It was two in the morning. My alarm had gone off after nothing more than a couple hours of sleep. I opened my tent flap to a lovely view of the stars and a cold breeze on my face. Settled on the Squak glacier at our basecamp, it was time to wake my team for our final push to the summit of Mt. Baker. This would be my 25th summit, and the 7th time that year. I was in my 6th year working as a mountain guide based out of Seattle, Washington. As the lead guide, I was responsible for providing safety, education, and unforgettable experiences in some of the most challenging environments imaginable. As a professional that spent all their time in the natural world, it was impossible not to find myself as an advocate for protecting these magical places. Much of my time spent with clients, whether traveling miles of snow-capped mountains or rock climbing around granite and sandstone landscapes, was focused on providing them with a sense of awe and respect for the places I cherished. I would educate on weather, local environmental factors and historical events that help to form the landscape, current impacts of climate change on glacial recession, and many other topics. The work was hard, but unbelievably rewarding and after leaving guiding due to COVID-19 restrictions I decided to pursue the education necessary to begin a career as a Wildlife Biologist.

Even before dreaming of guiding, what I really wanted to do was be a marine scientist, but that took schooling, and I didn't come from a background that provided much educational support. My family was military, so the expectation was that I would also join the military, and so I did. At 19, I enlisted and joined the Air Force as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller. Though I never identified myself as a soldier, I loved the work. The military also provided me with what I can best describe as "grit". I learned to find comfort in being uncomfortable, perform effectively in adverse conditions, understand the importance of teamwork, be a reliable teammate, and

commit to achieving a goal. The military provided a way to pay for college when I was ready for my next challenge.

One of my primary hobbies throughout this time was scuba diving. I spent time building my skills and learning the complicated and often challenging aspects of diving in the Puget Sound. During a summer dive in 2013, my dive team came upon a horrible site. Dozens of Sea Stars strewn across the seafloor, some missing limbs or others that were barely recognizable. We had no idea that this event would be the beginning of a near collapse of several species of Sea Stars throughout the U.S. west coast.

In March of 2020, amidst a growing global pandemic and the loss of my job as an adventure guide, I decided to take the opportunity to jump back into school and pursue a degree in Marine Science. The experience of seeing first-hand the impacts of changing ocean conditions on local populations of Sea Stars solidified my goal to find work in research and education that would provide me the opportunity to contribute to ocean health. I enrolled at The Evergreen State College where I completed rigorous coursework in Organic Chemistry, Microbiology, Aquatic Toxicology, and Marine Environments. I worked hard, and even with the challenges of a global pandemic; I completed the required courses to graduate with a dual BA/BS degree in June of 2022 with a field of study in Marine Science.

As a recommendation from one of my professors, I took a job working as a field technician and diver for a biologist at the Wenatchee Forestry Sciences Laboratory. The primary focus of the research was aimed at observations, capture, and tagging of juvenile salmonid in the Entiat River, where efforts to restore salmon habitat and improve floodplain connectivity had been

taking place for over a decade. The work was exciting, and it turned out to be a fantastic opportunity to apply my growing academic knowledge to real world research. Along with tagging and measuring of fish, data was also collected on river flow rates, temperature, and depth. Engineered log jams (ELJ), which were constructed to provide a variety of habitats for juvenile salmon, were also measured and spatially compared to help determine the effectiveness of restoration efforts. It was a busy season, with long hours, rough conditions, and an enormous amount of data collection, but I loved it. After the fieldwork season was complete, through video conferencing and email, our team slowly built the story we wanted to tell with our field work. The research paper will be presented at the Salmon Recovery Conference in April 2023. I was also promoted to lead field technician for further studies around floodplain usage by juvenile salmon and application of life cycle modeling comparisons between western and Eastern Washington river systems.

As I look to the future, and graduate school, I hope to continue in pursuit of my dream by expanding my knowledge as well as my practical application of that knowledge within marine environments. After experiencing real world research, graduate school will help to hone my understanding of research processes and the importance of improving on writing and analytical skills needed to pursue a career as a Wildlife Biologist. I look forward to working as part of a collaborative team of individuals doing quality research to help solve some of our ocean's biggest issues. Thanks for your consideration.

Daye Glisson