

Wyoming Survey Intern #1  
October 12, 2008

Charlie Doman  
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I thoroughly enjoyed my experience as a STEP employee working with the BLM during the summer of 2008. The impressions I had about the BLM have convinced me that a career with them would be a productive and honorable choice once I graduate from school. I have no reservations about recommending the BLM to my fellow students. It is an excellent place to build confidence, and a very easy place to fit in quickly.

As a STEP employee working in the Cadastral Surveying Department of the Rawlins Field Office in Rawlins, Wyoming, a typical day for me was very busy. I started each day by performing the duties of "the new guy," paying attention and attending to the maintenance needs of the work truck, restocking the truck with materials that will be needed in the field, and loading the equipment. In my case, a trailer we used to tow a Polaris Ranger ATV was also a daily maintenance check. I also kept up on the maintenance of tools we used in the field.

After arriving in the field, setting up the GPS system and loading the Ranger, the crew set out to do the job at hand. Using the GPS to navigate, we staked out from a point and drove across the terrain to locate section corners and quarter corners for the purposes of dependently resurveying an entire township. What we were doing, in essence, was following in the footsteps of the original surveyor, verifying that the evidence he left was still there, acquiring more modern data to be used for the advantages of digitization of land corner recordation, and replacing monumentation that has served its purpose with new monumentation that will last many times longer than the original.

While working in the field I gained a reasonable amount of knowledge pertaining to GPS surveying. I was involved with setting up a GPS network more than once, and became fairly proficient with the use of the data collector. I learned several functions and had enough experience with it to eliminate any preconceived inadequacies I had with them. I can now go back to school and effectively operate any of the different systems presently in use at my school.

I became familiar with the mathematics involved in the restoration of corners. It was not my job to perform any of those computations, but I did gain a familiarity and gained a sense of what I needed to work on to become proficient with them.

The days were long and physical, but the rewards of having your name associated with official government work will last much longer. Many BLM employees spend their days in the field. The public land in this country needs to be looked after in a responsible manner to ensure that it does not fall victim to faulty management methods, blatant misuse, or a careless public. You are truly serving your country.

Through the course of the summer I had the opportunity to talk with BLM employees. Many times conversations led to what they thought about working for the BLM. I never heard negativity expressed towards the BLM from any of those people. Although I did find some people who were presently not enjoying the work they were doing, no one ever said they did not like the BLM. I heard the words “family,” and “very fair” used more than once. Many of those people had several years of public service in various offices across the country. I realized I had found a place to practice a profession in an environment that was productive and meaningful for me.

If there is anything else I can be of assistance with, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Jack

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Wyoming Survey Intern #2  
October 12, 2008

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This past summer I had an incredible opportunity to work with the BLM cadastral survey in Rock Springs, Wyoming. As a student enrolled in the four-year, surveying engineering degree program at Penn State University, Wilkes-Barre, I applied for the position of survey technician through the BLM’s STEP program. The STEP program gives students the opportunity to gain valuable experience in their respective fields while working on their education without interruption. The surveying experiences I gained this summer exceeded my expectations of what I felt I would learn and I constantly had a rewarding feeling that I was playing a major part in taking a job from start to finish and that my efforts were appreciated. This experience also had a major impact on where I see myself personally, and my career in land surveying leading to after graduation. Not only will I look into the private sector for work, but I would consider any full-time job openings that the BLM were to offer.

Working under the supervision of cadastral surveyor, I was able to put my education and previous surveying experiences to the test. Being from Pennsylvania, I had no prior experience with the public land survey system, so I was a little concerned about how much this might hinder my job performance. However, after my first day I was relieved to see that my supervisor has a great deal of surveying knowledge, and he was patient and more than willing to share his knowledge and answer all of my questions. It was exciting to see and use today's GPS technology to find original survey corners that were set well over one hundred years ago, using a chain and transit, and find them within a reasonable search area.

One of the most impressive aspects of the job for me was the beauty of the landscape; from the buttes to the roaming wildlife including wild horses; it was like nothing I had ever experienced working in Pennsylvania.

Being two thousand miles away from home made me a little homesick in the beginning. However, the friendliness and the helpfulness of everyone I met in the Rock Springs field office helped make the experience an enjoyable and rewarding summer internship.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone that made this a memorable surveying experience.

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Sincerely,

Joe