

A WELL TRAVELED INTERN

by Erin Henry, Environmental Education Student Assistant

Talk about ambitious! One adventurous intern traveled over the Atlantic to learn more about the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) this summer. Gemma Sherrett, a recent Environmental Geography college graduate from the University College London, was interested in the Great Lakes and did an internet search on an internship in Michigan. She came across the DEQ and contacted the Environmental Education Coordinator to attain an unpaid internship this summer. A summer program was set up for her by the Multi Media Coordinator (MMC) in the Southeast Michigan District Office, which is located near some Michigan friends Gemma had met in Germany. The MMC, Oladipo Oyinsan even set up free accommodations for her at a DEQ staff member's house.

Gemma worked with a different division for each of her five weeks. The first week she spent with Remediation and Redevelopment Division (RRD), the second with Waste and Hazardous Materials Division and then Geological and Land Management Division the third week. Another week was spent with the Air Quality Division. Gemma says she's been out in the field nearly every day, but has also been able to sit in on negotiation meetings. While with RRD she saw a remediation effort at a company where volatile organic compound (VOC) impacted soil was being excavated. She learned more about wastewater treatment at the Coe's Cleaner site in Milford, where she saw the groundwater pump and treatment system with air stripper.

She toured a landfill and observed the automated methane monitoring system. Gemma had a chance to measure methane pressure from the landfill. She also sampled eight other wells as part of the DEQ's periodic monitoring of the potential for off-site migration at this site. These field visits showed Gemma the challenges of old landfill management and methane abatement.

During her time with Waste and Hazardous Materials, she visited active landfills, observing transfer stations where rubbish is delivered, compacted, and taken away. She also visited a factory where tires were getting new tread.

On another week, Gemma examined seawalls that people had built on seafront property. She also helped to map wetlands with the Water Division.

During her free time in Michigan she was able to travel to Lake Michigan and to Northern Michigan for a camping trip. Gemma said she has been exposed to many areas of the DEQ, and is very grateful to have had this experience. She has been able to see a lot of the environmental issues facing Michigan, and the procedures the DEQ uses to tackle them, thanks to Oladipo Oyinsan and the staff in the Southeast Michigan District Office. The DEQ offers a myriad of opportunities for interns who want to gain environmental experience.

For more information on the DEQ's student intern program contact **Tom Occhipinti**, **517-373-2379** or **Occhipit@michigan.gov**.