The mountainous island of Tasmania with its great natural beauty and acres of protected land is the perfect place for a natural resources student to study. University of Minnesota, Crookston senior and natural resources major Jeffrey Wilson, Spooner, Wis., describes his study abroad trip as, “the best experience of my life so far.”

Wilson’s trip took him for a semester of study to Strahan in Western Tasmania. He arrived in Australia in July two weeks before classes started to sightsee before making his way to University of Tasmania.

When classes ended the first of November, Wilson took advantage of an opportunity to spend the rest of his time visiting Australia. The father of a friend he met during his semester of study had a place for him to stay in Mission Beach, Queensland.

“I lived with a row of palm trees and coconut trees between me and the ocean,” explains Wilson. “I would wake up with the sun and head to the ocean for a swim.”

He took advantage of whitewater rafting on a nearby river and snorkeling near the Great Barrier Reef, but the highlight of his adventure came in the form of a two-week road trip from Mission Beach to Melbourne, Victoria, in the southeastern corner of Australia, with friends he made during his stay in Mission Beach.

In the car were four different people from four different countries which, Wilson says, “led to interesting discussions on many topics.”

A 1970 Holden Kingswood car without air conditioning, took them on their 1,693 mile adventure. They stopped every day along the way to buy fresh produce to eat. “Every night we spent camping at spots along the beach, swimming, hiking, and visiting the countryside,” Wilson recalls. “We only drove as far as we wanted each day, allowing us to take time for exploration of beautiful beaches, rivers, and anything we felt like stopping to see.”

“I would like to have stayed longer,” explains Wilson. “But, going half way across the world makes you realize that family is very important. My sister was expecting a baby and my brother was getting married, and I knew I wanted to be home for both.”

He smiles when he says his current ambition is to graduate from the U of M, Crookston, but one thing Wilson knows about his future is he wants to continue traveling. “If I were to give someone advice, I would tell them to take advantage of study abroad opportunities. Leave yourself time to explore and find the unexpected. It will be the best experience of your life… so far.”

Senior Jeffrey Wilson is majoring in natural resources with an emphasis in park management. He is also passionate about flying and intends to go to flight school after he completes his bachelor’s degree.