



Shaunna M. Chase

Soil Scientist

SpecPro, Inc.

B.S. – Soil Science, 2005; UW-Madison

“The Department of Soil Science and CALS made it easier for me to create relationships with the faculty and fellow students. Through my research project funded by the Holstrum Fellowship, I learned valuable research, time management, and people management skills.”

- Shaunna M. Chase

Without her educational experiences as a soil science major at UW-Madison, Shaunna Chase says she never would have landed the job that opened the doors to her current position. Flexibility in the soil science major allowed Shaunna to take a variety of rewarding environmental science courses. She also participated in a Holstrum Fellowship research project through the university, which sent her to Alaska to learn research methods by studying the effect of forest fires on soils.

“I learned how to do research. I may not have come away with good results, but wouldn’t have gotten job with spec pro if didn’t have that experience,” Shaunna says about her research project. “You can’t just get discouraged at the little things.”

Shaunna currently works for SpecPro, a company that serves government and industry by providing contractual environmental services. As a SpecPro employee, Shaunna works on the site of the inactive Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, WI. Most of her projects are designed to prepare the property to be transferred to new ownership by removing byproducts of ammunition production. Contaminants include everything from petroleum to propellant components to metals.

Shaunna began working for SpecPro as an Environmental Technician and was later promoted to the position of Soil Scientist. Most of her work involves leading or assisting in remediation projects and completing Department of Defense property transfer documents. She estimates that she spends 90 percent of her time in the office and relies heavily on writing, editing, public speaking, interpersonal communication, and research skills.

A great project support system in Shaunna’s department encourages teamwork and positive office relationships.

“You have your project, but you also have someone backing up as quality engineer,” Shaunna describes. “They help look at project to see if doing it efficiently and correctly and answer questions if you’re gone.”

A similar close-knit atmosphere led Shaunna to the Department of Soil Science in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. She knew her goal was to work in the environmental sciences and she was seeking a supportive atmosphere. After researching the majors, Shaunna settled on soil science because she felt that soil is the backbone of environment studies. She believes that a strong background in soil science leads to a stronger understanding of the environment.

Shaunna points to professional organizations, including the Soil Science Society of America, the Wisconsin Society of Professional Soil Scientists, and the Federation of Environmental Technologists, as great sources of information, training, and networking opportunities. Even before you graduate, these societies offer many opportunities for students as well as professionals.