

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/

Conference Title: BIOGEOMON 2012

Travel Dates: 15th – 19th July 2012

Location: Maine, USA

Group member(s): Eilidh Morrison

Aims: To orally present “Reactive Gas Fluxes in Perennial Bioenergy & Annual Arable Crops”

To meet and discuss work with scientists working in a similar research area

To attend plenary talks, oral presentations and poster presentations on a wide range of topics

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

I applied to the James Rennie Bequest in order to attend the 7th in the series of BIOGEOMON conferences, held in Maine, USA. I am a PhD student funded jointly by internal funds from the School of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Research Station of the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. As I am not funded by a Research Council, there is no budget associated with my PhD project to cover costs involved in attending conferences. As such, BIOGEOMON was the first, and only, international conference I was able to attend during the course of my PhD.

BIOGEOMON is an international conference held approximately only every 3 or 4 years that brings together multidisciplinary researchers investigating ecosystem behaviour and biogeochemical processes. The BIOGEOMON conference offered a one-of-a-kind opportunity for me to gain valuable feedback on my research from scientists in the wider community in advance of writing articles for submission to the literature and my PhD thesis. Attending the BIOGEOMON conference was also a great opportunity for networking and discovering future collaborations and career opportunities.

I was accepted for an oral presentation at the conference which was very exciting and motivated me to give some real thought to how best to tell others about the importance of my work. I delivered my talk in front of an audience of world experts and afterwards engaged in some very valuable discussion of the methods I employed and the results that I had presented. Best of all, I won a prize! As one of 3 selected from around 50 student presentations I was very pleased.

I also had the opportunity to listen to many of these world experts present their latest work and to broaden my insight into the field of biogeochemistry. There was a wide ranging schedule of talks to attend as well as a whole day dedicated to a field trip to an important research site. There we had the opportunity to discuss the approaches taken to solving scientific questions and to get stuck in with the different bits of equipment available.

On a personal note, I also managed to meet many interesting and friendly scientists working in similar and not so similar areas. I have kept in contact with many of the people I met and hope that we may be able to work together in the future.

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It was a valuable experience presenting my work to an informed and interested audience and BIOGEOMON was the ideal venue for me to discuss my work, broaden my insight, and forge links with others within the scientific community. I am now writing my PhD thesis and the support and advice I received from the participants at BIOGEOMON has been a great encouragement to me.

I would like to sincerely thank the James Rennie Bequest for their award of a travel grant, without which it would have been very difficult for me to attend this conference.