**The 2011 Annual Association of American Geographers Conference in Seattle**

I was recently given the opportunity to represent my employer, United States Geological Survey (USGS), as well as the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), at the Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting in Seattle. My purpose was to present preliminary results of the work that my USGS crew and I perform at Nisqually NWR; talk about my position as part of the USGS team; and discuss the environmental monitoring relationship we have with the neighboring Nisqually Indian Tribe.

I began working with USGS after my first year as a graduate student in the MES program at Evergreen in June 2010. Since then, I have been in a SISNAR position, or Student Interns in Support of Native American Relations. The responsibility of my crew are to monitor the biological and physical changes that have occurred within the Nisqually River delta since the removal of the dike in 2009. Some preliminary results from our monitoring efforts that were presented at the AAG Conference included abiotic changes such as sedimentation, elevation, geomorphology, hydrologic, photodocumentation, water quality, aerial photography and remote sensing. Other monitoring efforts presented included biotic changes within avian, benthic invertebrate, fish and vegetation communities.

The particular conference session that I was asked to present at was Tribal Rivers as Confluences of Environmental and Cultural Restoration because of our close estuary monitoring relationship with scientists from the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Other participants within my session included Patricia McDowell from the University of Oregon, Seth White from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and Viv Sinnamon from the Kowanyama Aboriginal Tribe of Australia. In many tribal communities, rivers support biota that are important to the maintenance and restoration of tribal cultures and lifestyles.  Therefore, river management and restoration can be important factors determining the overall cultural health and welfare of tribal communities.  This session highlighted the growing role that tribal governments and agencies play in the collaborative management and restoration of rivers that support resources of special tribal significance, including fish, birds, mollusks and native plants just to name a few. Our presentations were to describe ecological linkages between river processes and life histories of culturally important species for tribal communities, ways in which tribal or aboriginal viewpoints have influenced river science, management, or restoration programs, and/or the growth and significance of tribal programs that promote innovative collaboration in the management and restoration of rivers with special importance to Native American tribes.

Attending this conference was a fantastic opportunity to meet and converse with scientists from various disciplines, not just geography, and such participation reiterated to me the interrelationship of all scientific disciplines. From this opportunity, I was able to convey the importance of our work at Nisqually NWR and the close working relationship we have with the Nisqually Indian Tribe. It also provided an opportunity to learn about research projects that are occurring here in the Pacific Northwest, the rest of the United States and even abroad. If given the opportunity to attend this event again in the future, I would definitely take it and highly recommend it to any others that might also be given the chance to attend.