cab