ANGELA CALDERARO, ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGIST

What was the most applicable/meaningful class you took at UC Davis and why?

Many classes within the both the EBM and EPAP majors are applicable to what I do each day. All the environmental policy classes have helped me tremendously in my day to day work and even to help me land jobs in environmental consulting. Although, the most enriching and challenging class I took was Environmental Ethics. A lot of skills and information, you can learn on the job, but the most important thing is to remain true to your ethics. Working with developers and sometimes even government agencies, your ethics are challenged. There is usually a lot of contention when dealing with environmental resources. Someone may not value a resource as high as you or as high as the law. Everyday I am faced with my value system. Whether I am monitoring a construction site, developing mitigation measures for a specific project, or creating goals and policies for a general plan, I need to evaluate first what is within the parameters of the law, and then what value should be placed on a specific biological resource. It is important to understand the politics of what is going on around you and do what you truly believe to be right.

What was the most satisfying part about getting your EBM degree?

I felt that the students and faculty in both majors were generally concerned about the environment and wanted to improve it in some way or another. Some people were so passionate they turned me on to things I may not have thought twice about, such as how much pollution comes from vinyl house siding or how harmful artificial sweetener (saccharin) can be or how plastics can leach chemicals into the liquids they hold. Faculty and students within both majors heightened my awareness of the world around me and augmented the importance of even the small decisions I make each day. I graduated with a deeper understanding of the environment, knowledge I could spread to others, and determination to be more environmentally friendly.

What words of wisdom do you have for other students?

Studying abroad in Costa Rica changed my life. Although I think the internships I did while in school helped with getting practical experience and job skills, my trip to Costa Rica rejuvenated my enthusiasm for biology and the world around me. I would have never traveled to a country by myself with unknown dangers lurking around every corner, like large crocodiles, painful bullet ants or the venomous bushmaster. With a staff of trained local biologists to teach all the intricate wonders within the rainforest and the other varied ecosystems within the country, I was able to relax and enjoy the experience. In the process, I became an avid bug lover and collector. There are very few chances to live and experience a new culture for three months worry free. I would recommend embracing all the experiences you can while still in school. They always end up being good stories later on.