CHC Udall Scholar to Dedicate Career to Environmental Education
By: Hannah Depin
Wed, 05/09/2018

Commonwealth Honors College junior Michael Crowley has won the prestigious Udall Scholarship, a nationally-competitive award for students who will dedicate their careers to the environment or Native American public policy.

The Udall Scholarship recognizes fifty winners from more than 500 applicants, and Crowley is the first UMass Amherst student to win the award since 2005. He hopes to dedicate his career to connecting more people and communities to nature and the environment.

Before coming to UMass Amherst as a transfer student, Crowley worked in conservation as a forest and park supervisor, as a project leader, and as a naturalist teacher. He saw opportunities for improvement on both the on-the-ground and management levels, which inspired him to finish his undergraduate degree and pursue a master's degree.

Nature itself is a “continual learning process,” Crowley said. “It’s something you can discover even though it’s right outside your door.” His goal is to find ways to better integrate nature into our communities, and this work will involve skills in education, public policy, and nonprofit development and management.

His studies reflect this multidisciplinary approach; through the BDIC program at UMass, he designed a major in Integrated Environmental Education. His courses have included GIS science classes, environmental studies, history, and political science. He will continue his studies in the accelerated Masters of Public Policy program at UMass Amherst.

As a Udall scholar, Crowley will travel this summer to Tucson, Arizona, to attend a networking and leadership conference, and says he looks forward to the opportunity. “Developing these networks of peers is so important for creating change,” he said.

Crowley applied for the Udall award through the Office of National Scholarship Advisement (ONSA), which works with students who want to pursue nationally and internationally competitive scholarships and fellowships. In spite of the time and work that applying requires, Crowley encourages other students to consider it. “I really recommend applying,” he said. “It tested my belief in myself, and then had it validated.”