Why I Want to be a Geologist; A Path to Field Mapping and Structural Geology

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I love geologic mapping and particularly structural geology with its connection to large scale tectonic features such as plate boundaries and mountain ranges. After some introductory geology courses, I changed my major to Geology on the recommendation of a teacher even though the change added a year to my undergraduate degree and required 6 more courses in Linear Algebra, Calculus and Physics to meet the transfer requirements at the nearest university. And if that doesn’t demonstrate a strong desire to become a geologist, I don’t know what would!

I took some excellent structural geology courses at university and felt like this was what I thought geology would be about; using limited surface data and remote sensing to project structures into the subsurface. I did my senior thesis field mapping the structural geology of Opabin Plateau in the Lake O’Hara region of the Canadian Rockies. Working all summer for a hydrogeology group in this stunning alpine area and doing field mapping combined my love of geology, hiking in the mountains and research while attempting to contribute to our understanding of a significant normal fault in the dominantly contractional fold and thrust belt of the Canadian Cordillera. This experience inspired me to apply for a MSc which also became a field based structural geology focused thesis working on the southern termination of the Stateline Fault in the easternmost Clark Mountains in the Eastern California Shear Zone in California near the Nevada state line.

My PhD dissertation at the University of Kentucky is a structural geology field based mapping project in the beautiful and rugged terrain of the Little San Bernardino Mountains of NW Joshua Tree National Park. I have done a full year of field work, to do justice documenting total offsets on 40 miles of faults, with previously undocumented slips. My continuing keen interest is in pursuing the highest level in education and geologic research. Thank you to AIPG for your support in helping me achieve my academic goals and providing funding at a critical time after my assured funding ends while I finish writing and defending my dissertation.