

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This past harvest season at Coastal Cultivars, a six acre cannabis farm in Southeastern Massachusetts, I had the pleasure of meeting a fatherly figure of a man named Eric. Day by day we chatted in the early mornings over the sunrise and tea while hanging, cutting, and bucking product. He'd share with me his expeditions in Washington state, gold panning in the rivers, how his brother once hit a target 60 feet away with a bow and arrow, and the importance of tire chains for rough weather conditions. I desperately craved father figures in my life, one with interests that aligned with mine, and then came along the coolest guy I have ever met in my life.

As the six am shifts went by, I grew hungry for the experiences that he gushed about. I began watching more and more videos on solo-survival adventures out west. One random morning, he looked at me and told me that when he lived near Seattle, he often ran around with some friends at Evergreen State College. That afternoon after a long day of manual labor, it was the first thing I looked up after my shift. My travels had been waiting for me, and the stars were aligning.

In my undergraduate studies at University of Massachusetts Amherst, my academic advisor Julie Brigham-Grette and I had endless life chats. I stopped in to see her about her Glacial Geology class I was taking, deadlines, and guidance, but often inevitably ended up talking about life stories by the end. Connecting this way has come to be the center of my world. It's easy to feel lost in a generation that struggles with community in response to exponentially evolving technology. Sitting in her office surrounded by plants, books, and figurines from different adventures quieted my messy mind. It gave me direction when I could not seem to find the guiding light.

Time passed, and I shared my resources for visual learning in science back with her, which she would eventually show in class. Growing within our connection and science simultaneously brought me a clearer vision of my passions. For my final project in Glacial 563, she gave me space to bend the rubric. I put my own spin on studying glacial retreat and mass balance research by incorporating compilations of indigenous communities facing climate disasters into a video project, backed with music that I wrote, recorded, and audio-engineered. When presentation time came, I lugged my fender amp and electric guitar into the sedimentary room with crystals and rocks lining the back walls. We joked about how this was the first, and possibly last time that room would hear a six-string sing.

Post-graduation, I was a bit lost. I had a handful of passions, yet I lacked any awareness of how to move forward with them. My mind constantly told me to pick one. Eventually I gave up on trying to do so, recombining my interconnected passions once more. GIS for visual learning became increasingly interesting, so through the University Without Walls at Umass I enrolled in a course with Forrest Bowlick, shown to me by Julie. One day in her office, I was inquiring about GIS classes and how to go about dipping my toes in just as he walked by. Moments like this have encouraged me to believe in the right place at the right time, and expand my perspectives. The class fulfilled me like no other. I fell in love with the technical aspects and

final products that I could share with my friends and family. For the first time, I found a method to present my findings in research in a way that was digestible to them, not solely paper based with lots of words and complexities. My worlds began to collide in the most beautiful way. So, as you can imagine, that summer afternoon when I looked into the Evergreen Environmental Studies program with GIS opportunities, the fire within me relit to an extent I'd yet to experience. Everything was coming together, the knot was finally tightening. My favorite color being forest green influenced my building excitement, as silly as it is.

The next few months became abundant with meditating, delving into research on sockeye alongside climate change, and physically training through farming and lifting weights. My closest friend, Jaakko Rinta, a successful and professional scuba diver who runs the metric system database at Coastal, gave me pointers on bulking with increased protein in-take and all the rest. I became a sponge, learning and moving with grace in the face of life's hiccups.

That brings me to today, just before Christmas, having access to share my studies over the holidays with family and friends. For the first time since 2017, when I became engulfed in climate change's impacts, I have the confidence and visuals to provide a full story about my research. To continue expanding this knowledge, for myself and others, while creating a safe space to educate without placing responsibility solely on the consumer is my end goal.