



9/23/16

Dear Laurie and Paul Stanford Bernhard Foundation Board of Trustees,

Hello, my name is Shelby Sly, and I was given the opportunity to spend my summer as the Bill Levitt Fellow at Friends of Alta. I am writing to personally thank you for your generous donation to the Bill Levitt Fellowship fund. This position has been a truly valuable experience both for my own personal growth and for my academic and professional career moving forward, and it wouldn't have been possible without such gracious support.

I am currently a senior at the University of Utah pursuing a degree in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and Geography. As a Utah native as well as an avid skier and outdoor lover, the Cottonwood Canyons are where my heart lies. It was more than a pleasure getting to be involved in all the great work that Friends of Alta does to conserve our precious open space and encourage overall sustainability in Alta.

As the Bill Levitt Fellow, I was able to be a part of a wide variety of projects and work with a number of partner organizations, providing me with a wealth of experience and new skills. It was a healthy mix of computer time in the office and hands on work in the field. I helped collect and enter data, completed surveys with the Alta Environmental Center in conjunction with our Alta Bird Survey and Summer Invasive Weed Program, served as a trail host at the Albion Meadows Trailhead, and helped with weekend events like the Wasatch Wildflower Festival, Alta Kids Day, and the Town of Alta Restoration day. I got to plant trees, lead volunteer weed pull events, work on projects like the Alta Kids Activity Book, and inform the public about why preserving and conserving our environment is important. Each day was unique, and I felt as though my work was actually meaningful, which in the world of internships now days is often hard to find.

This summer I've become more comfortable working with computer programs like Adobe and Excel, I learned how to operate GPS systems, how to conduct surveys, and gained a new understanding of our local ecosystem's vegetative and wildlife communities. I learned how to identify native and non-native species, learned more about the land conservation process and gained better interpersonal communication skills in both an office and public outreach setting. My time with Friends of Alta has prepared me for that scary plunge into the real world that I'll soon experience upon graduating in the spring. I've learned far more than I expected, developed new passions, and discovered more about the direction I want to take with my degree. As my time with the organization comes to a close, it feels good to move on knowing that, because of your support, the Bill Levitt Fellowship will continue to enrich the education of future undergrads and provide them with the same opportunity I was given. Thank you, again, for your recognition of the value in this fellowship. My appreciation is boundless.

Sincerely,

Shelby Sly

Summer Bill Levitt Fellow 2016

