**2017 Roland E. Dimick Memorial Scholarship Recipient -- Olyvia Childress**

Olyvia Childress always knew that she wanted a career focused on environmental conservation and research. As a Corvallis native, she grew up hearing about Oregon State University and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. When it came time to make her final decision as to which college and major to choose, OSU Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences was the obvious pick for meeting her goals.

Even after her summer internship with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies surveying for Mexican spotted owls in Arizona, her primary interest is in freshwater ecology.

“I love looking at how every little part of an ecosystem plays a different role in the big picture. I think it’s important that more people understand this for the sake of having a more sustainable relationship with our planet now and in the future,” she said.

Olyvia received the 2017-18 Roland E. Dimick Memorial Scholarship, awarded to a sophomore based on her freshman year performance. Spread out over three terms, it will help her further her education and allow her to have more time to volunteer and get additional real-world experiences. She continually discovers more interests, most recently via her Mexican spotted owl internship, in which she found that she really enjoyed learning about birds more than anticipated.

This upcoming school year, she hopes to continue on the path of balancing academics with volunteering and making professional connections. This strategy has worked well for her.

“By doing the same thing last year, I was able to get the internship and have three months full of rich learning and discovery,” she said. “I would love to continue to have these opportunities and I know that they are contingent upon my work effort.”

Before coming to OSU she volunteered for the Linn-Benton Salmon Watch Program, teaching children about the importance of riparian areas and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife participating in snorkel surveys. She is currently with the ODFW Fish Health Lab, testing fish for diseases and will begin assisting David Roon, PhD in Fisheries Science, prepare algae samples for isotope analysis.

Her long-term career goal is to add more field seasons to her resume and pursue a master’s degree, eventually becoming a biologist for ODFW or another state agency. Currently, she would like to focus on fisheries, however, she is fully aware that she is still early on in her schooling and is open to a different interest.

When she’s not actively pursuing learning opportunities, Olyvia’s main hobby is hiking.

“I love the feeling of completing a tough hike and being rewarded with a great view and knowing that I am the one person that got myself up there,” she said. “I also enjoy fishing. There’s no better way to experience sunset than reeling in a big largemouth bass.”

Olyvia is not only excited and thankful to be a recipient of this scholarship, but also to be a student in the fisheries and wildlife program.

“It’s filled with great people and staff that really want students to succeed,” she said. “Additionally, there are so many wonderful resources through both the department and OSU as a whole that are made available to students. [This is] just another reason why I am still so confident in my decision to choose OSU and the Fisheries and Wildlife program.”