Two recent Warren Wilson College graduates have earned prestigious Fulbright research scholarships. The scholarships will enable Keaton Scanlon and Nick Macalle to pursue agroforestry research projects in Senegal and Indonesia.

Scanlon’s project will focus on traditional wild food in rural villages of Joal, Senegal, and Macalle’s project will focus on bridging a gap between social and ecological analyses of agroforestry management systems on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia.

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program is one of the most widely recognized and prestigious international exchange programs in the world. Sponsored by the U.S. government, the program supports research, study and teaching in more than 140 countries.

“We are so proud of Keaton and Nick,” President of Warren Wilson College Lynn Morton said. “The grants provide them with incredible opportunities to pursue research that will make a tangible difference in Senegal and Indonesia and will ripple out into the wider world.”

Keaton Scanlon is a 2018 graduate of Warren Wilson College with a Bachelor of Science in environmental studies with a concentration in ecological forestry. She will use the Fulbright award to collect and catalog native medicinal and edible plants in Senegal. She plans to compile her data into a format that may be used by locals who wish to share the information with their communities.

“I feel grateful to be able to spend nine months in a part of the world that means a lot to me,” said Scanlon, who has spent time in Senegal on and off for the past six years. “Having conversations with friends in Senegal about the medicinal plants they grew up with has always been really fascinating, and then later talking more about resource exploitation and rights surrounding these plants started to show how many layers these issues have.”

Nick Macalle graduated in 2018 from Warren Wilson College with a Bachelor of Science in environmental studies with a concentration in ecological forestry. His Fulbright research project seeks to analyze the impact of coffee agriculture intensification on soil fertility, biodiversity, crop productivity and farmer livelihood on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi.

“While living in five villages in South Sulawesi, my research partner Dian and I will be able to develop a relationship with the community, where we can assist in providing the village with resources for developing and establishing long-term sustainable land management plans,” Macalle said.

Dave Ellum, professor and dean of land resources at Warren Wilson College, taught both students and assisted them with applying for the grants.

“Keaton and Nick exemplify the best in Warren Wilson students – fearlessness in joining a community outside their own, dedication to their personal and professional passions and commitment to making positive contributions to the world,” Ellum said. “We are proud to have them representing us in the global conservation community.”

Scanlon said her coursework, senior thesis travel to the Ecuadorian Amazon to study indigenous agroforestry systems and taking agronomy classes when she studied abroad in central Mexico prepared her in “huge ways” for the work she will be doing in Senegal.

“I didn’t know what agroforestry was before coming to Warren Wilson, and so my education there, especially Dave Ellum’s classes and the forestry program, introduced me to a new way of thinking when it comes to land management,” Scanlon said.

As a student at Warren Wilson, Macalle took a course on arts, culture and tourism in Indonesia that had a three-week study abroad component. He said the connections he made during that trip, along with other work, service and academic opportunities he had at Warren Wilson, spurred his interest in doing further research in Indonesia, and it became the basis for his proposal.

“My time at Warren Wilson College and experiences in Indonesia, whether spent with (host mother) Oma, learning from the farming communities or developing a research collaboration and partnership, assure me that I am prepared to pursue a Fulbright,” Macalle said.