

**ENS Rachel Jordan
Jr. COSTEP Summer 2010
Eastern Kentucky University
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Tempe, Arizona**

My name is Rachel Jordan and I am a student from Eastern Kentucky University. I will be graduating in December with a Bachelors of Science degree in Environmental Health Science. I learned about the COSTEP program from a professor at my school, Professor Joe Beck. He had nothing but good things to say about the program. I had also talked to other students who have done COSTEPs in previous years.



I was super excited when I got the call that I was offered a position in Arizona at the Western Arizona District Office in Tempe. I knew that this was going to be a great experience because I had met my preceptor, CDR Vince Garcia, two years ago. I was supposed to arrive in Tempe on May 17th, but due to some issues with the writing of the health care reform, my orders were delayed. This was a very stressful time because no one knew if any of the COSTEPs were going to be going to their duty stations. I was so stressed and upset because not only would I not get to have the COSTEP experience, I would also not be able to graduate in December. I was able to still come out to the office as an extern instead of a COSTEP, and eventually my orders were sent through.

I arrived for work on June 2nd and I was thrown into work immediately. On the first day I went with LTJG John Hansen to survey a casino on the Ak-Chin Indian reservation. I was super nervous and excited all at once. It was my first time surveying a kitchen, let alone one in a casino. I have worked with John a lot this summer and he has shown me so much and really helped me become more comfortable with doing surveys of establishments.



I can honestly say that Vince has been the best boss I have ever had. He is so helpful and full of knowledge. I am so glad that I got to work with him and everyone else in the WADO office. Vince has taken me all over the state to work with all of our covered tribes. I have really gotten the chance to learn each tribe's culture and I am glad that I was educated on something I had no idea about before I arrived. I have also had the privilege to see so many amazing and beautiful places. I was able to go into the Grand Canyon on two different occasions. The first was when we went to Peach Springs to survey the camp grounds that they have. The Hualapai tribe has one of the only access points in the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River and it was so amazing to get to see that.

Vince then took Chris Caler, the extern at PIMC, and me to the village of Supai to work with the Supai Tribe. Supai is the tribe that lives down in the Grand Canyon. The only way to get to the tribe is to either hike the 8 mile trail, ride on mules, or to ride a helicopter in. We got to ride the helicopter and it was an amazing experience for me! When we arrived at the village we immediately got to work. Vince gave a presentation on elder fall prevention and car seat safety. We also got to hike down to take a look at the camp grounds and the falls. They had just had a flood two days before we got there and the camp grounds were a mess. It was sad to see this because they had been working so hard to get everything fixed from the last flood they had. The falls were still so amazing to see and I am so happy that I got the opportunity to visit this tribe.

This has been the best experience of my life and everyone in this office has definitely made my summer amazing. I have learned so much from all of the surveys I have conducted (pools, stores, food establishments, juvenile detention center, and many more places) and the mosquito trapping we conducted. I will definitely be taking everything I have learned from here back home with me and I hope to get a job with IHS one day. I want to thank Vince and John for taking me under their wing this summer and teaching me all they know. I would also like to thank everyone in the Area Office for being so helpful and friendly. If any student has the opportunity to do a COSTEP internship jump at the chance to do it, you will not be disappointed. Oh and please don't let the paper work discourage you. It is totally worth it once you get to your job!

