

## James Ray, Environmental Science

As an undergraduate in Environmental Science I benefited from a staff that had a range of backgrounds and experience and that understood the course needed to be interdisciplinary in order to be effective. This gave me a broad base of knowledge but also allowed me to focus on particular areas of interest as I progressed through the course.

I developed productive relationships with my lecturers, and so two years after graduating I returned to Birmingham to complete a Master of Philosophy degree in stream ecology.

Since I graduated, the experiences of earning my Bachelor's of Science and Master of Philosophy degrees from Birmingham have been invaluable for opening career doors, and continue to help me approach issues I face at work from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Currently I am living and working in the USA. I work for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as a fish biologist. I have been with the department for the past three years and it has offered me a great opportunity to participate in the kind of work I've always wanted to do.

My job is diverse and I frequently work in the field, as well as in education programs for children and adults. Salmon and trout issues in the Pacific Northwest are deeply ingrained into the culture and are therefore often contentious. I'm helping to conserve and protect the salmon and trout populations in Oregon through promoting a 'healthy watershed' approach to land management.

However, there is more to do at Birmingham University than just work-another reason I'd recommend it. The University itself has a great student's guild with plenty of events to keep your social calendar full.

The city of Birmingham is diverse, has a lively atmosphere, great food, and offers students of all tastes something to do; plus, it is centrally located so you can easily visit your mates at other Universities or take your washing home!

The advice I would give to students currently studying on the Environmental Science program would be use your teachers; they have a lot of knowledge and experience and are really approachable. But don't expect them to spoon feed you; meet them halfway. If you invest the time so will they.