

Hailey Rosenthal

Personal Statement

MES Application

I discovered my passion for the environment at 15 when I spent two weeks bushwacking through the Chugash mountain range in the Alaskan wilderness. My resources were limited to all that I could carry in my backpack or forage for in my surroundings. I learned the significance of living with nature and the value of living simply and sustainably. This empowering lesson has stayed with me and shaped my trajectory.

At 23, I discovered my passion for marine sciences while stationed in the small village of Huinay, Chile. I was tasked with researching the local macroinvertebrates of the Comau Fjord. My epiphany unfolded on the morning of a red tide event. I encouraged another intern to kayak around the station and collect plankton samples with a handheld net tow. Initially, those samples seemed like nothing more than a source of amusement under a biological microscope. However, my impulsive act of data collection ignited a profound intrigue in marine sciences and the intricate web of relationships between organisms and nutrients in the water column.

Now, at 30, I am a dedicated professional to salmon management and have witnessed firsthand the effects of rising water temperatures, altered ocean currents, and changing ecosystems on salmon populations. My goal is to pursue a masters focusing on climate variability and salmon populations within Puget Sound. My interests focus on how rising temperatures and CO2 levels in Puget Sound will impact the marine food chain. Recent findings have indicated an inverse relationship between promising environmental conditions within the ocean and salmon runs within South Puget Sound. However, little research has been done to identify the environmental indicators of these occurrences. The MS in Environmental Studies program at Evergreen State College is an ideal platform for me to delve deeper into the interdisciplinary aspects of marine science, climate change impacts, and environmental conservation.

My current work focuses on enhancing Puget Sound recreational fisheries while conserving salmon populations. Each year, I assist in the development of fishery packages based on salmon policy, public interest, and negotiations with co-managers. This process has empowered me to understand the complexities and challenges associated with maintaining salmon populations. I use this understanding in my daily work as the coordinator for the Puget sound recreational fisheries enhancement program. I aim to educate the public on salmon conservation and inspire active participation in sustainable practices. It has become clear that a comprehensive approach, combining scientific research with effective public outreach, is essential to address the multifaceted challenges of salmon.

As I observe my colleagues, who are accomplished scientists, I am inspired to follow in their footsteps and further my education. My journey in marine science started in a kayak with a handheld net tow and would ultimately lead to a lifelong commitment to understanding, conserving, and responsibly managing our marine resources. I look ahead with eager anticipation, aiming to advance my education and contribute research ideas for sustainable ecosystem management in Puget Sound.