

I am interested in pursuing a graduate degree in environmental studies, because I love learning and have a strong desire to know more about the world around me. I have had an affinity for animals since I was young. I currently help volunteer at Happy Cats Haven. It is a nice opportunity to work with the cats and I am certified to work with Shy Cats. I live in Manitou Springs and love going on hikes in our nearby canyon, which is an extension of Garden of the Gods. I am curious to know more about ecology and the relationship between animals and their habitats. I think Washington would provide a great area for research.

I went to school at Ave Maria University for my undergraduate studies. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. One of the last courses I took was Ecology. We got to go on several field trips, where we categorized shells, observed birds and other wildlife, and classified soils. I lived in very close proximity to a canal with alligators and one of our research studies took place at the bridge overlooking the canal. We were trying to get a water reading and the alligator ended up being attracted to the noise and splashing our group made, and attempted to steal our equipment each time we lowered it. That was an experience I will always remember and was an example of the unpredictability of nature. Another course I enjoyed that will help prepare me for graduate study was Marine Biology. I learned quite a bit about the feeding habits of sting rays for a research study and found the work satisfying. It was exciting to learn new information about one of our last largely unknown frontiers – the ocean, especially since it affects so much of our world.

Currently, I am employed as an upper elementary school math teacher. I have learned a lot about presenting information in a matter that can be easily understood, as our school, The Vanguard School in Colorado Springs, is a charter school priding itself on academic rigor. We are observed and given debriefs on how to better present material including wall-to-wall instruction

and choral response questions. However, the goal overall is to guide the students through a holistic approach to learning and there are other classes for them, that are largely unique to our school, such as a character block and core skills. My job is to help lead the students to improve their academic knowledge, but just as importantly help them leave the school ready to have a positive impact on those around them. I plan to carry on this belief in leadership by example and will continue to value character as I have seen firsthand the difference it can make in addressing conflict and correcting behavior.

I would hope to use the skills given to me through my education in biology and my experience in the classroom to make the world around me a brighter place wherever I end up. I aim to do this through continuing to pursue my academic studies. I think that the concentration in climate justice could be a possibility as this would combine my love of nature with a desire to help those around me. It helps me to see a tangible application of my studies. This work is especially needed in today's world, with the ill effects of our actions post-Industrial Revolution beginning to appear. I would like to help break down data and spread awareness of the generational impact and problems left to be solved. One potential example is the increase in natural disasters we have seen lately and I would be curious to know how responsible humans are for some of the drastic weather changes we are observing such as mega earthquakes and an expansion of the hurricane season.

Thank you for considering me as an applicant to your environmental studies program. I look forward to hearing from you.