

#### Application Related Information

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Application: Application Incomplete  
Grad Program Applying To: MES

Iteration Name: 202610\_GR\_G  
Program Name: MES

#### Recommendation Information

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Recommended By: Anna Smith  
Recommenders Institution: Bureau of Land Management  
Prineville

Recommenders Title: Hydrologist  
Contact Name: Will Niskanen

Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.

Recommendation Waiver Choice:

Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 02/18/2025 10:48 PM

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant without reservation.

Recommendation Type: General

Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation

Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000121622174

Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

#### Recommender Form Questions

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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

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Description:

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

#### Other Information

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Created Time: 01/12/2025 08:06 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier

Modified Time: 02/18/2025 10:48 PM

Modified By: Josephine Bernier

February 18, 2025

To whom it may concern:

My name is Anna Smith, and I am a hydrologist at the Prineville District Bureau of Land Management in Prineville, Oregon.

Will Niskanen worked as a Natural Resource Monitoring Intern in my office for 10 weeks; June through August of 2024. Staff was not notified that interns would be available as a shared resource, until right before they arrived. As a result, it took a while for folks like me to organize his program of work for the summer. He was eager to get going but still patient while we got organized.

I think Will's strengths include trouble shooting, working independently, technically proficient, being flexible, and getting work done under difficult conditions.

Will was eager to get going and was happy to trouble shoot technical problems that I should have had sorted before he arrived. For example, we were using a new version of water temperature loggers that didn't have cables and shuttles that I was used to. Will figured out how to download the data loggers using Bluetooth on a cell phone.

Will's flexibility is exemplified by his willingness to shift the summer game plan to accommodate safety concerns and area closures due to wildfire. It was a particularly challenging season on our District, with over 800,000 acres in multiple wildfires. There were several times when we would sit down and plan out the next week's work on a Friday and by Monday, none of the field locations were accessible due to fire. Will would calmly adjust and suggest ways to bundle work from later in the season into that week.

In addition to the scheduling challenge presented by wildfire, Will was willing and able to hike long distances, alone, to deploy temperature loggers in very remote locations. He stayed safe and followed the BLM's rather stringent check-in and check-out policies. It has been many summers since I didn't receive at least one, late night phone call from our dispatch center, inquiring why an intern had not reported back from the field, but I did not receive a single complaint about Will all summer.

Like all of us, I see some opportunities for Will to grow – namely in interpersonal engagement. I was able to get to know Will throughout the summer, and enjoyed having him work on my projects. However, he was somewhat reserved with the other employees. I suspect it was a bit of shyness and uncertainty in the work to be done. There are also some cultural differences between Western Washington and Eastern Oregon that can be an adjustment.

Graduate school would be an excellent opportunity for Will to expand communication skills necessary to solve the environmental problems facing us today. I recommend him for your program and would love to have him come work here again after he finishes his schooling. If you have additional question or

concerns, please feel free to call my cell at 541-325-9370 or email me at [aksmith@blm.gov](mailto:aksmith@blm.gov).

Sincerely,

Anna Smith