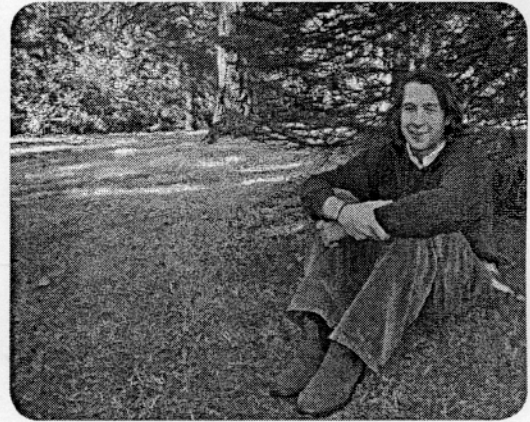


World Fisheries Trust

Student: Branden Beatty

Program: Biology

UVic Co-op Student



Try to pigeonhole Branden Beatty, and you'll be out of luck. The third-year biology student is an activist, a photographer, a carpenter, a tree planter, and a naturalist. "I've always been someone who needs to keep busy, and who needs to constantly try new things," he says. "I just can't sit still."

Beatty's energetic attitude can be attributed in part to his background. Raised in northwest Ontario, he grew up surrounded by nature, and has always felt most comfortable striving to positively impact his environment. He's also been known to try to incorporate his many interests into each area of his life.

So when Beatty visited the Biology Co-op Office, he was not only looking for a job that would satisfy his thirst for knowledge, but one that would also allow him to speak Portuguese. "I didn't think it would happen," he says.

Yet within a day, Biology Co-op Coordinator Anne Parkinson had responded with a potential job working with World Fisheries Trust (WFT), a Victoria-based non-profit organization that promotes sustainable fisheries and fisheries resources locally and worldwide. The WFT was looking for help on one of their CIDA projects, which focuses on improving the sustainability of Brazil's inland fisheries through the development of educational resources for local fishermen.

"The project engages local fishing communities on Vancouver Island to exchange experience and strategies with communities in Brazil," says Beatty. "I knew this would be an opportunity to support an important project, and I would also be able to incorporate my language skills."

Beatty was hired to facilitate communication with project partners, and to provide Portuguese language support. He also worked on a distribution strategy for aquatic biodiversity publications, did a mass mail out of WFT's Migratory Fishes of South America book, and did a lot of office management. "WFT benefited from Branden's enthusiasm and energy," says Carmen Ross, Field Director with WFT. "His keen interest in the field of fisheries and the operations of non-profit organization was evident every day."

"Non-profits like WFT need all the help they can get, because it's very important work," says Beatty. "People may shy away from getting involved, because they think there are certain qualifications, but the only real prerequisite is passion to make a difference. Once you have that, you're in."

For the first month, Beatty was one of only two employees working in the office, and he got right to work. "I was often able to work independently, which I really appreciate. My co-workers also constantly inspired me. These are people whose entire lives are altruistic and giving, and that really made an impact."

Branden has visited the WFT office a number of times since his work term ended and has voiced a desire to remain involved with the WFT and the Brazil project. He's currently looking into the possibility of developing a proposal and obtaining funding for an internship position with the project.

An avid photographer, Beatty says he'd like to go to Brazil to document the WFT project. "I think it's important to connect with the human side of things," he says. "If you make that connection, it just inspires you to push a little harder."

—• For more information about World Fisheries Trust, visit www.worldfish.org