



NALMS 314 Workgroup Intern

Skye Embray

I am Skye Embray, and I recently completed a policy internship with the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS). I graduated from Trinity College in May and received my bachelor of science in environmental science and public policy and law. I am currently pursuing a master of public administration degree in environmental science and policy at Columbia University. My educational background in environmental science and policy has provided me with an in-depth understanding of the ecological foundations that support the policies I hope to push and has allowed me to study policy development mechanisms.

During my undergraduate studies, I researched harmful algal blooms and how they affect drinking water quality. This experience sparked my interest in remediating freshwater ecosystems to protect the environment and public health. Therefore, I was interested in working with NALMS in this role because of the internship's focus on the value of lakes to the American economy and using this frame to vie for their protection. My career goal is to engage with the science that matters to policy and ensure equity in implementing and enforcing environmental laws and regulations. I am interested in bridging the gap between science research and policy and addressing the on-the-ground problems faced by communities disproportionately impacted by environmental racism and lack of access to clean drinking water. I aim to pursue an environmental protection specialist career within a U.S. federal agency to accomplish this.

For the past year, I have been working with the 314 NALMS working



group to create informational materials for the campaign to bring awareness and new funding to Section 314 of the Clean Water Act, Clean Lakes Program. The goal is to explain to different audiences and through various formats the importance of the Clean Lakes Program, what it did, and its success, and ultimately convince others why we need the program re-established and adequately funded.

With the help of the working group, I have created a series of fact sheets for both public and legislator audiences, informational PowerPoint presentations accompanied by recorded narration, a template letter for constituents to contact their representatives, and a survey for state agencies to communicate their needs for funding and how to best implement funding if re-appropriated for the Clean Lakes Program. Additionally, I began work on a dashboard that will demonstrate just how few lake success stories there have been under the CWA Section 319

Non-Point Source Program, which the Environmental Protection Agency currently uses as the source of funding to address lake issues instead of the Clean Lakes Program. Within the dashboard maps, we can comprehend that more than resources apportioned from the Non-Point Source Program are needed to protect and remediate our nation's lakes comprehensively. The variety of resources created during my internship with the working group will be available on the NALMS website this summer.

My professional role with the working group has taught me the importance of framing an issue to elicit a specific response from legislators and how scientific research directly affects how to present a policy issue to policymakers. This October, I hope to attend the NALMS annual conference in Erie, Pennsylvania, to show my work with NALMS and how this campaign intends to not only elicit new funding for an enhanced Clean Lakes Program but also how the communication of the science behind lake issues to various audiences is an essential aspect of pushing policy development.

The Clean Lakes Program is critical to protecting our nation's freshwater resources. It provides funding for research, monitoring, and restoration projects that improve water quality and promote lake ecosystems' health. However, the program's budget has been severely cut in recent years, jeopardizing its ability to carry out its critical mission.

By creating a range of materials to explain the importance of the Clean Lakes Program, we hope to educate legislators and the public on the need for enhanced funding for this vital program.