

VOLUNTEERS

Helping People Help the Land

Working in the Field = Good Experience for Student

Engineering student Alissa Mell spent the summer volunteering as a Conservation Engineering Assistant for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team in Minnesota.

“Spending time out in the field, doing surveys is so different than learning from a book or a PowerPoint show. It was a really good experience for me,” said Alissa.

Alissa worked directly with Nichole Sternquist, Agricultural Engineer in the Mora Field Office and the Area 3 engineering staff covering several counties in northeast Minnesota. She assisted with site evaluation, soil borings and field surveys using GPS surveying equipment and working with landowners to address their erosion issues. Alissa gained on-the-job experience in conservation engineering practices over a variety of land uses, including grazing lands, cropland, dairy, beef and poultry production.

Volunteering with the Earth Team Volunteer program provides opportunities to learn job skills, enhance knowledge in conservation activities and provide assistance to NRCS. It is a great way for college students to explore and gain experience in their field of study.

According to Sternquist, “Field experience is a fun and meaningful way to introduce students to a natural resource career.”

“In class, you can try to imagine it, but you don’t really know what it’s going to be like. I could see myself doing this as a career,” said Alissa.

Alissa is currently a sophomore engineering student at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan.



Nichole Sternquist, Agricultural Engineer (left) introduces Earth Team Volunteer Alissa Mell (right) to field surveying and site evaluation.

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*Nichole Sternquist,
Agricultural Engineer*

The Earth Team is the volunteer component of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



If you are interested in volunteering, contact the National Earth Team office at (888) 526- 3227 or visit

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/volunteers/>