

Where Are They Now?

A Look at What Previous Whitman Interns at Lemhi Regional Land Trust and Salmon Valley Stewardship Are Doing Today

History of the Internship

In 2012 then-executive director of Salmon Valley Stewardship Gina Knudson contacted Whitman professor Don Snow after hearing about the school's Environmental Studies internship program from Nils Christoffersen of Wallowa Resources and Jim Owens of the Brainerd Foundation. The ES program saw how valuable LRLT and SVS's unique location, engagement with management and stewardship of public and private lands, and coordination with multiple other agencies would be for students and sent its first intern, Jenny Gonyer, in 2013. The partnership has continued ever since.

Jenny Gonyer

2013 Intern

Class of 2014

Where are you now, and what are you doing?

Never left Salmon! I am the Natural Resources Program Manager for Salmon Valley

Stewardship. Through my program we monitor sage grouse habitat, upland rangelands, and inventory aspen stands. In the past we have also worked on whitebark and riparian monitoring. Essentially I spend the majority of my time hiking around our public lands!

How has your internship with LRLT/SVS impacted what you have done since? I guess you can say that my internship completely shaped my years following graduation. I had my internship before my senior year, and SVS hired me back as a crew leader after graduation. They kept me on during the winter through a sagegrouse tracking project, and then I became the Natural Resources Program Manager in 2015. I'll be in Salmon at least a few more years, depends on if I start a graduate project on aspen.

What was your favorite experience as an intern? Hiking the Continental Divide Trail. I spent three



days hiking the CDT with my father, documenting a 30 mile section, between Lemhi and Bannock Pass. Lemhi Pass is forty-five minutes from Salmon and is where Lewis and Clark crossed the Continental Divide. I like to say the first 5 minutes of the trail sums up the wonders of Idaho; I found an arrowhead and then saw a moose. The trail is incredible, with views of both Idaho and Montana, spectacular fire sunsets, pine martens, and whitebark. We also ran into a few "thru-hikes" on their way from Canada to Mexico, and talked to them about their long trek!

What's one takeaway or thing you learned from your time as an intern? In the smallest of towns you'll find the most dedicated people, who wear many hats and work together to get things done.

What are 5 words or a phrase that would describe your experience? If you drink the Salmon River water, you might end up getting stuck here. (Said during a rafting trip).



Kristin Nesbit

2014 Intern

Class of 2016

Where are you now, and what are you doing? I

am living in Boulder, Colorado,

working as a seasonal forester for Boulder County Parks and Open Space. I am primarily on the planning side of forestry, so I am mostly conducting field work to collect data on the trees in Open Space areas; this data will be used to get a big-picture idea of the forests in order to plan a potential future treatment (e.g. thinning, cutting disease/insect-ridden stands, prescribed burns). I have also participated in a prescribed burn on Open Space land, so it is neat to be able to see how the data I am collecting is used in planning such treatments.

How has your internship with LRLT/SVS impacted what you have done since? My internship with LRLT/SVS really sparked my interest in field work and in working with organizations dedicated to conservation and environmental issues. It was neat to be able to explore many different areas of the environmental non-profit world while in Salmon, from the various types of field work to data analysis to report-writing. The skills I learned through LRLT/SVS have proved more useful than I could have ever imagined, and nearly every job that I have had since my summer in Salmon has benefited from these skills and knowledge.



What was your favorite experience as an intern?

Walking around the conservation easement ranches! It was so incredible to be able to explore around these ranches on my own, stumbling across hidden gems and wildlife, and occasionally meeting the most interesting people.

What was your favorite thing about Salmon? Salmon has the most down-to-earth and friendliest people. People make an effort to look you in the eyes, smile, and say “hi” as they walk past, a far cry from the larger cities that I’ve lived in. And the river is pretty great, as well as the nearby hot springs.

Hannah Alverson

2015 Intern

Class of 2017

Where are you now, and what are you doing? I’m back in Salmon

working for the BLM. I was hired through the Pathways Program, a unique program that combines continuing education,

mentoring, and hands-on experience in public lands management. This summer I’ve been going out in the field with the monitoring team to collect data on the upland and riparian areas in the Salmon Field Office.

How has your internship with LRLT/SVS impacted what you have done since? My internship directly affected what I’m doing after Whitman! The summer after my internship (between junior and senior years at Whitman) I returned to Salmon to work on the SVS range crew. During that time, I met the assistant field manager to the BLM Salmon Field Office, Vince Guyer (also an Whitman alum!), who encouraged me to apply for my current position last winter. Thanks to the people at SVS and the contacts I made during my internship, I’m now working my dream job after graduation.



What was your favorite experience as an intern?

My favorite experience as an intern was getting to go out with the range crew. The opportunity to go out in the field and do vegetation surveys in sage grouse habitat helped me realize that I wanted to go into field biology or natural resources management after Whitman.



What was the wildest thing that happened to you during your time as an intern?

The wildest thing that happened to me as an intern was going to pick up water testing packets at the Tyler Ranch. There happened to be aggressive, territorial burrowing owls living near the stream we were monitoring. I never got dive-bombed by the owls, but my fellow intern did. On the day I went out in the field with my fellow intern to collect the packets, I carried a hockey stick with us to ward off any aggressive owls. Fortunately, I didn't need the hockey stick to protect us, but it did come in handy as a walking stick through the hummock-filled fields.

Olivia Sasaki

2016 Intern

Class of 2017

Where are you now, and what are you doing?

This summer I've been traveling around and visiting friends before heading back home to Wisconsin where I'll work/spend time with family before I leave for a job teaching English in Japan in



March! It's been so much fun, and my only regret is that I couldn't make it out to Salmon to see everyone again.

How has your internship with LRLT/SVS impacted what you have done since? The internship introduced me to many issues and perspectives on the integration of sustainability and community needs that I hadn't considered before that summer. I really took to heart the philosophies of both the LRLT and SVS, where changes and improvements within their community are always a collaboration and well thought out. Though I may not be entering a job or field that directly deals with conservation easements or promoting environmental stewardship, I feel as though the knowledge and experience I gained through my internship with these issues have and will continue to inform how I engage with my community - through striving to reach understanding and considering everyone's best interest.

What was your favorite experience as an intern? I absolutely loved getting to go out on the easements with my fellow intern Sam! The areas were always so beautiful, and it was especially great when we had the opportunity to speak with the landowners and hear their thoughts on conservation, etc.

What was your favorite thing about Salmon? There are so many things! Salmon is just such a beautiful place filled with wonderful people. I loved getting the opportunity to get out on the river and go rafting for the first time, hiking in the mountains and seeing gorgeous wildflowers, and getting such delicious food! I tried huckleberries for the first time, and loved getting the huckleberry danishes from the Oddfellow's bakery or huckleberry ice cream in North Fork.

What recommendations or advice do you have for future interns? My advice would be to participate in all the experiences you can and feel free to find ways to connect your skills and interests with the organizations'. The people there are so supportive and encouraging, so if you have ideas to share or a project you want to start/work on you should just ask!

What are 5 words or a phrase that would describe your experience? The time of my life!

Joe Jolley

2017 Intern

Class of
2019

Where are you now, and what are you doing? I'm

about to start my third year at Whitman, and am excited to continue working towards a degree in environmental studies.

If there was any doubt in my mind that the ES program is where I want to be, getting to come out to Salmon on this internship and see all of the great work folks are doing in this field has put it to rest.

How has your internship with LRLT/SVS impacted what you have done since? Getting to work with

these organizations has definitely inspired me to try and stay involved in the fields of land management and stewardship in the future. I'm not yet sure where my road after Whitman will lead, but I do know that wherever I end up I'd love to find a way to help preserve and protect the land and the communities that depend on it, as the people in Salmon seem so dedicated to doing. And who knows, maybe I'll end up being pulled back to Salmon like so many other Whitman alums have been!

What's one takeaway or thing you learned from your time as an intern? This internship has really helped me expand my understanding of what goes into good land management, and the sorts of things that can be incorporated into that management. I think growing up in western Washington especially you get a negatively distorted picture of ranching and its interactions with the environment, but Salmon presents a great example of how that isn't really correct, and that there are ways to successfully mesh having a working landscape with conservation and stewardship projects. Being out here has shown



me that there's a lot more nuance to making conservation successful than generally gets acknowledged.

What was your favorite thing about Salmon? I really love how close the community is out here, and how familiar and friendly all the people are. It was great to run into folks I had met on the job getting some breakfast at the bakery in the morning, and to hear the backgrounds of all the of the many people who stopped by the office to share some piece of news or just to say hi. It felt really special to get to step into such a close-knit community and be a part of it for a while; it's definitely something you don't get so much in a big city like Seattle.

What are 5 words or a phrase that would describe your experience? Wonderful people, beautiful land, together.



Whitman intern Joe Jolley (left) with Fish and Wildlife intern Joe Stewart, also a Whittie!

