

Ashlee Tibbets: International Research Travel Report USDA National Needs Fellowship program: Grant #2008-38420-19525

During the summer of 2010, I was fortunate enough to travel to two different countries. I spent June and July in Australia collecting data, and I was in the Republic of Korea during the month of August. In both countries I spent time in multiple cities, traveling via public transportation.

In Australia, I conducted interviews with design professionals in order to identify informational and material gaps that limit the ability of building design and construction professional sot use environmentally responsible materials in the structural systems of buildings. The goals of the interviews was to help material producers better understand the needs of designers, inform curriculum development for upper level courses and continuing education, as well as identify future research opportunities related to the evaluation and development of green structural materials.

In the Republic of Korea, I was attending an international gathering of the International Forestry Students' Association as a United States delegate. I was able to travel all over the country with a group of students from over fifty different countries. I participated in the official meetings and ended up volunteering a year to the organization as the North American Regional Representative. I also volunteered to be on the Fundraising Commission.

Australia

Destinations: Melbourne, Kilsyth, Cairns, Sydney.

I attended the professional conference Frame Australia in Melbourne for two days as an Oregon State University representative. I also attended the trade show DesignBuild Australia in Melbourne. I worked collecting data for the Softwood Export Council by administering questionnaires. I went to a zoo where I was first introduced to Australian wildlife such as the dingo, koala, and kangaroo.



In Kilsyth, I was hosted by Glenn Tilling, who kindly let me use his family's house as residence. I was able to experience Australia in a different way than most people by spending time in a suburban area. I took regular walks around the area and I bonded with a couple of neighboring horse. I was also fortunate enough to get a personal tour of the Tilling Timber mill by Glenn Tilling. I conducted a group interview with design professionals in Melbourne, just an hour's train ride from Kilsyth. While in Kilsyth, I took a two-day trip down to the island of Tasmania. The province of Tasmania offered many things. I took advantage of the Cadbury Chocolate Factory, a tour of the oldest brewery in Australia, and the Hobart zoo, called Bonorong Park, where I got to feed kangaroos and wallabies as well as pet a koala.





I was hosted by a family friend in Cairns. While I was there I visited local landmarks and learned about the indigenous culture. I was able to experience a different region of the country than I would have if I had stayed in the south-eastern tip of the country (in Melbourne and Sydney). I visited zoos, rivers, and art centers here in order to gain an appreciation for the wildlife and culture. I also snorkeled on the Great Barrier Reef. The picture below is of a wild crocodile I saw while on a river boat with our guide.





I stayed in Sydney in a hostel. During my stay in Sydney, I attended an internationally-acclaimed musical called *Wicked*. I visited many local landmarks such as the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Opera House, and public markets. I also went to a zoo that featured local and exotic animals. I also went on a walking tour with my hostel from Bondi Beach to Koogee Beach. The last two group interviews were conducted in Sydney, as well as the data analysis and write-up of the final report.





Overview of Australia

Australia proved to be an invaluable experience, professionally as well as personally. I developed lasting relationships with professionals in the forest products industry during my time in Australia. I appreciated their hospitality and common courtesy. I enjoyed my time in the North the most because everything was so drastically different from the time in the South. The North was humid and covered in lizards and frogs. I enjoyed this climate as well as the mindset of the people who lived there.

Republic of Korea

Destinations: Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, Andong-Si, Hoengseong-gun, Seoul.

I attended a presentation focusing on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of forest resources as well as another presentation about Asia's future forests. I attended presentations by the minister of the Korean Forest Service, the president of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, and the president of Seoul National University. I got to watch a traditional Korean music performance.



I trekked through local Korean forests and visited the educational forest of Seoul National University. I visited an iron mill, multiple Buddhist temples, and multiple local beaches. I participated in multiple student group meetings discussing methods and ideas on improving student retention and club building skills.



To gain an understanding of Korean culture, I visited a traditional paper factory and a traditional mask museum. I also attended an outdoor Korean musical. I attended a seminar focusing on forest products and the production processes for a greener future. I also attended seminars focusing on forests, communities, and cultures. I climbed a large mountain and rafted down a river called the Dong-gang. I visited the national arboretum and the Demilitarized Zone.



I attended the International Union of Forest Research Organizations as a representative of Oregon State University. I presented the data found in the Australian interviews, as well as presented a poster on previous research on market orientation of a selection of Oregon's forest products companies.



Overview of the Republic of Korea

My professional development blossomed in the Republic of Korea. Though the first two weeks were spent with a group of students, I was one of the older students so I was able to work on my organizational and group skills. The last week in the Republic of Korea was spent in a much more professional atmosphere, where I was able to meet many international forestry professionals. I gave an oral presentation for which I prepared heavily. I believe I performed well and I am proud of the accomplishments.

The day before I arrived in Seoul, I was extremely nervous because I had never been to an Asian country. I was anticipating heavy culture shock as well as bad food. I couldn't have been more wrong. The Republic of Korea proved to be the most memorable and exciting time in my life. It only took a couple hours to realize that I would love my time spent there. The people were so hospitable and loving that I was taken aback. They displayed huge amounts of friendliness and acceptance toward me. The food was absolutely incredible. I have never enjoyed food so much in my life, and I have attempted to bring the culinary ideas I learned back to Oregon. I loved every meal I ate, including odd things like squid soup. I know that I want to go back to the Republic of Korea, in order to see my friends, eat the food, and experience the love that I had never before seen displayed by an entire culture.