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Last summer I would have never thought that in a year I would be living 1500 miles away from home in the White Mountains. However, I did know exactly what I wanted from my internship and that was a public health oriented hands on learning experience. My perfect internship ended up being an Indian Health Service COSTEP at the Eastern Arizona District Office, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, Lakeside, AZ. I could not have asked for a better adventure. I got everything I wanted plus the opportunity to explore places I had never been before.

When I arrived at the District Office I quickly learned I had gotten very lucky. Stationed there allowed me to serve three different service units, which meant I got to do a variety of work. I had also been very lucky to have gotten a great preceptor, Stephen Piontkowski, who provided and encouraged all of my learning experiences.

Within my first couple weeks I visited all three reservations I would be working on the rest of the summer, the San Carlos Apache Reservation, the Hopi Reservation and the White Mountain Apache Reservation.



Over the course of the summer I was able to participate in a variety of activities including food surveys, institutional surveys, injury prevention data collection, three rabies clinics and three Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF) prevention campaigns. My favorite of those activities were the rabies clinics and RMSF activities. It was so great to work directly with tribal members and learn first hand some of the American Indian culture. These clinics and prevention

campaigns were also a great way to learn more about RMSF. RMSF is a fairly new disease in eastern Arizona and it was really great to be apart of the efforts to help raise awareness and prevent new cases through the application of pesticide at homesites (photo above) and the placing of tick collars on dogs.



Eastern Arizona District
Environmental Health Officers.

I learned so much during my COSTEP experience and I have everyone at the Eastern Arizona District Office, the San Carlos Service unit, the Whiteriver Service Unit and the Keams Canyon Service Unit to thank. I was also very lucky to have met so many

IHS officers at the Phoenix Area Workshop. The work shop was a rare opportunity to meet other officers and learn more about IHS. It was a truly enjoyable week and I even attended my first professional baseball game!

My environmental health program at Illinois State University covered a broad range of environmental studies. I felt that I used everything I learned from those studies plus gained more knowledge in most areas. I would highly recommend the COSTEP program to anyone interested in broadening their environmental health knowledge or those looking for an exciting career in environmental health.