

**ENS Lauren Haggerty  
JRCOSTEP Summer 2016  
Boise State University  
Rhineland District Office  
Rhineland, Wisconsin**



Hello! My name is Lauren Haggerty; I'm from Boise, Idaho and attend Boise State University. I will be graduating this fall with a B.S. in Environmental and Occupational Health with a sustainability minor. Boise State has had numerous COSTEPs throughout the years and I've heard so many wonderful things about this internship that I knew I had to take the chance and apply. After getting through the application process and getting the call that I had been offered a position I was ecstatic. I was stationed in Rhineland, Wisconsin at the District Office where I had the pleasure of working with my preceptor Marissa Kumar, Environmental Health Specialist, who completed a COSTEP assignment and knew exactly how to make the most of my summer.

Upon arriving at the Rhineland District Office I knew immediately that I was going to get to see and do more than the average internship provides. I've been told that I had one of the most exciting first days that a COSTEP can have. Approximately 15 minutes into my first day I was told that I was going out in the field and this wasn't any ordinary day out in the field. Ms. Kumar, Garrett Steiner (another COSTEP), and I and traveled to a reservation that had recently had some serious issues with the production and consumption of synthetic drugs. We worked alongside the U.S. EPA and went to a few homes where the synthetic drug had been manufactured, used, and sold to assess what type of remediation would need to be done for the houses to be inhabited again. The U.S. EPA brought some sampling equipment to measure the volatile organic compounds and particulates in the air to test the air quality of the homes. The best part was that Mr. Steiner and I were able to do the actual sampling. This was definitely one of my favorite days all summer.



My more typical days included conducting routine food surveys of restaurants and of temporary food vendors at powwows, safety inspections, and the occasional meeting. These different surveys really built upon what I had learned in school, improved my food safety knowledge, and helped me begin to memorize the FDA Food Code. Towards the end of my COSTEP I was able to inspect a powwow completely on my own and feel confident doing so. I also became really familiar with the online reporting system WebEHRS, which is where I would write a report after conducting the inspection. I appreciated these days because it gave me quality experience and allowed me to understand what a job in this field would look like day-in and day-out.

An atypical but more memorable experience I had was in the wake of a disastrous flood that hit the northern part of Wisconsin and left one of the tribes we work with in a state of emergency. I was able to get up to the reservation about five days after the flood occurred. Seeing the repercussions of such a detrimental flood was devastating but in a public health aspect it was an awesome experience to see an incident command post in full swing. To see how the surrounding communities responded to the flood and the efforts they made to collect donations for the affected was humbling. While we were out at the reservation I was able to do some private well water sampling to see if it was contaminated. Water quality and drinking water is an area of public health I have a lot of passion for so I really enjoyed being able to be a part of the sampling.

Before working for Indian Health Service (IHS) I was completely unaware of the broad scope of services that are offered to the tribes and all the areas of public health that this job reaches. Ms. Kumar and I worked primarily with three tribes in Wisconsin and three tribes in Lower Michigan. Working with different tribes allowed me to meet so many wonderful people and throughout the summer I got to see the importance of building and maintaining relationships with these tribes. I have appreciated the cultural growth this internship has given me and the new perspectives that I've gained while working with IHS.

My time spent as a JRCOSTEP and working with IHS has been a very rewarding experience. The knowledge I have gained throughout my summer as an Environmental Health COSTEP has helped pave the way for a successful and fulfilling career. This experience is comparable to none and I'm grateful for the growth that this internship has facilitated for me. Even though I was hesitant to step out of my comfort zone and move 1,700 miles from home I am so glad that I did and I will never forget this experience.

Thank you to everyone who made my summer more than I could have ever imagined!

