

Hunter Adelson

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Dear Evergreen State College Admissions Board,

My name is Hunter Adelson, and I am writing to express my interest in earning a master's degree in environmental studies at Evergreen State College. I want to attend graduate school and earn my master's degree in order to work to conserve wetlands, a valuable and rapidly diminishing resource, and protect them against emerging issues.

I've lived in Washington state my entire life. I received my bachelor's degree in environmental science from Western Washington University in 2022, and, lacking the experience or specialization to begin a career right away, I enrolled in the University of Washington's Wetland Science and Management certificate program in 2023, and completed the program in 2024. Since receiving my bachelor's degree, I have been working part-time with the express purpose of saving money for graduate school.

When not studying or working, I do volunteer work in my spare time. Notably, I worked with Pierce Conservation District in 2022 planting rain gardens and vegetative buffers to prevent chemicals and other contaminants from making their way into the water. I am also working with King County's salmon watcher program this fall.

At Western Washington University, I switched majors from computer science at the beginning of my junior year, and as a result of the reduced course availability due to the outbreak of COVID-19, I was not able to take as wide a variety of classes in my desired field as I would have liked. My coursework included water quality, conservation of biodiversity, and a senior project in which I studied the spread of New Zealand mud snails in Lake Padden in Bellingham, Washington. Being able to attend Evergreen's graduate program would allow me the years of hands-on environmental education experience that I missed out on in my undergrad years.

During my time in the University of Washington's wetland program, I dedicated my practicum to studying 6PPD-Q, a chemical identified in 2020 as the cause of acute mortality in coho salmon. I had wanted to study the chemical for my undergrad project at Western Washington University, but not enough was known regarding 6PPD-Q at the time, and the extremely short window I had to complete the project rendered the idea infeasible. My practicum ideally required a wetland site surrounded by high-intensity land use to maximize potential 6PPD-Q in stormwater runoff. As such, I selected the environment around Trilogy, a retirement community in Redmond, Washington. The site includes several wetlands, creeks, and a bog.

At the conclusion of my practicum, I determined that a question requiring further study is how 6PPD-Q, an organic chemical, may interact with and accumulate in the organic soils present in bogs. These are the kinds of questions that drive my curiosity, and that a master's degree at Evergreen would give me the tools and resources to investigate and resolve.

I would like to study at Evergreen in order to bring my work closer to the state government agencies handling environmental issues. My aim is to get connected with an environmental government agency such as the Washington State Department of Transportation via their summer wetlands internship. Once I receive my master's degree, I hope to land a job with a state or city government where I can effectively apply my studies.

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope I will be accepted into the MES program.

Sincerely,

Hunter Adelson