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Statement of Purpose

Being born and raised in Olympia, Washington, environmentalism has been a constant in my set of values. From a young age, carbon footprint, water quality, and biodiversity were concepts that fascinated me. Learning more about these world problems and their applications both enlightened my desire for knowledge as well as the creative, problem-solving side of me.

Over the course of my life, I've discovered the specific details behind our environments and tactics for maintaining these aspects. By pursuing a masters degree in environmental studies, I feel freed with the capabilities to do my part to heal the ecosystems around me. My goal is to work for the state department of ecology, aiding in the puget sound and surrounding ecosystems.

I have also spent a great deal of my life being enthralled by looking to nature and biomimicry for sustainable technologies, reading books and researching nature's solutions to many issues. Much of my empathy and desire for social cooperation branches from my love of our ecosystems and also what we can learn from nature. I believe that the thriving of a society is reflected by their overall desire to protect and maintain the local ecosystem around which they are built.

Several experiences led to my passion for environmental issues in the Pacific Northwest. In middle school, I had several field trips out to local wetlands, forests, and beaches. The highlight of these was getting into the water and using scientific tools to measure water quality in my environmental science class, then presenting with my group to the Washington Department of Ecology. I was able to give a detailed report on phosphorous and nitrates levels and their effect on algae bloom cycles, and how those levels affect crucial watershed health such as dissolved oxygen and CO2 levels.

After researching career opportunities, I found that obtaining an MES degree from Evergreen College would virtually guarantee me a chance to work for the Washington State Department of Ecology. I find it essential that I pursue this degree at the Evergreen State College, because of its values as well as the opportunity to study locally within the ecosystem I desire to protect in my career in the future. This university's academic values of equity, humanity, and creativity align with mine, as well as the academic structure I believe will be best for my need of innovative and inquisitive learning.

Experiences in my undergraduate studies have led me to deepen my knowledge of evaluating and maintaining healthy ecosystems. In my entomology class, I collected over 50 identified families and of 20 different orders. I collected insects from rivers, wetlands, mountains, forests, and deserts in Southeast Idaho, keeping an updated field journal as I went. I learned about the EPT index (ephemoptera, plecoptera, and trichoptera), and how an index of the presence of those orders can indicate the health of an environment. I presented IPM plans with groups for given pest scenarios.

In my evolutionary science class, I learned about hybridization, coevolution, red queen theory and other relationships between organisms that shift an environment's dynamics. I studied and wrote a research article on the co-evolution of chiroptera and viruses and their impact on global epidemics. I believe that all that I've learned from these experiences will be used on a daily basis in my graduate studies.

In the course of my bachelor's degree, I have switched my major over 8 times, varying from engineering to physics to biology and health science. Over the years, I've had a difficulty finding what field of work specifically speaks to me and brings me fulfillment. With my spectrum of chemistry, biology, physics, upper math, and humanities classes, I found my environmental classes such as entomology, evolution, and invertebrates to be mentally stimulating as they cohesively brought my knowledge of different fields of science together. I found that my interest in a lot of different fields became my strength, allowing me to make connections easily and draw ideas from interdisciplinary studies to come up with creative environmental solutions.

My community engagement and volunteer service have helped me to learn how to reach people's emotional and equitable needs. I served as a spanish-speaking missionary in North Carolina for a year and a half, where I worked with a missionary partner at food banks, taught in homes of families and individuals, and organized English classes and enriching community events. I also volunteered as the activities coordinator for my university's interfaith leadership society, where I organized activities by reaching out to local religious leaders and delegating responsibilities and educating society members. These efforts strengthened ties between my university peers and various communities of Islamic, Jewish, and Christian faiths in Southeast Idaho.

From these experiences I learned to listen to others and how to communicate effectively to share what was important to me in a way that reached what was important to them. I believe developing these skills are crucial in a state environmental position, where communicating abstract scientific concepts and why they matter to the public must be done with clarity and care: reaching them while also giving them the opportunity to expand their code of ethics and understanding of different sides of certain issues.

In conclusion, my motivation for my master's in environmental studies is deeply rooted in my personal code, my love for the social community and natural ecosystems around me, and my desire for knowledge and creativity. I hope to contribute new approaches to strategies in environmentalism as well as an enthusiastic and positive approach that will encourage others in our community toward environmental support. I feel excited to embark on such a journey of emotional, intellectual, and intersocial fulfillment as a graduate student in environmental studies at the Evergreen State College.