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- USU-Uintah Basin

Morgan Larsen, a Utah State University-Uintah Basin (USU) student, received the Berryman Institute Scholarship that, in addition to the monetary award, provided Larsen the opportunity to spend the summer working for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Service.

“This internship was my first job in wildlife management. I learned so much and am even more excited about pursuing a career in this field,” said Larsen. “I am grateful to the Berryman Institute for giving me this opportunity, and to my professor, Mark Chynoweth, who encouraged me to apply for it. It’s great being an Aggie, surrounded by mentors who want to help me succeed.”

Pairing a university degree with job experience is the ideal scenario when it comes to searching and applying for fulfilling careers. This internship gave Larsen what he needed to complete the equation. When asked about one of the more important lessons he learned from working at the Pocatello, Idaho Supply Depot, Larsen said, “This experience helped me realize, even more than before, that to make it in this field it takes work; good, honest, hard work.”

During the eight weeks, Larsen was able to mix and produce SPV (Sylvatic Plague Vaccine) bait in a laboratory setting, worked on several goose round-ups alongside wildlife biologists and technicians performing predator control projects, and rode horses into a remote area to help a shepherder set traps for a black bear that was killing sheep.

The Berryman Institute is an international organization dedicated to enhancing human-wildlife relationships by better managing human-wildlife conflicts through research, education, extension, and outreach. Their goal is to contribute to the developmental needs of wildlife management by continuing education and recognition of personal, research, and career excellence in wildlife damage management. Their internship accomplishes this, one student at a time.

“I had many experiences that provided me with great insight in mitigating human and wildlife conflict,” said Larsen. “One morning we were tasked with relocating geese from a golf course to a more wildlife-friendly location. We encountered some individuals who were happy we were doing this, and others who were upset. I was reminded to keep an open mind, and, as a public employee, realized part of my responsibility is to educate the public while also listening to their concerns.”

Field experience is just as important as classroom lectures. These hands-on experiences are paramount for students to develop into professionals. Internships and scholarships, like those provided by the Berryman Institute, open up post-graduation opportunities for students.

Larsen is currently pursuing a degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management at USU-Uintah Basin.

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1. Regional Campuses Home
2. News
3. 2018