



My Summer Experience in Sde Boker, Israel -- Claire Howard

The ability to learn and live in Sde Boker, Israel at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev this summer was a very thrilling opportunity. The small town in the heart of the Negev Desert is one-of-a-kind. It draws researchers, scientists, and students from around the world to the unique and leading laboratories and culture that one can only find in Sde Boker. I had the opportunity to work in a laboratory in the

Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research that focused on hyporheic exchange—the exchange of water and particles between the top layer of sediment and overlying water in a stream. Collaborating with several doctorate candidates and a leading professor provided me with a glimpse into upper level academia and greater perspectives on water research.



Sde Boker is a picturesque and impressive place. The concentration of committed students, researchers, and professors is unmatched. People from all over the world come to this small town in the Negev to pursue their very niche area of research. Living in this community brings together students of a range of ages, perspectives, and interests in an engaging and dynamic learning environment. The international influence from

fellow researchers also creates an energetic living setting. Everyone working in Sde Boker comes to commit to their research, learn from one another, and contribute to a growing understanding of water, solar, or ecology-related knowledge. The passion and drive that the masters and doctoral candidates display each day creates an encouraging and exciting workplace.



The relaxed nature of Sde Boker provided a remarkable experience for delving into research, living outside my comfort zone, and engaging in a very new learning environment. The passion and commitment with which fellow researchers applied themselves everyday consistently matched their interest in learning about others' work. Everyone had a unique story of their path to pursue work in Sde Boker. I loved hearing about how other students' particular interests in desalination, algae, solar technology, hydroponics, or hydrology led them to the Negev Desert. Living in Sde Boker also provided ample opportunities to explore the incredible nature of the Zin Valley and engage with fellow students. The Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research

was just a few blocks from the dramatic overlook of the Zin Valley. Filled with ibex, an animal native to the area, the Zin Valley offered incredible views and opportunities for hiking and biking.

The ability to live, learn, and work within the Sde Boker campus of Ben Gurion University of the Negev was an immeasurable personal and professional opportunity. I encourage anyone interested in hands-on learning, living in a new environment, and gaining experience in a collaborative and challenging work setting to consider such an opportunity.

Water is a global need and it is presently a global challenge in terms of quality, access, and availability. The opportunity to see and share with others their commitment to water research reaffirmed my interest in my future involvement in applying my academic and professional knowledge to improving a greater understanding of water. I was also able to see firsthand Israel's pioneering role within water research and critical action. The Negev Desert is strikingly bare, yet Ben-Gurion's vision to see the desert flourish is realized in Sde Boker's research capacity and community.

My own journey to the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research was made possible by the ongoing partnership between Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the Northwestern Center for Water Research. Considerable support was provided by Northwestern's Buffett Institute. I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity to grow as a student,

researcher, and individual during my time in Sde Boker this past summer, and to confirm my interest in contributing to a greater global understanding of water.