The summer of 2017 I had the privilege of working as an ITEP intern for Environmental Department of the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley. ITEP, the acronym for Institute of Tribal Environmental Professionals, was founded to work toward building a healthy environment for strong, self-sustaining tribal communities through strengthening tribal capacity and sovereignty in environmental and natural resource management. I applied for the ITEP internship to learn more about environmental issues facing Native communities and how I can work to support environmental justice in my personal and professional life. I am passionate about working to protect people's health and the health of our environment, and my studies have helped me to further understand how intricately our health and wellbeing is connected to the health of the environment.

It has been a pleasure to work with the knowledgeable staff at the Environmental Department, the Educational Department and the Tribal offices and have the chance to meet many open, warm, and welcoming members of the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley. As an intern for the Environmental Department of the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley, I spent the majority of my time conducting independent online research to develop curriculum for air quality and climate change environmental education outreach activities. I created lesson plans, worksheets, acquired, made, and tested materials for two hands-on, science based educational activities which I presented to tribal youth attending a summer session at the Tribal Education Center. My other major activity was planning and implementing a one-day field trip seminar designed to further tribal knowledge of local climate change vulnerabilities, mitigation, adaptation, and survival strategies. Additionally, on the technical side of things, I helped set up, take down and perform regular maintenance on the Tribe’s Emergency Beta Attenuation Monitor. I also helped to take down a meteorological station tower for troubleshooting and helped with the installation and set-up of a webcam that will eventually be used for live stream monitoring of air quality on the reservation. The internship gave me an idea of what working for a Tribal Department is like on daily basis and also provided me an opportunity to improve my interpersonal relationship skills and self-direction especially concerning time management and public speaking skills.