



Watershed Management in Central NJ



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Introduction

During the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to be the recipient of the Ted Stiles Internship at the Watershed Institute, a community environmental center focused on local education and environmental research. As an intern at the institute, I was a land stewardess working primarily to remove invasive and plant native plant species on the site's 950-acre reserve.



Image of myself reporting data from a conductivity test.

Issues Confronting Site:

It was an extensive challenge to clear enough land of invasives and plant the over 300 gallon-sized native plants the institute had received for the project before the summer ended or they died from being in pots for too long.



Image of interns weeding floating wetland (I'm in the purple with waders).

Activities:

- Waded in nearby river tributaries to carry out water testing including taking samples and measuring conductivity, dissolved oxygen, pH and turbidity.
- Restored a rain garden by turning the soil, adding compost and replanting water loving species such as Juncus, Irises, and Button Bushes.
- Restored a floating wetland on a pond by removing the overgrown weeds and planting new Juncus plugs.
- Cleared invasive species such as Japanese Honeysuckle, Multi-floral Rose and Autumn Olive, and planted native species in their place including Black Willows, Dogwood bushes, and River Birches.



Images of cleared areas with planted native species that are staked and netted.

Favorite Experience:

In August, the institute holds their annual Butterfly Festival. This community event features performances and presentations where attendees can have fun while also learned about the environment around them. I loved seeing the community come out and teaching people about watersheds and what they could do to protect them.

Impact:

This experience was really rewarding in that it gave me the opportunity to learn more about the environment and acquire field work skills. I really thrived on the passion of the organization and ability to do my part to make a visible positive change. I learned that I really enjoy hands on work but also that my passion can be extreme causing me to overwork.

Future Work:

I am returning to the Watershed Institute this upcoming summer 2020 as their Ted Stiles intern.



Image of myself planting a Black Willow tree.



Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Allison Jackson for giving me this opportunity and being an amazing supervisor as well as Dr. Thomas Holtz and Dr. John Merck for their support and guidance throughout my SGC career.

Site Information:

The Watershed Institute

31 Titus Mill Rd, Pennington, NJ 08534

Supervisor: Allison Jackson

