Internship with Caloosahatchee Riverwatch

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Responsibilities

My responsibilities as an intern for Caloosahatchee Riverwatch included but were not limited to distributing information regarding upcoming events, attending, and helping to facilitate said events. Keeping contact with community partners in regards to present and future endeavors. Communicating with the public on behalf of the organization in person at tabling events and in writing on behalf of the organization for local magazines. Attending and summarizing committee meetings and providing a young professional viewpoint of current issues plaguing Southwest Florida. And probably most enjoyable, spending time monitoring the Caloosahatchee from the sky via plane and from the water by a variety of boats.

Experience and Educational Connection

I have learned so much about the way the professional side of a successful nonprofit is not only run, but how it transitions into the next morphological step in its development. In helping in any arena I could, I was presented with a rapidly growing, hungry team willing to encourage many skills that I possessed to blossom. I have always been an ambivert, somewhere in the middle of an introvert and an extrovert, and I had to use both parts of myself to achieve desired results. I had to be able to confidently address a broad audience, while using my organizational skills to ensure deadlines were being met. This position helped me realize that I am allergic to email, and the only cure is sea water and sunshine. This internship has brought many of my classes full circle. I had experienced several instances where environmental policy was being dictated by the ecology of the area and the lack of environmental education to the public that Riverwatch is working to bridge. Dr. Duke would have been proud to know that his hours of lecturing on water quality kept me afloat with the current topics and how the river was bearing with the pressures from foreign systems. Overall FGCU provided an appropriate baseline for me to jump into the professional world with and for that I am grateful.

Career Plan

My time with Caloosahatchee Riverwatch has in many ways prepared me for the future. I have always been drawn to the world of nonprofits and it is not only refreshing but inspiring to see one doing so well in this community. After I complete my time with FGCU I intend to complete a term with the Peace Corps of America and continue to graduate school. I also fully intend on instilling the skills and knowledge I have gained during this internship to help protect the watershed wherever I end up, and inevitably when I join another nonprofit I can use Caloosahatchee Riverwatch as a character witness as to effectively be a positive force in the community.

A very special and sincere thanks to everyone at Caloosahatchee Riverwatch for taking me under their wings and guiding me to learn how to transition a successful nonprofit into a more modern pillar of the community. And most importantly to Mary Rawl for always presenting me with incredible opportunities that have without a doubt shaped my future. I am thankful to not only call you a mentor, but a friend.