



Undergraduate Research Fellow 2004 – 2005



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Like a lot of ecologists I also grew up learning about plants and animals from my parents and grandparents and enjoying the outdoors. I never thought those lessons would someday be directed toward my college and professional career.

I entered college as a non-traditional student at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. I began college in Computer Information Systems. At the time, it seemed that computers were the way to go, but I quickly found I had no love for this program. I switched majors and was accepted into the Environmental Science program. This is when I knew I was going to do something I would enjoy.

The instructors at Haskell have all been very supportive and influential in keeping my interests focused. Another influence has been SEEDS. I attended my first SEEDS field trip to Baltimore in November of 2003. Immediately I felt at home with the other field trip participants. The students all had some of the same ideas and interests as me. This was also my first exposure to professionals in ecology other than my professors.

It was around this same time that I became involved in the Haskell Ecology Club on campus and introduced other students to the aspects of SEEDS. Through my initial involvement with SEEDS and the Haskell Ecology Club I learned of the SEEDS fellowship. I applied, was accepted, and subsequently was able to attend the August 2004 ESA conference in Portland. At the conference I was able to experience first hand what the fellowship entailed by attending the presentations of the current fellowship recipients and visiting with them.

The SEEDS program coordinated a mentor match for me and has helped me stay on task throughout the year. My mentor, Alan Knapp, is extremely knowledgeable. His knowledge and enthusiasm has helped me through the tough parts of my project. My research project is studying native grasses on the Konza Prairie in Manhattan, Kansas. I am observing the growth in different water treatments and how these treatments affect the production of vegetative versus reproductive growth.

I feel very fortunate to be associated with the SEEDS program. I encourage any undergraduate in science to get involved with the SEEDS program as well as any other program that gives them the opportunity to meet professionals and other students who have similar interests.

