

ENS T.J. Archer
Jr. COSTEP Summer 2010
East Central University
Lawton Service Unit
Lawton, OK

My name is T.J. Archer. I am currently attending East Central University in Ada, OK in which I am pursuing a Bachelors degree in Environmental Health Science. Dr. Pat Bohan, one of my professors at East Central University, introduced me to the JRCOSTEP program in the early fall semester of 2009. After a few weeks of contemplating on whether or not to do the JRCOSTEP, I decided to go for it. With much help from Dr. Bohan on getting all the paper work completed, I was selected for my JRCOSTEP assignment in February 2010



I was selected to start active duty on May 24, 2010-August 12, 2010 in Lawton, OK. I worked out of the Office of Environmental Health, stationed at the Indian Hospital in Lawton, OK. The Lawton Service area covers portions of Caddo, Comanche, Kiowa, Tillman, Cotton, Stephens, Jefferson, Grady, Canadian, and Blaine counties in southwestern Oklahoma and Maverick County, TX exposing you to many different cultures. Tribal jurisdiction within the service area include seven tribes: Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma, Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, Delaware Nation of Oklahoma, Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas, Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, and Wichita affiliated Tribes of Oklahoma.

There are two field officers located at the Lawton field office in which both served as my preceptors. These two field officers are LTJG Zac Grinnell and LTJG Dusty Joplin, both graduates of East Central's Environmental Health Science program.

During my time as a JrCOSTEP I had a variety of responsibilities and duties. These responsibilities and duties included food service surveys, institutional environmental health surveys, injury prevention, water sampling for swimming pools, rabies vaccination for dogs and cats, head start environmental health surveys, environmental health of native homes, water and wastewater treatment, and environmental management.



An example, of many of the projects my preceptor arranged for me to do, was to test, analyze, and compare water samples for the Comanche Nation Water Park. What I tested for at the water park was alkalinity, chlorine, bromine, and combined chlorine. The reason for performing these tests was to see if the water park was correctly monitoring and correcting their pool water, and to make data graphs to see how chemicals in the water would fluctuate throughout the day. After the data was collected, analyzed, and constructed we then provided this data to the Comanche Nation Water Park.

I gained experience during my time as a JrCOSTEP in networking between tribal, state, and federal agencies by participating in professional meetings such as Native American Injury Prevention Coalition (NAIPC). During these meetings, different people would discuss an overview of the different types of injury prevention work, in which they have been providing each month. I gained great knowledge from listening to all the great environmental health professionals describe their different injury prevention techniques, and this experience taught me how to network between many different agencies.

My experience with the Indian Health Services has been outstanding and more than I could have ever expected. I have gained great knowledge and experience learning from all the great environmental health professionals

located in Oklahoma. The JrCOSTEP has been a great hands-on experience and introduced me to many different cultures. I recommend to anyone who is looking for an internship dealing with environmental health, to consider the JrCOSTEP and Indian Health Services. You won't regret it!