

Statement of Purpose

Few of my personal truths have remained unwavering in a world of constant change and surprise. These concepts I identify with date back to some of my earliest core memories. Such ideologies include my intrinsic connection to nature and call to action.

From an early age I gravitated towards environmental and social justice. I spent time outdoors doing what I would now consider environmental education and restoration work. I studied Earth processes, sustainability, and biodiversity, and in turn educated my peers. I rallied groups together to leave our community better than we found it. Of course this was elementary school and it was mostly community clean ups and saving the bees, but it sent me down a specific trajectory and that's all I needed. As time went on I did explore other interests, such as my love for creative expression, but I always come back to the outdoors.

The year 2020 became my catalyst, as it did for many. That year escalated my involvement in environmental affairs, but it didn't begin there. I already had experience working on self-sustaining and organic farms in Washington and the Netherlands from years prior to 2020. I had taken natural science classes like geology in college before 2020, but something changed. At the time, most of my work revolved around social justice, but that inevitably meant I'd arrive at the conclusion that environmental justice is social justice. People's quality of living, their environment, varies based on their demographic. After 2020, my undergraduate studies began to incorporate more environmental/social studies, like Climate Academy: Justice and Resilience. My volunteer work in the community also began to reflect this, for example, aiding the Chameleon Blockade, whose goal was to prevent the clear cutting of legacy forests on Coast Salish territory.

Eventually, after graduating with a Bachelor's of Arts from The Evergreen State College, I went on to do international work. I worked at non-profits trying to find creative ways to upcycle waste, such as youth based art classes in England. I also contributed to housing and food projects in Germany, reducing food waste and creating sustainable living. This work provided me hands-on experience and cross-cultural learning opportunities. Now I bring home the global, by volunteering for local organizations like the Puget Sound Estuarium and Nisqually Land Trust for environmental outreach, education, and restoration. I also like to find ways to make work interdisciplinary and intersectional. An example of this is my involvement in Food Not Bombs. The organization traditionally focuses on food security, but by working with local venues and creating a menu open to donations, we fundraise for other issues such as our Fall 2022 benefits which raised money for the Jackson, Mississippi water crisis and the Myanmar Food Not Bombs.

None of these interests are new to me. The biggest difference from my youth to now is the calling is growing stronger. It can't be ignored, denied, or postponed. Sometimes, I step back and ask myself why it is that this work is so inherent to me; why am I motivated by this. There's the obvious; our livelihood depends on our symbiotic relationship to each other and our environment. This is incredibly important to me. It's about what's right and I can't shake that. But there's also the personal. Nothing makes me feel more at peace and at ease, nothing makes my

neurodivergent brain more calm, or my spirit more secure, than when I am immersed in our environment. I want to preserve that, for myself, for others, for future generations, and I want to share that passion. To have the ability to do that full time is why I want to pursue a Masters in Environmental Studies. I know the MES program at The Evergreen State College will prepare me for the work I enjoy, whether that be environmental education, restoration, or other sectors of the field. Thank you for your consideration.