

Statement of Purpose

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I am a federal cultural resource manager who values a cross-disciplinary approach to environmental regulatory compliance. While I have decades of experience in my own field and a strong belief that the work of my agency's cultural and natural resource managers should be integrated, I currently lack the solid foundation in natural sciences and resource planning that will make me a more active contributor to holistic environmental compliance. The Evergreen State College's Master of Environmental Studies (MES) program will help me fill the gaps in my environmental background.

My previous studies include a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tulane University in history and anthropology with a specialization in archaeology, which I completed in 1989. For two decades I pursued a career in linguistics and English language teaching in the United States (US) and abroad, receiving a Master of Arts for Teachers from the University of Washington (UW) in 1999 in the process. I continued to take classes at UW as I considered a move into the field of cultural landscape preservation. These classes included ecological restoration and the history of landscape architecture.

To prepare me for my current profession, I received a Master of Arts in historic building conservation in the Department of Archaeology at York University, United Kingdom (UK). In addition to traditional materials analysis, my specializations were historic preservation policy and ethics, and cultural landscape analysis. For my master's thesis, I produced a report for Washington State Parks on the significance and management of the World War II gun battery at Fort Ebey State Park as a recreational historic landscape.

Since completing my degree, I have worked in cultural resource management in the public and private sectors. I have worked on and off as a consultant for over eight years, both at a large environmental firm (Cardno) and my own business. My public-sector employers have been at the city (City of Olympia, Washington), county (Maidstone Borough Council, UK), state (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife [WDFW]), and federal levels. I currently serve as the Cultural Resource Program Manager for the US Navy at Naval Base Kitsap.

A large part of my work has involved agency and tribal consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the National Environmental Policy Act, the Washington State Environmental Policy Act, the now defunct Washington Executive Order 05-05, and municipal code. I also initiated the substantial revision of Olympia's municipal code on historic preservation to formalize tribal consultation and strengthen cultural resource protections for archaeological resources and human remains (2017 Ordinance 7109: OMC 18.12.120; OMC 18.12.130; OMC 18.12.140).

My work with the Nisqually and Squaxin Island Tribes while at the City of Olympia provided my first exposure to tribal treaty rights. My current job with the Navy has revealed a number of tensions in my daily work that stem from the siloing of compliance with cultural and natural resource regulations and tribal treaty rights.

The clear lines between regulations are reflected in the Navy base's environmental organizational structure. Biologists manage compliance with natural resource regulations, architectural historians and archaeologists address cultural resource compliance, and archaeologists support adherence to tribal treaties. This organizational structure often means that three different people evaluate for and consult on regulatory/treaty compliance for a given project. In addition, our subject matter expertise means that none of us may have the capacity to effectively respond to belief systems among our region's tribes that natural resources are cultural resource: our archaeologists do not have a foundation in the natural sciences and our biologists are not attuned to cultural significance. The distinct regulations we work under do not engender a clear path to integration. All of these factors combine to create intergovernmental conflict during consultation. Projects have been abandoned as a result.

In addition, the siloed response to cultural and natural resource regulations and tribal treaties often results in the destruction of one resource in favor of another without a holistic analysis of alternatives. In a project I'm currently working on, the need for compensatory mitigation for potential adverse impacts to natural resources has resulted in the decision to demolish a number of historic properties. Careful consideration was given to finding sites that would support the conservation of comparable natural resources, but no meaningful evaluation of alternatives that would avoid the loss of historic properties was made. The compensatory mitigation will likely result in an Adverse-Effects determination under Section 106 of the NHPA. The Navy will then be required to mitigate an action that was itself intended as mitigation.

While complex, some of the tensions inherent in these examples are based out of mission conflict, with each of the subject matter experts working towards their goals of ensuring that the agency complies with the regulations or treaties in their area of responsibility. My intention to foster more holistic regulatory compliance processes has inspired me to pursue Evergreen's MES program.

In addition to gaining subject-matter expertise in the natural sciences, I plan to use the program's flexibility to bring my archaeological knowledge up to the twenty-first century, with the field moving away from the model of Euro-American dominated cultural resource extraction to one of partnership with Tribes. For instance, with Evergreen faculty support, I plan to use an independent study contract to create an archaeological field school under the direction of archaeologist peers at the WDFW if a similar course is not offered at Evergreen. While my ideas on a thesis project are likely to evolve during the course of the program, I am also in discussions with WDFW about conducting my project in collaboration with the agency's cultural resource managers. My hope is that continuing to work with a state agency that is committed to cultural resource protection within its natural-resource focused mission, I will continue to forge a professional path of integration of cultural and natural resource compliance.