

Kenith Franks
Summer Extern 2010
Fort Lewis College
Rosebud Service Unit
Rosebud, SD



I am Kenith Franks and I come from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. I am currently an enrolled Junior at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. I am majoring in Environmental Science. I have always been interested in the Environmental Health Field. To be selected as a Summer Extern was a rewarding opportunity. I worked for two (2) months at the Rosebud Service Unit located on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. Initially, I had a basic idea of the work that was to be done in the Environmental Health field, however as the weeks progressed I found out that there are different aspects of this job that you cannot prepare yourself for.



During the first week my Supervisor, Mr. Charles Mack informed me that we were being detailed to the Wagner Service Unit to help with home surveys due to flood damage. I spent two days over in the Wagner, SD area doing flood damage assessments. I also helped with the flood surveys of a Tribal Office Building and a large maintenance plant. I used informational forms and asked basic questions that would help the tribe and individuals with information that would aid the people that needed it. Over all this flooding experience helped me learn valuable people skills and documentation skills that I applied later on at the Rosebud Office of Environmental Health.

After I got back from the Wagner Service Unit I learned that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe had been impacted by tornadoes and straight line winds. My supervisor and I where dispatched to the town of Eagle Butte, SD where we were detailed out from an Incident Command Center. We did home assessments of severely damaged homes and interviewed the citizens that were impacted by the weather events.

No sooner than I returned back to the Rosebud Reservation, there was a severe thunderstorm with heavy rotation and straight line winds. So my next two (2) weeks were spent surveying damaged and completely destroyed homes on Rosebud Reservation. In addition I spent time interviewing the people that were displaced and the information gathered I incorporated it into a Survey Report. The final survey product was shared with the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs which aided 26 households in receiving \$1000.00 each.



Finally, after all storm damage assessments, we commenced on getting environmental health surveys done and doing other miscellaneous tasks. One memorable experience was when a cat mauled a baby and a rabies analysis was a concern. We removed the cat's head from its body and took it to the State Health Lab in Pierre, SD. I was impressed with the whole layout of the State Laboratory. This possible rabies concern was a good experience for me. In addition, while on a survey of a local golf course my supervisor and I came across a stray dog showing symptoms of possibly having rabies. With assistance from a Tribal Games, Fish, and Parks Ranger we took care of that public health threat.

My very first food survey was the Tribal Summer Food Program. Throughout my time at the Rosebud Service Unit OEH, I spent time reading publications on proper food handling and preparation, but nothing compares to actually getting in the field and putting something tangible to the words I read. The various summer food



surveys prepared me for an in-depth survey we did at the Rosebud Casino Restaurant and Deli. While at the casino I also assisted in doing an institutional survey of the casino hotel.

Later on as I progressed through out my time we did rabies vaccinations at a remote part of the reservation. We went door to door looking for animals we could give the vaccines to. I gave my first vaccination and also learned how to fill out rabies certification paper work. In late July 2010 I assisted with the local animal spay and neuter clinic. During this four day clinic there were 227 animal surgeries and over 380 rabies vaccinations given. Most of the locals were happy, as this was a *free* clinic.

My time at Rosebud was a very insightful experience, as my confidence in dealing with people has been enhanced. I learned different techniques on how to write reports, also different ways of conducting a food survey and an institutional survey. This Extern experience has helped me acquire knowledge that is needed in this field.