

Tony Cuellar

PRIME Final Report/Essay

Tony was a high school intern in an Arlington internship program called PRIME. He wrote this piece about his experience.

Creating a future with nature and wildlife for future generations is what the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust is striving to do. As more people immigrate into the area and as more developments go up, nature is sacrificed each time. NVCT is a non-profit organization that works with lawyers, landowners, land management companies, and the government to save nature on the various properties of Northern Virginia. Over the past four weeks I have had the pleasure of working with seven hard working, intelligent people on issues we all care deeply about. Some of these issues were problems I had never heard of, and being able to witness the discussions and meetings about how to overcome these issues was truly inspiring. For example, a lot of environments are becoming vulnerable to climate change and rising sea levels. I got to listen in on a meeting where a circuit rider came to discuss that exact issue. Discovering the science behind it and the solutions everyone brought to the table was fascinating. Outside of meetings and outings, my mentors kept me busy with two large projects which I completed on a computer using Excel. I also had the chance to engage in property visits. During these visits, one of my colleagues and I would drive out to NVCT's property easement sites and make sure that everything was still in the same condition as the previous year. This is vital because landowners are legally required to maintain their properties and stay within easement boundaries. These visits were neat to go on and I learned a lot of new information along the way. Overall, my internship let me explore many areas of the field and gave me a good taste of what the working world is like. I could not be more grateful to my mentors for letting me spend a month working for them.

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