Hannah’s Major: Conservation Biology

Program: UW Ceiba Rainforest Ecology Field Expedition, Winter

Academics: We had four or five classroom lectures during this program led by my UW professor Catherine Woodward. I enjoyed that it was heavily focused on field learning, rather than in a classroom setting. We were able to hear presentations from some of the researchers at the Tiputini Biodiversity Station about their current projects, which showed us exactly what a research biologist could do for a career.

Fieldwork: My partner and I studied the spatial distribution of butterflies in the Amazon Rainforest. It was a great learning experience to see the actual time commitment needed to conduct an experiment.

Impact on Future Career Plans: This project affirmed my intentions of being a field research biologist. I am confident that my future career will include travel and hands on research work, very much like what I was able to do at Tiputini.

Ecuador as a Second Home: While I was only there for eleven days, I did develop a lasting bond with the Amazon rainforest. I realized that I was happy to be there every single day, even when I had to wake up at 6 a.m. and couldn’t take a hot shower at the end. I started to notice that everyday I was excited to explore and see what else I could learn, and which part of my comfort zone could be pushed. On the boat back to the city, with all the knowledge I had gained through the program, I knew that I wanted to help educate other young adults and kids about this place. While there are many other places I would like to travel to while a student at UW-Madison, I know that I will return to Ecuador.

“This module allowed for me to experience what being a research biologist in the field is really like.”