

Ecological Engineering – Internships Give Experience

Video Created by Oregon State University

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Tessa Hanson: I've always grown up loving the outdoors and loving rivers. I grew up basically hanging out in rivers all the time. And so just my love for rivers but then also once I started engineering I really started to love the mathematics of rivers, the physics of rivers.

My name is Tessa Hanson I wanted to be able to be actively involved in making things happen and solving problems in the environment. And so ecological engineering seemed like the best fit for that. I think a lot of people come in to engineering and they may think that they're more interested in environmental because they associate that with the environment when ecological maybe a better fit because ecological engineering is just solving like a diverse variety of problems in the environment with a systems approach and with the tools as an engineer.

Ecological engineering is really to put it simply it takes traditional engineering and it looks at these engineering problems with a systems approach and so you're taking a lot of fundamentals from ecology like systems, theory and applying it to engineering problems.

What's interesting about our program is that we all have completely different interests in ecological engineering. It's so diverse that we all kind of bounce ideas off each other. And we have interest as different as agricultural engineering to a by remediation river engineering.

Really dive into internships early because that's how I really found out what my passion in ecological engineering was. My first year at OSU I applied for an internship with the Bureau of Reclamation working as a biological intern and I was helping with, I was doing a couple things. I was mostly helping with a water balance in the valley actually where I'm from.

I was working as an intern there and so we were trying to do water balance in the valley and do flow measurements to account for all the of water that was coming into the valley and leaving the valley. Then also I was helping write proposals for a nonprofit organization called the Grand Ronde Model Watershed, applying for restoration funding from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for funding for restoration projects in the area.

I really enjoyed just being out there in the field. It just gave me really good hands-on experience with what a restoration project is like and that's really what I was hoping for.

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