Yale Conservation Scholars - Early Leadership Initiative

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YCS-ELI is a program focused on providing valuable professional experience, skills, and community to young environmental leaders from an underrepresented background in the environmental field. The program pairs participants with an internship site as well as provides weekly informational/training modules on topics such as:

- QGIS
- Graduate School Applications
- Navigating workplace issues

How did I choose this program?

This is an opportunity that I had applied for in my freshman year and was rejected. The biggest draw for me was the ability to work on site (out of Ohio!), the diversity of the work that I could choose from, and the community surrounding the program. I had originally found out about it in an online search and it made it to the top of my interest list after hearing about the experience another Buckeye had with the program.

POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER NETWORK

PRKN is a non-profit organization located in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. They are comprised of smaller riverkeeper bodies along the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers in addition to their respective tributaries. Their mission is to "protect the people’s right to clean water" and to stop pollution in the interest of protecting drinking water, river habitats, and people’s enjoyment.

How do they reach those goals?

- Litigation & Advocacy
- Citizen Science/Water Quality Monitoring
- Regional Investigation/Partnerships

What did I do?

A fellow intern and I created a methodology for conducting compliance sweeps on industrial facilities in Maryland relating to a newly-renovated stormwater discharge permit.

...What does that actually mean?

Stormwater runoff can cause a myriad of environmental and community problems, particularly runoff from industrial facilities. There are permits in place to mitigate this problem but not every facility goes out and gets one; the purpose of this project was to create a method of identifying these unpermitted polluters that could be implemented across the state of Maryland and potentially beyond.

How was this done?

- Region Identification (EJ based)
- Research (Data Acquisition & Assessment)
- Facility Narrowing
- Site Visiting
- Outreach (Letter Writing)

Other Responsibilities

- Presenting methodology to other riverkeeper organizations
- Creating an ArcGIS Storymap to explain stormwater issue and methodology utilization to public

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