

Dear Admissions Committee,

My name is Jonathan Legin, and I am excited to apply for the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) program. Pursuing this degree aligns with my passion for environmental conservation and education, and I am eager to further my knowledge and impact in the field.

My academic journey began at Green River College, where I took an Environmental Studies class in 2019. This course was a turning point for me, as it opened my eyes to the significant challenges facing our ecosystems due to human activities. This realization fueled my desire to make a difference. Although I explored other career paths, I found true fulfillment in environmental work.

After initially being unable to gain admission to the University of Washington Tacoma's Environmental Program, I reassessed my path and found an excellent opportunity at Green River College, where I enrolled in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Natural Resources: Forestry Management program. I have since earned five Associate of Applied Science degrees (2022) and my Bachelor's degree in 2024.

Beyond academics, my hands-on experience in ecological restoration has solidified my commitment to environmental stewardship. I worked for two years with the Green River Coalition and later co-founded Free The Green in 2023. Through this student-led organization, I have been actively engaged in ecological restoration along waterways, primarily in the Big Soos Creek tributary and on the Green River College campus. We collaborate with Orca Conservancy, hosting work events and educating the public on the critical link between habitat restoration, salmon populations, and orca conservation.

Additionally, I worked with King County Parks for two seasons, first with the Vegetation Management team, focusing on noxious weed control, and later with the Restoration Crew,

where I contributed to site maintenance through tasks like weed-eating, watering, and mulching. These experiences have provided me with practical skills that I apply to my restoration projects with Free The Green.

For my bachelor's capstone project, I applied for a grant to restore a five-acre property owned by friends. While I did not receive the grant, I secured hundreds of free plants through the King County Water and Land Resource Division. I also facilitated connections between the landowners and the King Conservation District, which is now assisting them with future restoration efforts. Presenting my project to professionals from Parks and my professors was a proud moment, as it showcased my ability to turn ideas into actionable environmental initiatives.

My experiences have reinforced my belief in the power of education and community involvement in environmental conservation. Teaching landowners and volunteers about sustainable practices is just as crucial as hands-on restoration work. By joining the MES program, I hope to deepen my understanding of environmental science and policy, equipping myself with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive meaningful change on a larger scale.

I am eager to contribute and grow within the MES community. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to further my education and continue making a positive impact on the environment.

Sincerely, Jonathan Legin