

As the Annual HEP/CAMP Directors Meeting gets closer I am filled with anticipation and I'm eager to match faces to the names that have been emailing me. Throughout this week I have been working hard on creating a marvelous presentation that humbly brags about all the wonderful folks we have within our organization. Aside from this project, I was delegated to also help set up and participate in a collaborative meeting with some other government departments that serve farmworkers and their families. Being able to contribute and learn from this meeting helped me put things into perspective of how many programs are available to serve a certain population but may often miss the opportunity to connect with each other due to the fast-paced environment that keeps them primarily focused on their particular projects. Yet this situation also happens at the community level. Often times we miss opportunities of collaboration when we focus on our sole objectives and often forget that there are outside entities that would help us move forward, perhaps, more efficiently if we were to work together. Taking time to listen to how they conducted themselves and shared suggestions and participated in discussion allowed me to make notes of the positive skills and ideas this meeting had for all those who were involved. Hopefully proving me useful to implement back home.

Wednesday was very special being that I was in the nation's capital on its national day of independence! Being able to witness the excitement, and some chaos, of the people in D.C., allowed me to reflect on the significance of this day. Recognizing its importance for our country, but also acknowledging the development we must continue going through as a nation. While this day is looked upon to celebrate the freedom of the nation I can attest that the feeling is not mutually shared by everyone who is currently residing in it. Many gave up an environment that they were somewhat comfortable with to pursue the greater liberties and promised opportunities that the founding fathers promoted many years ago. All could bask in the glory of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, yet that seems far from the truth today. This year, as I sat on the lawn that allowed me to view fireworks, the U.S. Capitol Building, and the Washington Monument I took that extra time to really appreciate the position I am in to enjoy these freedoms that we too often take for granted.

As for my weekend, I scheduled every hour to be as productive and efficient as possible. Saturday I was able to visit five different museums, three memorials and finished the day off by looking out at the Potomac River. Sunday many of us interns headed to Virginia to spend the whole day hiking up Old Rag Mountain. Being from Oregon, the mere idea of hiking made me giddy and being able to appreciate the nature of the opposite side of the country was an added bonus. While climbing up the rocks of the mountain and reaching the top made me realize how minuscule we are in the grand scheme of things. Yet scaling the literal mountain reassured me that challenges are only as big as you make them seem. Anything is possible.

OLD RAG MOUNTAIN



SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

