**Morgan\_Internship.Final Transcript**

**Morgan Beeler:** Hi, I’m Morgan Beeler and I spent my summer interning at the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes.

I was born and raised in Michigan, and I knew that I wanted to stay here, and water quality policy is of particular interest to me, especially in the Great Lakes Basin, and so I was looking for an internship that encompassed not only the Great Lakes and protecting the waters here, but also community engagement. When I came across the Office of the Great Lakes, it had all of those pieces. Not only are they working on protecting the great lakes, but community engagement is one of the core pillars of the office, so I thought that would be a really great fit.

In the winter semester, at the School for Environment and Sustainability, the Office of the Great Lakes was actually participating in a course. So I chose to take that class to further develop my networking with the office.

I was their Ford Fellow for Community Engagement, and so the biggest part of my internship was working with two communities, St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, and helping them to develop a process for co-creating a vision for their shared harbor. We just elected a new governor, and because of that, there are a lot of changes happening, and we needed to communicate to the new governor and their team the importance of our agency and what we do. So I helped to put together a transition document that essentially laid out the overall value that we bring to the state of Michigan and the communities that we serve.

I also worked on doing some tribal engagement and inclusion. I went to meetings with different tribal leadership and we talked about the changes that were being made and then helped to work and incorporate suggestions from tribal leadership.

This internship really did solidify my work aspirations. I’ve been able to continue working with St. Joseph and Benton Harbor to keep creating that shared vision in the community, but also start talking with government leadership there on how to create a governance structure for their harbor which they currently don’t have.

For me, this opportunity to do the partnership has really opened a lot of doors to other avenues in the state which I could possibly take in the future for my future career.