

Bowens, Wesley T  
30 December 2022  
Statement of Purpose

My life has been a journey through the wilderness. Since my youth I've been drawn to the wild remote places where I can experience humanity at its most essential- as a part of nature. I spent my formative years learning to be a patient observer driven by my curiosity for understanding the relationships of the plants and organisms. One of my passions has been learning traditional survival skills and foraging native plants. In my late twenties these passions and curiosities led me to pursue an environmental science degree at Evergreen. I wasn't sure where this would lead but I knew that I wanted to have a career focused on the environment and conservation. I entered my undergrad thinking my focus would be ethnobotany doing some type of work related to indigenous food systems. The "Evergreen experience" opened so many other worlds to me and so began a deep dive into the realms of the natural sciences. I was blessed to have some great mentors who saw and understood my strengths and encouraged me to pursue biology. I developed a breadth of experience through my education which allowed me to develop skills of a field biologist and naturalist and grow as a citizen of the Earth. One of the core values I gained from Evergreen is a commitment to public service which has driven my life and career.

Initially upon graduation I pursued field ornithology, as birds are one of the loves of my life. The migratory nature of this type of work proved challenging as the positions are generally only a few months at a time and require one to be away for significant periods of time. I struggled with being constrained from building and connecting with my community and desired a more sedentary lifestyle. I returned to working with coffee to support myself financially, allowing me to connect with my community, and maintaining the flexibility to explore and connect with the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. Still I needed an outlet to feel satisfied in service and giving back to the world. My focus became volunteering in environmental education and for several years I led naturalist bird and native plant programming through Point Defiance Park in Tacoma. I value every opportunity I am able to teach and engage in public outreach. Although this experience was fulfilling I found myself needing to do something more and be fully committed to doing conservation as my life's work. I began volunteering for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife seeing this as my best chance for a stable career as a biologist. The following Spring I got a position as a scientific technician in the Aquatic Research Section in the Habitat Program researching amphibians.

I've now been there for a few years and have worked my way up into a biologist position primarily focused on stream associated amphibians and forest management practices. I'm part

of a 20 year study researching the effects of forest stream buffers and how they impact amphibians in headwater streams. This research is part of the Adaptive Management Program which assists in informing the Forest Practices Board whether it's necessary to adjust policies and guidance. I am blessed to be directly involved in the committed conservation of Washington's streams and rivers with potential for direct long term impacts to the health of our environment.

I eagerly look forward to continuing my explorations and growth by returning to Evergreen for graduate studies. I plan to hone my skill set by taking a deep dive into statistical analysis, modeling, and ArcGIS, while broadening my fluency in environmental policy. With the full support of my colleagues I have access to a number of data sets to use for thesis based research, and am also engaged in conversations about developing my own research questions relevant to our long term conservation goals. Friends and colleagues know me as an emotionally intelligent, compassionate, and natural leader who interacts inclusively with the community in building positive, collaborative, working relationships. In other words, I am a Greener through and through.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me for any additional information.

Sincerely,

Wesley T. Bowens