

**Elizabeth Lacey, ASFPM Foundation Future Leaders Scholarship Recipient, shares her experiences as a 2021 Summer Intern with Michael Baker International
September 20, 2021**

This summer I had the opportunity for an in-person internship with Michael Baker International that came through my professional networking with members of the ASFPM Foundation. This was only financially possible because the Foundation invited me to stay in its DC-based corporate apartment for the months I was there. Travelling to and living in the historic Washington, D.C. area this summer was one of the most positive



and fascinating experiences that I have had. That, coupled with the tremendous team I worked with at Michael Baker and my mentor, Allison Andrews, reinforced my desire to pursue Civil Engineering. I am profoundly grateful to the ASFPM Foundation for the opportunity to expand my knowledge and learn how my degree can be applied in a real-world setting.

The two main projects that I worked on were determining the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) for a 100-year flood in different areas and working on the hydraulics and hydrology of a bridge project. I learned much about the different types of programs and analysis methods that can be used to determine the BFE, and how to determine whether a structure or property was above or below that BFE. I also learned how to use HEC-RAS and the process of determining the impact of a bridge on water surface elevations and pier scour. Learning hydraulics and hydrology in a practical setting this summer has helped prepare me for my senior classes at Colorado State University. My on-the-job understanding of hydraulics and hydrology has transformed the theoretical knowledge of the textbook. Equally exciting was the opportunity to travel to downtown Washington to see firsthand FEMA Headquarters (see photo).

Throughout this summer, I was able to go in person to my internship and explore the Washington area, paying close attention to the COVID requirements that kept me safe. One of the most meaningful places to me was the National Mall, with the profound writings of those who walked before me and are honored in all the memorials and monuments. Experiencing the view at the top of the Washington Monument was one of my favorite things in that it showed me the bird's-eye view of our Nation's beginnings in the form of the beautiful City of Washington, and how it still thrives today. It was especially interesting to learn about the different ways that flooding has affected the monuments and memorials and how floodplain management has helped prevent some catastrophic events.

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As I toured Washington and floated on the Potomac River on the ferry, the bridges and water management projects were a site to behold. Touring around Alexandria, VA and going to the Wharf to look out over the Potomac River was a fulfilling experience as I contemplated the older technology and methods that have been displaced by the current civil engineering methods.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with Michael Baker for the depth of projects they manage for their clients, and count it a privilege to be a part of the ASFPM Foundation. My partnering with both these organizations has allowed me to learn more about floodplain management than I would have merely in a college textbook! I am grateful to the ASFPM Foundation for the tremendous opportunity and the scholarship, which allowed me to take my desire to help others, which sprang from my family's challenges with Hurricane Katrina 16 years ago, and see it come to fruition.