Program: SFS Rainforest Studies, Fall

Danny's Major: Wildlife Ecology

Academic Life: It was by far not your typical university experience, with a small group of like-minded people and a curriculum designed around hands-on activities and field work where you put what you learned in the classroom to the test. This is something unique about SFS programs where you do a lot of work in the field and learn techniques outside the classroom. In my case, the rainforest was my classroom. There were only eighteen other students on this program which made learning easier and formed a connected community among the students and staff.

On Life In Yungaburra: I literally lived in a rainforest. I liken it to camping where you live very intimately with nature. The facilities were really nice, with running water and electricity. I felt like I lived in luxury in the rainforest! There was a circular road that meandered through the forest, that connected log cabins where we slept to the showers and to the center. The five minute walk to the center through rainforest is a stark contrast to wading through a cold blizzard back at Madison.

Danny's Fieldwork Experience: Fieldwork was intended to enrich what I learned in the classroom. It was the practice behind the theory. The types varied by class, like going to nearby towns to interview people about the towns' history, previous uses of natural resources, and the current state of the town. Most of our field work was done in the rainforest collecting data from the field, like soil samples, measuring the diameter-breast-height of trees, or surveying for animals.

Advice For Students Considering Fieldwork Abroad: It is just a great learning opportunity, builds your resume, and expands your horizons. For me, this experience has shown me what field research is like and it is something that I would like to continue doing in the future. It is also refreshing to not only to get out of the country, but also off of campus.

“There was natural wonder every day and always something new.”

Danny (left) after clearing invasive weed from a local creek during weekly community service.

YUNGABURRA, AUSTRALIA

DANNY ERICKSON

YUNGABURRA, AUSTRALIA

DANNY ERICKSON

Program: SFS Rainforest Studies, Fall

Danny's Major: Wildlife Ecology

Academic Life: It was by far not your typical university experience, with a small group of like-minded people and a curriculum designed around hands-on activities and field work where you put what you learned in the classroom to the test. This is something unique about SFS programs where you do a lot of work in the field and learn techniques outside the classroom. In my case, the rainforest was my classroom. There were only eighteen other students on this program which made learning easier and formed a connected community among the students and staff.

On Life In Yungaburra: I literally lived in a rainforest. I liken it to camping where you live very intimately with nature. The facilities were really nice, with running water and electricity. I felt like I lived in luxury in the rainforest! There was a circular road that meandered through the forest, that connected log cabins where we slept to the showers and to the center. The five minute walk to the center through rainforest is a stark contrast to wading through a cold blizzard back at Madison.

Danny's Fieldwork Experience: Fieldwork was intended to enrich what I learned in the classroom. It was the practice behind the theory. The types varied by class, like going to nearby towns to interview people about the towns' history, previous uses of natural resources, and the current state of the town. Most of our field work was done in the rainforest collecting data from the field, like soil samples, measuring the diameter-breast-height of trees, or surveying for animals.

Advice For Students Considering Fieldwork Abroad: It is just a great learning opportunity, builds your resume, and expands your horizons. For me, this experience has shown me what field research is like and it is something that I would like to continue doing in the future. It is also refreshing to not only to get out of the country, but also off of campus.

“There was natural wonder every day and always something new.”

Danny (left) after clearing invasive weed from a local creek during weekly community service.