

Andrea Doerr
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Post-Enrichment Report

In his final remarks our Wildlife Management professor, Dr. Moses Okello said, “It’s not as much about what you know as it is about how that knowledge changes you as a human.” This comment summarized my study abroad experience with the School for Field Studies (SFS) in Kenya last fall, an experience funded by the Honors Enrichment Award. The entire mantra of SFS is about applicable knowledge, learning that serves a purpose in the wider community. At the end of my time in Kenya, I completed a directed research project studying rangeland condition which included community perceptions about the causes of change in rangeland condition as well as a vegetation assessment of the true condition of the rangelands. We then presented our findings along with practical solutions to a large group of people from the surrounding area. The Directed Research (DR) presentation and other community interactions introduced genuine conversations with the local people and taught me how to view a problem from every viewpoint.

Through this experience I gained a passion for studying how conservation and international development are intertwined, and the difficulties of reaching a middle ground that benefits both wildlife and humans. This is a focus that I hope to continue researching and studying through graduate school and for a career.



Upon my return to CSU last spring I registered for an independent research class, NR495, in which I worked alongside a graduate student who was completing her doctoral thesis on land use changes in East Africa, a topic I had just experienced and learned about *in* East Africa. I also started meeting with other faculty members who are working on more research projects studying rangeland ecosystems in East Africa. . Through these multiple networking meetings I met Randy Boone, a research scientist that was in the process of writing a proposal for a research project on wildlife movement and fragmentation from land use changes in Kenya. I now am researching and learning more about rangeland ecology through my work with Randy Boone as a Hughes Undergraduate Research Scholar, and am using my findings to write my Honors Thesis. I am deeply grateful to the Honors Program for helping fund this journey of discovery and learning that began with my study abroad experience in Kenya.