



**City of New York
Parks & Recreation**

Central Forestry
Olmsted Center Room 47
Flushing Meadows-Corona Park
Flushing, NY 11368

July 21, 2008

By the end of my junior year at Wittenberg University, I knew I wanted to be involved in the decision-making processes that shape our local communities. I had taken a degree's worth of Political Science classes, where the exceptional faculty assigned challenging projects and led lively class discussions concerning an array of topics covering international relations, the American political system and both political theory and methodology. However, I also knew that in addition to the rigorous but flexible academic program in the Political Science Department, there was no substitute for real work experience. Thus, it was with great enthusiasm that I applied for the local internship offered over the summer in various locations across the country, and it is with little surprise that the program is now certified by the International City/County Management Association. That summer would lead me to Grand Island, Nebraska and a wealth of concrete work experiences that increased my interest in public service, strengthened my resume and bargaining power in future employment, and continue to guide me in my current position as a Forester with the City of New York's office of Forestry and Horticulture.

For anyone interested in local government management, or any field in public service, not to mention anyone who wants to round out their undergraduate education with real work experience, the Local Government Management Internship Program is an excellent choice. The program offers the chance to see local government operations from the insider's perspective, where interns work side-by-side with the employees who keep our local governments running. A wide variety of projects kept me busy over the summer, while the academic portion of the program earned me credit and another learning opportunity outside of the traditional classroom setting. Unlike some busy work given to interns at other internships, I was given the opportunity to present results from one of my projects to the City Council, and those findings were actually used to direct city policy. We met the mayor on several occasions, as well as other city officials, and through communication with each other, our Wittenberg professors, and our city mentors, we quickly learned about the diverse problems affecting communities like Grand Island, as well the creative solutions that were applied to address those problems. In addition to the exciting work experiences, we also took weekend trips to scenic destinations including the Black Hills area of South Dakota, where we stopped at Devils Tower and the Badlands, as well as Breckenridge in Colorado. For a modest price, less than the actual tuition, we really packed a summer full of great opportunities. Ultimately, this program's strength lies in the fact that the interns involved benefit from a close working relationship with real professionals, as well as the close relationship made with their professors who proctor the academic portion of the program. Similarly, the local governments that employ the interns do so productively, with real challenges and great opportunities for the interns to prove to themselves just how valuable they can be. I know after that summer, I was more certain of my commitment to local government, and more aware of how many opportunities exist in the broad spectrum of "public service." I highly recommend the Local Government Management Internship Program.

Brandon Schmitt

Wittenberg University Class of 2001, B.A. in Political Science
Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs Class of 2007, MSES/MPA