

# Diplomacy in an agreeable setting

By *Brittany A. Krupica '06*

Finland is truly one of Earth's most glorious places. With its stunning landscape, crystal-clear lake regions and thousands of miles of forests, the country is a particularly pertinent location to study international environmental law and diplomacy.

Last August I traveled to the Northern Karelia Region of Finland to study at the University of Joensuu. Situated just a few miles west of the Russian border and a few hours south of Lapland, Joensuu encompassed the warmth and gracefulness of Finnish culture and tradition. As a participant in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

course on International Environmental Law and Diplomacy, I joined 30 other government officials, diplomats and UN officials to better understand how the delicate art of negotiation is applied to environmental management.

As the only undergraduate (an independent major in global ecological justice and French studies) and the only representative of the United States in the program, I was thrilled to be there. Such a comparative program in the field of international environmental law and policy serves as a perfect pedagogy for my career aspirations in the field of law. I heard lectures from international figures in the field of international environmental law, multilateral environmental agreements and compliance, and forest management policy,

the special topic of our two-week course.

Eighty percent of Finland is covered by forest, and forestry is a major national industry. We traveled to several northern regions of the country to directly examine forest management practices in Finland, Russia and Estonia. I was particu-

larly impressed by our visits to the Mekrijärvi Research Station, as well as to the Finnish National Forest Research Institute and the Koli National Park, all of which are located in desolate, northern regions of the world, with breathtaking scenery and views I thought existed only in heaven.

Having the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to interact and



**Brittany A. Krupica in Finland's Koli National Park, overlooking the Karelian Lake region near the Russian border.**

be among some of the world's finest and most intellectually diverse environmental leaders and scholars was truly amazing, most especially for a young, aspiring environmental law leader. My experience in Finland proved to be perhaps one of the most intellectually enriching and culturally vivid experiences I have ever had. The invaluable knowledge and contacts I have made within the global network of environmental law has and continues to be a driving force for my passion in wanting to fulfill my dreams of pursuing a career in global humanitarian and environmental policy work and research. 📍

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