

Percival Vogt

## Personal Statement

I was born and raised on ten acres of forest land down by Dewatto Bay of Mason County, Washington. We even have a salmon ladder; a culvert running beneath the county road, with a stream going across both sides of our property. The fish come up from the bay to return to their place of birth and spawn. The name of the Dewatto area, and the bay, comes from the Twana people who were here before me, before my parents, and before their parents. They spoke of spirits named the *tub-ta-ba*, which could enter the bodies of men and control them. These spirits had a home deep inside the earth, called *du-a-ta*. The land was given the same name as the spirits' home and eventually we would call the area Dewatto on county maps. On this land I was homeschooled by my mother until I was eight years old and went to public school for the first time, at Sandhill Elementary, outside Belfair. I was the youngest of nine children, the baby. Once in school I was able to experience raising salmon from eggs as part of Salmon in the Classroom and participate in the release of salmon at the Theler Wetlands Center. While I have seen the beauty of nature all around me and find myself at home in the woods and along streams, I quickly became exposed to the dangers of the climate crisis and the ledge our planet has sat on for decades.

When I was 13, the Flint Water Crisis started in Flint, Michigan. I began to understand that water is a limited resource, and that clean drinking water for wildlife and communities is not always ensured, with great struggles of power and control over who has access to environmental safety. I learned about the insidiousness of racism in our country, and how deeply it lies in the way we build and section our cities, and how

marginalized communities are more likely to experience issues with their access to medical, dental, and mental health care on top of environmental hazards caused by pollution, fracking, and nuclear waste.

As I've grown into an educator and community activist, the LA Wildfires further radicalized me as I witnessed reports of asbestos and other toxic chemicals released into our air due to historic California homes set ablaze. I realized that my next step after WWU should not be a Masters in Creative Writing, or a Masters in Education with a Certification to teach elementary. I decided that it is directly necessary I throw myself into a career that aligns with what I see as my civic duty to the world and future generations. I am the next generation inheriting the climate crisis, and it will not wait for me to do the necessary work, as it has not waited for anyone else. I am dedicated to devoting my life to the sciences in order to ensure there is a world for future generations; I venture forward into the realm of Environmental Studies with the direct wish to attend Evergreen's Environmental Studies program to carry on the work done by countless other volunteers, researchers, citizen scientists, and native neighbors before me. My ultimate goal is to ensure clean drinking water in Kitsap and Mason county, testing for fecal matter and other contaminants in our shared waterways and do all I can to lessen the brunt of the climate crisis against the wildlife of the Hood Canal and our indigenous neighbors to preserve critical aquatic and wetland life. Please consider me as part of your Fall 2025 Cohort, so I can gain the skills necessary for a more sustainable and resilient future for our planet and the Pacific Northwest.