

Career Profile

Joel Nichols, Aquatic Toxicologist

Whether scrutinizing research data or traveling to northern Ontario to collect and analyze water and sediment samples, there is never a dull moment in the life of an Aquatic Toxicologist.

Joel Nichols, a 2000 Laurier biology graduate, currently works for GlobalTox International Consultants Inc. located in Guelph. GlobalTox is a privately owned international corporation providing services in product testing and registration, human and environmental toxicology, and risk assessment for private sector clients and regulatory bodies. Joel also completed an MSc from the University of Waterloo in 2003 specializing in this field. In his current job role, he contributes to the preparation of both human health and ecological risk assessments, provides technical support in peer reviews of aquatic studies and assists in the writing of comprehensive technical proposals.

Joel began his Laurier career in the business program, only to realize after his first year that it was not the appropriate career path for him. Following his interests in the natural sciences, he was prompted to transfer to biology where he felt more engaged in his studies. However, it wasn't until Joel began working in a lab setting and conducting thesis research related to metal bioavailability that he narrowed his career path down.

Joel is a testament to the fact that career paths are not discovered simply by sitting in the classroom. Instead, Joel attended numerous related seminars and conferences that allowed for great networking. He also made a strong effort to talk to professors who offered a lot of useful information about the multiple fields of employment for biology graduates.

The establishment of a new Ontario Regulation (O.Reg 153/04) in 2004 requires property owners to meet detailed requirements related to environmental site assessment and clean up. This has opened new doors for Aquatic Toxicologists within environmental engineering and consulting firms to help ensure an ecological risk assessment is included in any assessments conducted under the regulation. Due to this fact, there has been a trend in environmental engineering and consulting firms to hire more environmental toxicologists with risk assessment knowledge and experience.

If you are interested in learning more about the dynamic field of aquatic toxicology, Joel suggests familiarizing yourself with these resources:

www.atw.ca - Aquatic Toxicology Workshop website: contains conference information

www.setac.org - SETAC website: contains conference information and job postings

www.ejobs.org - contains job postings, and links to company job posting sites.

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