

Ohio Division of Wildlife, Natural Resource Technician 1

Sarah Schott

BACKGROUND

Agency: Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife (DOW)

Location: District One office, Columbus, Ohio

The Division of Wildlife is one of 12 divisions in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. They are focused on fish and wildlife management and enforcement fishing and hunting regulations. Over 250,000 acres of land and more than 2.25 million acres of water are managed by the DOW which are funded mostly through hunting and fishing license sales. The Division of Wildlife also has an information and education section that promotes the mission by educating the public about Ohio's natural resources.

Division of Wildlife Mission:

"To conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all."

I found this internship by talking to employees at the District One office about a potential career path with Division of Wildlife. Upon learning that I was interested in information & education work, I was interviewed to fill the void of the communications specialist position on an internship level.

ON THE JOB

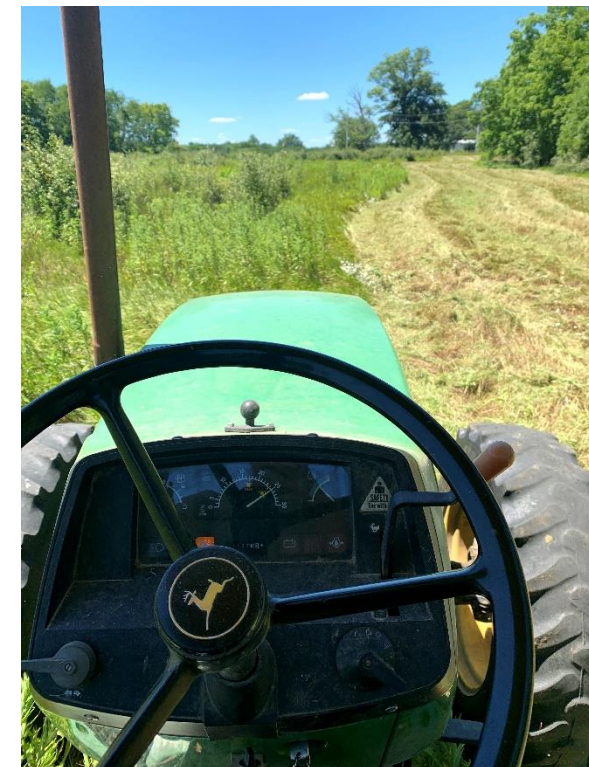
Due to COVID-19, my start date was delayed and my job duties were adjusted. During the beginning of my internship, I spent a great amount of time at Deer Creek Wildlife Area and Shooting Range to lend a helping hand.

Deer Creek Wildlife Area

My job duties on the wildlife area were as follows:

- Mowing
- Picking up trash
- Caring for ambassador owl

Mowing fields at Trump Wildlife Area. Learning to operate a tractor was a new skill for me



Deer Creek Shooting Range

My responsibilities at the shooting range were as follows:

- Sign in/out shooters
- Brief new shooters on safety/rules
- Enforce safety precautions and help/advice shooters when needed
- Clean range/fill out daily reports at end of day



Cleaning up the pistol range at the end of the day.



Shooters shooting at the 50-foot pistol range.

Working from Home

Shortly before classes at Ohio State began, I was issued a state laptop to use in order to work from home. Due to COVID-19, all Division of Wildlife employees were not allowed to work from their normal offices. I continue to work from home part-time during the school year. My job duties are as follows:

- Create bi-monthly newsletter
- Write/edit articles for *Wild Ohio*
- Assist in gathering social media content
- Write news releases and send them to media contacts
- Assisting in editing/creating content for the new website

REFLECTIONS

I was fortunate enough to secure an internship during a time when many were struggling for a job. For this, I was very grateful. I am even more grateful for all of the opportunities I was presented during my internship. I have wanted to work for the Division of Wildlife for many years now, and this experience reassured me of my career path and excited me for my future. I learned how the Division of Wildlife operates and gained a great amount of insight in the communications section. Going forward, I plan to keep this internship until my hours expire in July 2020. At this point, I will reevaluate the situation and either continue with an internship position with the Division of Wildlife or apply for a full-time position. Either way, I plan to stay employed with the organization and secure a full-time job. I hope to eventually work as a wildlife communications specialist.

I would recommend an internship to with the Division of Wildlife to anyone looking for a career in the environmental field, especially if they want to work with wildlife conservation. There are many experienced and knowledgeable individuals in law enforcement, wildlife management, fish management, and information and education that a young college student can learn from. Taking an internship with the Division of Wildlife is a great step to creating a future with this Division or any other divisions under the Ohio Division of Wildlife.



Various images of Wild Ohio magazine covers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For a college student to start their career with the Division of Wildlife (or any other organization for that matter), I recommend taking the following steps:

- Watch platforms like Handshake for posted opportunities. Be sure to do this year-round, not just right before summer begins.
- Reach out to employees at the Division of Wildlife. I acquired my internship by simply meeting employees at the District One office. After discussing my career path, I was offered an interview for an internship.
- Do your research. Memorize the mission statement. Make a list of potential questions you may be asked and memorize the answers. Even an informal meeting, you can be "interviewed" and it is a good chance to impress who you are talking to.
- Look at positions with an open mind. Don't be afraid to try something new even if you don't think it will relate directly to your career path. Increasing your resume with a variety of employments is always helpful.
- Push through the "grunt work." Many internships will include monotonous job tasks like picking up trash or mowing fields. Keep in mind that the individual with the position who aspire to have likely began their career the same way.

