My name is Ian Johnson. I am a third year graduate student at UW River Falls, intent on finishing my degree this semester (Spring 2010). I have a lengthy and non-linear life history that began out of high school with a four year tour in the Marine Corps. From there I obtained a BS in Construction Management from UW Stout and went to work for several years as a project manager for a nationwide homebuilder. I got out of the market just before the implosion and went back to get my masters in Sustainable Community Development, which I am working on now.

My formal research interests lie primarily in climate change and ecology, although informally they know no boundaries. I received a fellowship through the National Wildlife Federation in 2008 for my thesis studies, which will provide a holistically integrated model for optimal biofuels feedstock production from native prairie polycultures in conjunction with optimum management of rare, threatened, and endangered grassland species management for the sake of profit driven carbon negative climate initiatives in the Upper Midwest. More simply put, my studies focus on managing native prairies as a carbon negative biofuels feedstock while simultaneously benefitting the declining native species that associate with the native prairie habitat.

My professional goals ultimately lie in education. I hope to someday work in a college or university, continuing my work in the climate change and ecology field, and working with other like minded and interested professors and students. I would also like to continue my pursuit of self-sufficiency within sustainability, this fellowship is a valuable addition to my personal and professional portfolio. It will add a critical component of tangible climate change and carbon footprint benchmarking to my expertise, while paralleling my interests and studies of carbon sequestration in that less carbon emissions ultimately equal less need for sequestration. It will also allow me to broaden my focus from my primary research goals and view carbon emissions on a large scale institutional level while helping to define and model footprints that exist far beyond the standard utility and transportation genres. My knowledge and input will be used to help define what data is used to define average student commutes, how staff travel is recorded for ease of future use, and ultimately how URF can continue to reduce its footprint to meet institutional, UW system, and state and national goals as a model for campus sustainability. This is an exciting project to be a part of!