



JESSE WILSON

B.S. ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT '07

Palau is an island nation in Micronesia known for its tropical beauty, extraordinary marine environment and historical significance as a World War II battle site.

While tourists flock to Palauan resorts for sunbathing, relaxation and scuba diving, scientists like Jesse Wilson live in lab dorm rooms and spend their time studying the country's vast uninhabited area (more than 300 islands, much of them preserved). The work involves lugging heavy equipment through dense jungles while dodging poisonous trees and keeping an eye out for crocodiles and deadly sea kraits (snakes).

Wilson, who graduated summa cum laude from CSUCI and received his Ph.D. in Environmental Systems with a specialty in Marine Microbial Ecology/Environmental Microbiology from U.C. Merced, made four trips to Palau during his time as a graduate student. He has also conducted research in the Monterey Bay area, Yosemite, Alaska, New England and off the coast of Mexico.

"Research is just downright fun," said Wilson. "I got into science because I'm curious and I like to design experiments to answer questions about the world around me. Research includes a lot of field work, which can be hard at times, but it's always adventurous and exciting."

Wilson, who had been working as a lecturer at U.C. Merced, just started a postdoctoral research position at Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego this month.

"I'm extremely excited to start my postdoc experience at Scripps and to contribute to important breakthroughs in marine science," said Wilson. "So much remains unknown about microbes and the roles they play in our coastal ecosystems."

His long-term goal is to continue in academia – specifically at a CSU campus.

"Teaching is immensely fulfilling because of the impact I have on other people's lives," said Wilson. "To be there when someone has that 'aha' moment is priceless. The CSUs are particularly appealing to me because of the teaching focus. I enjoy including undergrads in research projects and experimenting with teaching styles that transform the learning experience."

In his free time, Wilson enjoys hiking and camping with his girlfriend and their cherished rescue dog, Mokey.

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