

Application Related Information

Application: Application Not Verified
Grad Program Applying To: MES

Iteration Name: 202610_GR_G
Program Name: MES

Recommendation Information

Recommended By: Scott Vlasak
Recommenders Institution: American Conservation
Experience
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to
review this recommendation.
Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommenders Title: Senior Project Manager
Contact Name: Ajaleigh Irons

Recommendation Waiver
Choice:

Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 12/26/2024 08:51 AM

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant.

Recommendation Type: General

Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation

Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000121441666

Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

Recommender Form Questions

How long have you known applicant:	Applicant ability as self-directed learner:
Time since last contact with applicant:	Applicant as productive member of group:
Relationship with Applicant:	Applicant most significant strengths:
Ability to complete rigorous grad program:	Responsibility/reliability:
Communication Skills - Oral:	Communication skills - written:
Service Orientation-sensitivity/empathy:	Ability to work independently:
Ability to handle stress:	Ability to think critically:
Ability to analyze/problem solve:	Ability to think creatively:
Openness to feedback:	Potential for leadership:
Ability to work in a team:	Personal/professional reflection:

Description Information

Description:

Form URL: <https://evergreenstatecollege.radiu>

Other Information

Created Time: 12/18/2024 01:50 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier

Modified Time: 12/26/2024 08:51 AM

Modified By: Josephine Bernier

12/23/2024
Stefan Scott Vlasak
Senior Project Manager
American Conservation Experience
46 East State Street
Hurricane Utah, 84737
sscottvlasak@usaconservation.org

To whom it may concern,

It is a pleasure to be writing a recommendation for Ajaleigh Irons for the Master of Environmental Studies at Evergreen State College. I worked and supervised Aja during her time serving as an Americorps member with the American Conservation Experience (ACE) Mountain West Branch in Southern Utah in 2021. The two projects I worked on with Aja were a trail maintenance project in the Fishlake National Forest and a hazard tree removal project in Bryce Canyon National Park. Both projects required critical thinking, collaboration, and perseverance, all things that Aja exudes. While with ACE over the last five years, I have served and worked with hundreds of individuals but Aja has stood out for her maturity, passion, grit, and commitment to conservation and improving the planet.

The ACE program requires its members to work and camp in the field for eight day hitches, or project weeks. Aja was a member with ACE for six months, she spent 96 days in the field during her time with the program. Aja showed her grit and passion for field work and was always a member who could be relied on. The project in Fishlake required us to hike up to 12 miles in a day while carrying hand tools, chainsaws, fuel, and our own gear and water. While working in Bryce Canyon, Aja and her crew camped at eight thousand feet in elevation during a mountain fall. Her crew encountered a snow storm and cold temperatures throughout the project but continued to produce high quality work. When it comes to getting hands dirty, Aja has experience and the resilience to deal with difficult and unpredictable field situations.

Aja worked and interacted with Forest Service and National Park staff. She saw first hand the difficulties in managing the resource for different conservation and usage purposes. In Fishlake we worked within Pondo, one of the largest aspen groves in the world, improving the trail. Aja seemed to understand that trail work is not the most clear conservation task but recognized that improved access to the area might inspire others to commit time to preserve these places. In Bryce Canyon National Park the conservation angle was a bit more clear. Aja helped sawyers remove dead trees that could fall on major roadways. The park staff at Bryce had clear objectives for the environment and the reason the crew worked in late fall was to avoid bat nesting within the park trees. Aja saw many difficulties and different approaches in managing the natural landscapes which is valuable to know when learning about how these organizations work.

The work completed on both of these projects was not straightforward and each situation both on the trail and when approaching hazard trees is never the same. Aja displayed great critical thinking skills and was always open to collaboration. In Fishlake I could rely upon Aja to lead small teams or complete drainage projects as I was chainsawing or working on other projects. Aja was a great communicator and a person who office staff knew could be relied upon to keep younger and less motivated members on task.

Aja was a very solid member for the ACE program and a person who would have been a valuable asset in a leadership position within the program. This program has its flaws and a few members I have seen lose some of their passion as they see the inefficiencies and some less than pure conservation approaches used by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management. Aja was eager and had the desire to face these issues and I think she would use this education to try and better these systems or come up with better ways to conserve and preserve the earth. Her passion for the work, communication, and overall resilience to the physicality and exposure were clear to everyone in the program.