

Preeyus Patel BSc Environmental Science



I am a third year environmental science student at York. The course has provided me with a vast amount of knowledge in a wide variety of disciplines. However, the most important skill I have gained is the ability to approach problems in a holistic manner. The world faces complex, diverse and extremely large environmental problems. In order to face these problems I believe a triple bottom line approach that considers ecological, economic and social aspects of the environment is required.

This is just one of the approaches that is taught within the environment department. With an extremely high calibre of lecturers and leading experts, in their respective fields, the department provides a fantastic platform for the development and growth of individuals.

This summer (2013) I completed a four-month internship for the Friends of St Nicholas Fields, an environmental charity in York. The organisation has three sections: a sustainability Centre known as the Environment Centre, a recycling sector and a 24-acre nature reserve. I worked as a Park Ranger. The role entailed me managing the nature reserve. This was an exciting, diverse, and often physically demanding, experience. On a daily basis there would be between 5 and 15 volunteers. I would manage and motivate the volunteers to perform various tasks. The tasks would vary on a daily basis; some of the tasks were the careful maintenance of ecological systems and the clearance of paths for public use. The reserve contains species, such as water voles that are protected in the UK, which required extra attention when performing conservation tasks. During my time I worked with members of the local community (both young and old) and local groups of people (such as travellers) building stronger lines of communication. I thoroughly enjoyed the role. St Nicholas Fields have worked with me to create an opportunity for students at the University of York to volunteer in conservation activities and ecological surveying. The high level of freedom and responsibility afforded me a chance to learn much.

My internship as a Park Ranger has helped me develop a more realistic and practical understanding of conservation and the difficulties that can arise outside of theoretical models. Studying Environmental Science has taught me about the importance of viewing problems in a holistic manner while also understanding the importance of protecting ecological systems.