Community Spotlight

Samantha Dunn

(She/Her)

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Q: Tell us about yourself.

I am a second-year master's student at California State University, Fullerton, and my research interests are in magmatic systems.

Q: How are you connected to the AGeS program?

I am a 2023 AGeS-Grad awardee! I am also a new member of the AGeS Networking Committee. I look forward to my continued involvement in the program.

Q: Describe your research (Beyond AGeS).

I am investigating the volcanic-plutonic connection of the Jackass Lakes pluton (JLP) in the central Sierra Nevada batholith. We are testing the following hypotheses: 1) the JLP granodiorites are compositionally complementary to the more felsic leucogranites and meta-rhyolites that formed from melt-extraction from the magma reservoir leaving behind crystal cumulates preserved in the plutonic rocks. Alternatively, 2) all three units are compositionally the same (equivalent).

Q: What geochronologic techniqes do you use?

I use laser ablation split stream inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (LASS-ICPMS) to obtain zircon U-Pb ages and trace elements. My work was conducted at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in their Preston Cloud Lab.

Q: What excites you about your research?

My research delves into the volcanic-plutonic connection. It's exciting to add my own results and interpretation to a subject that not all geologists agree on!

Q: What are you hobbies outside work?

Outside of everything geochronology and geology, I love caring for my houseplants and have recently been entering the world of collecting succulents and cacti. Botany has always been my second love after geology. I enjoy bringing the two together by designing my plotted cacti/succulents with rocks I have collected from the field to make it look like a natural landscape.

Q: What inspired you to get into the earth sciences?

Like most geoscientists, I have always had a love for the outdoors and collecting rocks. My grandmother was also a middle school earth science teacher and was always providing my brother and I STEM experiences from a young age. I am very fortunate in this way. However, what steered me towards geology, in particular, was a geology class I took in high school and a geologic hazards class I took while I was attending community college with the same teacher.