

1-1-2004

## Preparing the next generation of public land managers: A collaborative approach to summer internships

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### Recommended Citation

Baldwin, Ben; Bobowski, Ben; Brunson, Mark; and Voth, Kathy (2004) "Preparing the next generation of public land managers: A collaborative approach to summer internships," *Natural Resources and Environmental Issues*: Vol. 12, Article 50.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/nrei/vol12/iss1/50>

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## **Preparing the Next Generation of Public Land Managers: A Collaborative Approach to Summer Internships**

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Tehabi (te-HA-be) is a word symbolizing the spirit of teamwork. The program operates from Utah State University's College of Natural Resources with partners in the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. Its mission is to enhance natural resource management by facilitating an environment where natural resource professionals, scientists, students and communities can develop sustainable solutions by sharing experience, information and ideas. Through a unique process of training, focused internships and mentoring, Tehabi facilitates development of natural resource leaders with an appreciation for, and the skills to bring together science, policy, and diverse values.

Now in its sixth year, Tehabi includes elements not commonly found in other academic or seasonal employment programs. Students begin with a two-week field course where they learn about organizational culture, community context, and systems theory as well as valuable field skills. Summer-long internships with agencies and non-governmental organizations provide experience with the technical aspects of management as well as opportunities to transfer experience and techniques among students, host office staff, and local residents. The program's emphasis on mentoring, supported by written and oral assignments, helps interns develop coping strategies to "survive" and even "thrive" in an agency culture. The results include enhanced transfer of institutional memory and completion of on-the-ground projects. Tehabi's most important product is a group of future leaders with both technical and collaborative skills who have an understanding of the environment in which they will work and a network available to support them as they enter the work force.

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