

Profile Earth Team

Gonzaga student helps turn public relations into an “earth science”

It's not often that one thinks of public relations as an earth science. But the power of effective communications is often the key to helping landowners realize the value of conservation.

At a recent Public Relations Society of America breakfast meeting, Gonzaga University senior Nicole Reid was introduced to NRCS-Washington Public Affairs Officer Ron Nichols. Soon after their meeting, the topic turned to farming and the environment -- and the importance of strategic communications planning and execution. In less than the time it takes to butter a piece of toast, the two began discussing the real-life experience possibilities the Earth Team Volunteer program could offer a budding P.R. professional.

After visiting the Washington state office in Spokane and learning more about the agency's mission, Nicole signed up as an Earth Team volunteer.

Nicole is now spearheading an effort to develop a comprehensive marketing communications plan targeted to Hispanic and underserved producers in Washington -- starting first with locating



Earth Team volunteer Nicole Reid is getting a jump-start on the competition by applying her public relations skills to help the NRCS reach underserved producers throughout Washington. A senior majoring in public relations, Nicole attends Gonzaga University.

and evaluating secondary research about the target audiences. Once Nicole completes her research, she will work with the state's outreach committee to help craft the appropriate messages for the campaign and she will also provide creative direction on the tactics used in the implementation of the campaign.

Because the Earth Team program is so flexible, Nicole is able to carry a full load of academic studies AND begin applying public relations theory in a very practical and useful way.

"It's a great fit for both of us," says Nichols. "We get the benefit of Nicole's energy, enthusiasm and communications skills, and she'll walk away from her

experience with some impressive portfolio materials she can show perspective employers," he says. "She'll definitely have a competitive edge when she graduates. And we'll have a campaign that will help us reach out more effectively to Hispanic producers," Nichols says.

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