

The University of Vermont – Letters from the recipients of the Kate Svitek Memorial Scholarships (continued)

Dear Svitek Family,

Thank you so much for your support and financial assistance with my internship this summer! Your generosity helped me preserve and protect one of our nation's most beautiful natural resources while exploring the wilderness of Olympic National Park.

Over the course of the summer, I volunteered over 500 hours with the Park Service. I spent up to 10 days at a time backpacking through the magnificent old growth forests and the stunning sub-alpine ridgelines of Sol Duc Valley. As a backcountry ranger, I connected with visitors, hikers, and other volunteers from around the world. I helped encourage leave-no-trace ethics and stressed the importance of preserving and respecting the few truly wild places we have left. I initiated a new food storage program in the backcountry, which will help minimize impacts to the ecosystem while keeping visitors safe from wildlife. I also played a critical roll in several search-and-rescue operations to help injured hikers out of the remote backcountry.

Your generous gift allowed me to purchase the gear necessary to safely and efficiently work in one of the most rugged and inaccessible reaches of wilderness: new leather hiking boots, a heavy-duty backpack, raingear, and other essential equipment kept me comfortable and prepared to carry out my position. Your gift also helped cover some of the travel costs I incurred while driving to and from Washington State. Without your help, I would not have been able to afford such a life-changing opportunity.

This summer truly got me excited for a career in the outdoors, striving to protect our vital natural resources while providing education and outreach to all who wish to explore the wilderness. I cannot thank you enough for your generosity. If you have any other questions or would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Zachary N. Lance

