JUNIOR PROFESSIONALS GROWING THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE

We asked young environmental professionals what it's like to participate in ECO Canada's wage funding programs.
Inside you will find junior environmental professional successes and key learnings from participating in ECO's wage funding programs.
Investing in Canada's Environmental Workforce

Youth employment has been a core objective for ECO Canada since 1997. Our Wage Funding Program matches young professionals, new graduates and interns in the fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM), with environmental employers. Funded by the Federal Government, this program pays up to 50% of salary and helps give Canada's youth a good start in a competitive market.

Since program inception, ECO Canada has facilitated:

- 6000+ Jobs created for young professionals
- $40M+ In wage funding distributed
- 90% Success rate for long-term job growth
OUR JOB CANDIDATES COME FROM DIVERSE ACADEMIC AND CAREER BACKGROUNDS ACROSS THE NATION.
We Asked 12 Of Our Junior Professionals To Share Testimonials About Their Experience.
HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ECO’S WAGE FUNDING PROGRAM?
As an Environmental Professional in Training and recent graduate actively engaged in job searching I was interested in finding a competitive edge when I stumbled upon the EYC program. The opportunity was presented on the ECO Canada website and the application process was straightforward. I applied while job searching and used the EYC pre-approval as an ‘Ace under my sleeve’.

~ Stefana Dranga, MFC, BES, FIT, EPT ~
Forest Technician, B.A Blackwell and Associates Ltd.

I knew about the program through a banner ad on the ECO.CA website. I had come to the ECO.CA site to search your job board. It was however my future employer who was familiar with the program and asked that I apply so that they may be able to hire me after I started volunteering.

~ Alex Kent ~
WHAT’S YOUR ACADEMIC BACKGROUND AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO PURSUE AN ENVIRONMENTAL CAREER?
I completed my Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom. Graduating from University I came to British Columbia to work and travel for six months. Arriving in Whistler I quickly grew a fond appreciation for the natural environment of the province and decided to become a permanent resident of Canada. I was drawn to environmental work to pursue my study in the science of Biology while working and protecting the natural environment in which I recreate in my spare time.

~ SIMON FRY ~
Cascade Environmental Resources Group LTD

I have a BSc in Biological Science and an MSc in Environmental Science. I have been interested in environmental work from a young age; I enjoy learning about a range of natural and applied sciences, but always felt the most at peace being outdoors. Thinking about where I would want to spend the majority of my time while at work, I naturally gravitated towards environmental work.

~ Beth Millions ~
Environmental Outreach Coordinator, Elk River Watershed Alliance

I graduated from Lakeland College in 2015 in Vermilion, Alberta. I hold a diploma in Conservation and Restoration Ecology (C.A.R.E) in which I discovered my passion for prairie ecosystems. Environmental work interested me because I wanted to have a job where I could learn something new everyday while remaining in the outdoors.

~ Bianca Gaggero ~
Clark Ecoscience and Sustainability
DESCRIBE THE PROCESS TO BE MATCHED WITH AN EMPLOYER.
I found the application and matching process extremely stress free and efficient. I was matched with CPAWS-BC in a matter of days.

~ ALANA WITTMAN ~
Community Engagement Coordinator,
CPAWS-BC

My host company was already paired up with the wage funding program at the outset of my job, so the pairing process was a breeze and already set up prior to my hiring.

~ Josh Ang ~

When I was accepted as an intern I had an organization in mind that I wanted to work for, but I knew they didn’t have the funding [to be] an intern. So I brought information regarding the wage subsidy program to them, and ECO accepted them as a host company. We were able to move through the process of hiring me.

~ Beth Millions ~
Environmental Outreach Coordinator,
Elk River Watershed Alliance
HOW HAS ECO'S WAGE FUNDING PROGRAM HELPED TO ADVANCE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL CAREER?
Working as an environmental campaigner is my dream career. Lauren Hornor, Executive Director of Fraser Riverkeeper, has been an incredible mentor and support. She has provided me with an unprecedented opportunity to gain valuable experience in various aspects of non-for-profit work, from grant writing to public outreach. I am relatively new to the position but have already experienced great professional development and am excited for my future with Fraser Riverkeeper.

~ Charly Caproff ~
Fraser Riverkeeper

The internship has led to a full-time, permanent position with Relight in addition to access to plenty of EP training and certification courses that will further both my career at Relight and beyond.

~ Kasey Milani ~
Relight Solutions

ECO’s wage funding program made it easier to take the initial step into a professional career and gain work experience coming from an academic background.

~ Elizabeth Good ~
Communications and Event Coordination Assistant
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
WHAT'S YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE WAGE FUNDING PROGRAM?
I represented my host, and its members, at several provincial and federal climate change policy stakeholder engagements. Of these my favourite was a federal meeting with western Canadian stakeholders regarding carbon pricing, it’s impact on environmental sector, and how it could be best used to drive innovation.

~ ALEX KENT ~

During my internship I had a number of opportunities to deliver presentations and workshops to farmers, acreage owners and other landowners. Probably one of the most memorable of these for me was in Grande Prairie County, AB, where I delivered a 3-hour workshop on planting shelterbelts and eco-buffers. The attendees of that workshop were what made it memorable – they had brought along maps of their own properties, and together we worked through and discussed potential planting designs and challenges. I left feeling like I learned a lot and had been able to provide useful advice and insight.

~ Luke Wonneck ~
Agroforestry Technician, Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society.

The memorable experiences from my internship are the quality and care of my mentors. Compared to my work experiences at past consulting firms, the financial flexibility that being an intern offers to employers allows for better training experiences. As a consultant, where time efficiency and billability are important, the financial allotments from the internship program ease the billability requirements and allow for mentor training programs to be more thorough.

~ Jake McQueen B.Sc, Ept ~
DID YOU ENVISION YOURSELF IN THE TYPE OF ROLE YOU FOUND WITH THE HELP OF THE WAGE FUNDING PROGRAM?
I had envisioned myself more in an environmental policy role than the one I am currently in, which involves a lot of technical agroforestry work. Over my internship, I’ve come to appreciate the practicality and utility of my work, and also the fact that I’ve still managed to integrate some of my thinking around social change and governance. In other words, I’ve managed to shape my role slightly to suit my expertise and interests. I no longer feel the need to pursue a more conventional environmental policy career path.

~ LUKE WONNECK ~
Agroforestry Technician,
Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society

Yes, I have always wanted to share my passion for the environment, active living, and community building with others. This is exactly what I do as a Community Engagement Coordinator at CPAWS-BC.

~ Alana Wittman ~
Community Engagement Coordinator,
CPAWS-BC

During my studies at University I always envisioned myself being in an outdoor environment. My role as an Environmental Technician collecting field data for environmental studies has achieved this while still providing me with challenging technical work.

~ Simon Fry ~
Cascade Environmental Resources Group LTD
What were your key learnings from participating in the Eco Wage Funding Program?
ECO’s wage funding program offers so much more than just training in sustainability or environmental legislation. They offer project management, technical writing courses or a consulting course to help develop their interns to make them well-rounded Environmental Professionals.

~ KASEY MILANI ~
Relight Solutions
Coming into this program had zero expectations, that being said I learned a lot. I had the opportunity to work for a small company with limited resources, thereby exploring many different branches of environmental work. I started this spring by working in the greenhouse transplanting native species, coming into the summer I worked in the field planting, weeding, and maintaining onsite care. This winter I worked in the lab, running soil samples, entering data, and finally working on marketing and website design. All I can say is expect the unexpected. I have gained so much knowledge working with Clark Ecoscience and Sustainability and will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

~ BIANCA GAGGERO ~
Clark Ecoscience and Sustainability
This program has been a complete blessing for me. Many of my fellow graduates that left university at the same time as I did are still looking for work in their fields, and many have given up and are working in retail or similar low-paying jobs. I feel exceptionally grateful for ECO’s wage funding program having made this experience possible for me, and I am grateful for the Elk River Alliance for giving me a wonderful working experience, expanding my skillset, and improving my confidence in myself. Thank you to both organizations for making this possible!

~ BETH MILLIONS ~
Environmental Outreach Coordinator,
Elk River Watershed Alliance
IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO JUNIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS CONSIDERING THE WAGE FUNDING PROGRAM, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
If you are having a hard time breaking into the working world after you graduated, you should consider ECO’s wage funding program. It gives employers incentive to hire you, and then you can show them that you’re an incredible asset for them to have; something that doesn’t always get across through resumes and interviews.

~ BETH MILLIONS ~
Environmental Outreach Coordinator, Elk River Watershed Alliance

There is no good reason not to sign up! It’s easy (and free!) to join the wage subsidy program. From there you have access to hosts looking for interns, gain work experience that works toward to your EP certification and training to further your professional development

~ KASEY MILANI ~
Relight Solutions
The advice I would give to new graduates who are not a part of the wage subsidy program is to research the program, determine if you are eligible to become an intern and then apply. You have nothing to lose, and this program will give you a leg up on the competition when finding your dream job.

~ Jake McQueen B.Sc, Ept ~
Waterline Resources INC.

If your goal is to work for an environmental not-for-profit, apply for the wage funding program. You are a much more attractive candidate to an employer when a large portion of your salary is subsidized.

~ Alana Wittman ~
Community Engagement Coordinator, CPAWS-BC

My only advice to new graduates is to take advantage of opportunities such as ECO’s wage funding program, as it can definitely deliver a competitive edge and improve your chances of getting a job in your field.

~ Stefana Dranga, MFC, BES, FIT, EPT ~
Forest Technician
B.A Blackwell and Associates Ltd.
I would advise all recent graduates to apply for ECO’s wage funding program because it provides youth with unparalleled opportunities in the environmental sector.

~ Charly Caproff ~
Fraser Riverkeeper
Apply to become an ECO job candidate in as little as 10 business days. Visit eco.ca to get started today.