

[From Fall 2008]

## **Intern Experience**

The excitement finally hit as I crossed the vast glittering Chesapeake Bay. Gawking at the crashing waves and glinting sun, I let out a pure giggle of anticipation for the unknown opportunities lying on the other side of that engineering wonder. An internship at the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge awaited me, and I was eager to pour my thoughts into elaborate projects and absorb the knowledge of my superiors.

Greeting me warmly was a jovial, enthusiastic staff. Particularly invigorating was everyone's passion for their profession and their keenness to share their experiences with me. A spark of enthusiasm immediately ignited in my core, and I was eager to spread it throughout the office and to a sea of visitors. This excitement was brought about because I was finally getting the chance to be involved in the profession of my dreams, getting amazing experiences that will surely mold my future. Over the weeks that excitement only seemed to grow as I became familiar with the area and loved it all the more. A stream of surprises and new adventures constantly arose with the astoundingly diverse cultural backgrounds of the guests in the Visitor Center and continuous variation of wildlife on the trails.

The excitement and knowledge each visitor walked away with each day was inspiring and kept a grin on my face. The best thing about being an intern was that I got a variety of experiences. From creating ambitious programs to fieldwork, and even just learning the proper way to reuse and package a box, I truly got to do it all. I even got to explore the entire peninsula, making valuable contacts and sharing ideas with other refuges. This internship with the Refuge has been immensely rewarding, furthering my confidence to a new level and bringing about poise and initiative I didn't know I had.

The beauty on the Eastern Shore was like nothing I had experienced before. The splendor of the marsh, the subtle knowledge whispered amongst the trees, and the unique personality found in every alert little bird was fantastic. I hope I get lucky enough to experience its radiance again someday.

By Mary McClellan  
ESVNWR