

Tajinder Singh

Ecological Society of America (ESA)

Long Beach, California | August 4th – 9th

ESA Conference Travel Report

I was able to attend the Ecological Society of America Annual meeting 2024 in Long Beach, California. I attended the plenary session and opening talk by the ESA president on the importance of policy making to further conservation and protect biodiversity. He showed that policy had a stronger impact on conservation efforts than critical climate change research findings. Research alone is unable to drive public efforts into conservation and sustainability where appropriate policies are often needed to drive sustainability efforts. We must therefore increase public education on sustainability and climate efforts so that a stronger public demand can drive lawmakers to design comprehensive climate change and sustainability policies.

Following the plenary session, I was able to present my First authored poster titled The Fate of Terrestrial-derived Bacteria in Aquatic Ecosystems. It gave me a great opportunity to interact with peers from the scientific community and talk to them about my research findings. I was able to receive insightful comments and feedback from experts in the field which will help shape the future direction of my study. In the days following my presentation, I was able to attend many interesting talks on plant-microbe interactions, soil microbial ecology, and microbial community assembly. I attended talks focusing on maintaining a stable microbial community to promote soil health and biodiversity for supporting plant growth, especially under various stressors due to climate change. It is important to maintain microbial biodiversity and soil health to ensure that forests and agricultural crops can continue benefiting from the support and services provided by microbes. Beyond the introduction to extensive breadth of ecology research being conducted internationally, I was also able to interact with potential graduate advisors and employers. I discovered different job portals that post research internship opportunities for international students which is extremely difficult to find in an academic setting.

Attending the ESA Annual Meeting was a fantastical! I was able to present my research to an audience of international ecology experts and receive insightful feedback. I was also able to interact with many fellow researchers, industry leader, and government officials tremendously working together on addressing ecological issues in the face of a changing global climate. I grew both personally and professionally from this experience and made great connections which will help further my research career. I would like to extend my gratefulness to Shackouls Honors College and the H.U.R.P. travel grant for the generous support that enabled me to gain this valuable experience.