

In the summer of 2011, I became an intern at the Cañada de Los Osos Ecological Reserve, under the sponsorship of the STEM Program at Gavilan College. I absorbed a great amount of knowledge and learned many new skills from my mentors, Mr. Bob Clement and Mr. Henry Coletto. I was very fortunate in getting a second internship there, which gave me a chance to expand my knowledge and hone my new skills. I learned how to use different power tools and hand tools. I learned how to restore the land and water resources and how to interact with nature in a positive way to benefit the great variety of plants and wildlife living there. From just a short amount of time being there, I found myself growing stronger physically, mentally and emotionally.

At the time, I was majoring in Biochemistry and wasn't sure if I really wanted to further my studies to become a dentist. In a state of indecision, I continued at Gavilan College, partly just to think about what I really wanted to do, and partly to get my AA Degree. It was something to fall back on if I couldn't make it through a university program.

Working at the Reserve had reinforced my innate love of the outdoors. It became apparent that being a dentist was not the life for me. Bob suggested that Forestry might be something I should explore. Together we visited Cal Poly, in San Luis Obispo and Humboldt State University, in Arcata. I love the forest, and HSU is pretty much in the forest. What could be better? It is also a long way from home, so I had to learn a lot of things other than course work. A few years have gone by, I've graduated with degree in Forestry, emphasis in Conservation, and also with a minor in Geographical Information System (GIS). I am now working for the US Forest Service as a Forestry Technician in the El Dorado National Forest. I am certified as a Forest Protection Officer and will continue furthering my career in Forestry. I am glad that I made the decision that I did and I am really happy with my job.

I would like to thank the Gavilan College STEM Program for sponsoring me. Also, Mr. Rey Morales, Mr. Bob Clement, and Mr. Henry Coletto for mentoring me then and now. I would not be where I am today without your help.