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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MORRIS

Fulbright research experience continues cultural journey for Bartlett



(September 29, 2023) Abi Bartlett '22, Monticello, wasn't quite ready to go to grad school after graduating from UMN Morris, so instead, they applied for a Fulbright Study/Research Award to continue their geological research with Native communities.

As a geology major with an emphasis on hydrology and geochemistry, Bartlett's research at UMN Morris included work on wild rice density and the geochemistry of lake sediment cores, with the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

While the research was their first focus for their Fulbright application, Bartlett also was intrigued by the opportunity to live in New Zealand and learn about different cultures and how native communities can preserve their cultures.

Currently, they are working on a research project called 'Let the River Speak,' a multi-year research project headed by the University of Auckland, in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

"The field work is in Gisborne with current sampling being from the Waimatā River. I am focused on how western science and traditional ecological knowledge can come together to better understand how we can respect and protect our waterways."

Bartlett is a descendant of an Ojibwe White Earth Nation tribal member but grew up away from that culture. "As I began to grow in chemistry and geology I wanted to learn more of my ancestry. Currently I have been working with *manoomin* (wild rice) and *nibi* (water) health for a little over three years. This has given me the opportunity to give back to the communities of Ojibwe tribes while



learning how beautiful research can be when rooted in respectful relationships.”

Bartlett noted that things in New Zealand work a lot slower than research in the U.S. “But the process in which the research undergoes is very respectful and understanding with the communities living near the river.”