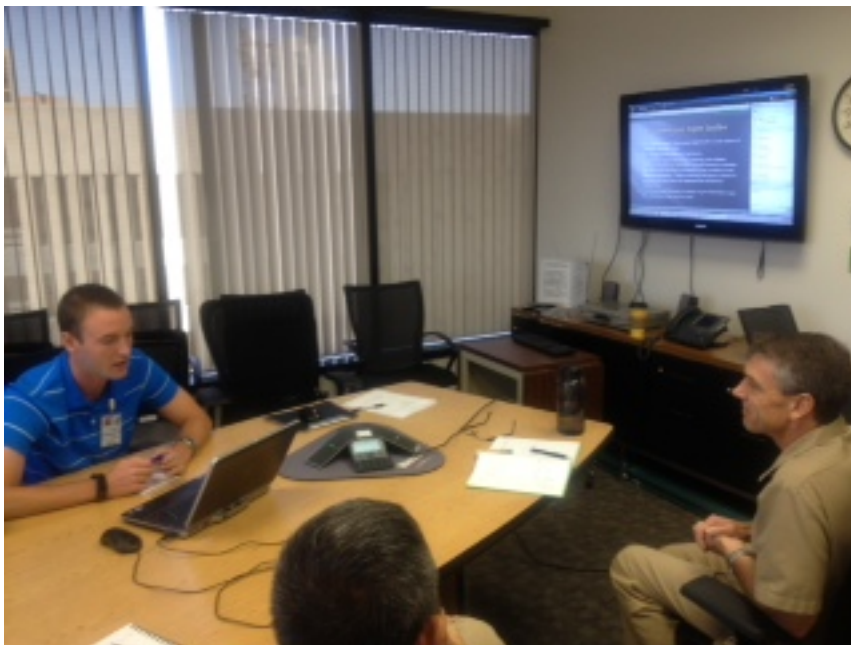


**ENS Joshua Turner
Jr. COSTEP Summer 2013
Western Carolina University
Phoenix Area Office
Phoenix, Arizona**

Hello, my name is Joshua Turner and this upcoming year I will be a senior at Western Carolina University. I will be receiving a degree in Environmental Health. This summer I had the opportunity to work with the United States Public Health Service in the Phoenix Area Office as a Jr. COSTEP. I had heard about the COSTEP program from Western Carolina students that had previously done COSTEPs all around the country and all of their stories and advice caught my attention. I decided to apply and once I knew I was accepted into the Phoenix Area Office Indian Health Service (PAIHS) I could not have been more excited to arrive and experience a whole new world.



This summer lived up to the hype previous students had told me about as well as my expectations. As being my first time really traveling from North Carolina seeing the country as I drove to Arizona as well as the Arizona desert were truly eye opening experiences for me. My preceptor was LCDR Amanda Parris, and I also worked with CDR Dave Cramer and CDR Ricardo Murga. I could not be more thankful for the mentoring they provided for me and also allowing me to work on such amazing projects. Some of the projects I was able to do this summer were environmental management audits, emergency preparedness, safety officer webinar, hazard surveillance, rabies clinic, Rocky Mountain spotted fever campaign, emergency alert system, and equipment calibrations.



One of the perks with working in an area office is that you get to travel and see the unique challenges of each service unit. With my project of performing the environmental management audits I was able to travel to six different service units. Environmental management audits look at a series of things including community right to know, hazardous waste, universal waste, medical waste, and hazard communication. With this type of auditing I would see one service unit that excelled in managing their hazardous waste and then another than struggled. This really showed me that the opportunity is there for each service unit to excel in all phases if we can find what works in an area and adapt it to that program. My favorite audit was going

to one of the truly most beautiful places in the world, the Havasupai tribe. Getting to spend a few days in the bottom of the Canyon and work in the clinic there opened my eyes to a whole new world. Getting to see the amazing scenery and waterfalls there in my afternoons was an amazing experience.

In another project I got to travel to another remote site Hopi. Here I helped teach a class on patient decontamination and START Triage. My main responsibility was to teach how to don and doff the level C personal protective equipment. We spent about an hour and a half in the classroom teaching and then spent the rest of the class outside and let the staff don and doff as well as set up the decontamination tent. During this visit I also performed an environmental management audit while I was at Hopi. Hopi also taught me valuable

lessons outside of work. Hopi is a community that is still deeply rooted into their culture and I really enjoyed their ways of life. They make some of the most beautiful crafts my favorite being the Kachina dolls. In my internship I had the opportunity to take the information I had learned from my environmental management audits and apply it to teaching a webinar. I taught a webinar on “Proper handling of Hazardous and Universal Waste”. I was able to teach this to all the safety officers under the Area office. I took the common problems from the audits I had done and it gave me an opportunity to show how they can be corrected and also how to improve the existing system. I really enjoyed getting to help make suggestions to improve things I had seen during my audits.

During my time at Havasupai and Peach Springs I was able to help the Safety Officer from the area Tim Poorbaugh with hazard surveillance. The most common thing observed during these rounds was cluttered areas. We examined every area inside each clinic as well as the outside of each clinic. It was great to work with a newly added safety officer that had just recently completed his masters. He was able to give great advice on internships as well as graduate programs.

I also got to work with the COSTEPs from Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) and the Western Arizona District Office. During this time we worked at a rabies clinic for the Tonto Apache Tribe. We got to work with a USDA Veterinarian. She performed the rabies vaccination on the animals as we filled out the paper work for each animal and helped educate the community on rabies as well as Rocky Mountain spotted fever. In this effort we were able to vaccinate 34 animals in the area.

I had another opportunity to work with the COSTEP from PIMC during the Rocky Mountain spotted fever campaign in the White River service unit. We spent three days working in the area. This consisted of driving from house to house and applying tick collars to any dogs above six months old and spraying puppies. Then we provided education to the community about Rocky Mountain spotted fever and its emergence with the Brown Dog Tick in Arizona over the past eight years. Then the house borders would be sprayed with pesticide to help remove the tick from inhabited areas.

I also had the chance to work on the PAIHS emergency alert system, the Arizona Health Alert Network (AZHAN). I helped update the database to include all Phoenix Area Office employees with their current information. I also helped place members into designated administrator controls of this system. I tested the system to send emails to the office employees and its effectiveness.

My last big project of my internship was to help calibrate all equipment that needed annual calibration during the summer. This included about 12 instruments from the Phoenix Area Office and then 8 instruments in different service units. This taught me some valuable skills on how to order calibration and receive full documentation on calibrated equipment. I feel that this is a skill that I will use later on in my career and this project taught many valuable skills. The major emphasis was on receiving correct documentation as well as proper organization.

I could not be more thankful for my experience this summer. Being in the PAIHS I was given a broad view of the Indian Health Service and each day brought new and exciting experiences. I could not ask my preceptor, LCDR Amanda Parris for a better experience and I truly appreciate the plan she made for me before I arrived and the time she took to invest in my experience. I appreciate the time taken from everyone that I worked with throughout the summer to give me a glimpse of what the Indian Health Service is all about. This experience is one I will talk about for the rest of my life and I encourage uprising students to give the United States Public Health Service COSTEP program some thought. I could not be happier with my decision to spend my summer as a COSTEP.

