

MEET THE BOARD

Joe Freas, Aquatic Bioassay and Consulting



SoCal SETAC Treasurer Joe Freas with wife Ashley and daughter Evie take a trip to the snow

I spent most of my childhood living in Simi Valley, CA. I feel lucky to have grown up in beautiful Southern California. As a kid I loved to spend my time outdoors. My family and I went camping all over the state exploring much of the diversity it had to offer. Observing nature sparked an interest in science for me at a very young age.

I graduated from California State University Channel Islands with a bachelor's degree in biology with special emphasis placed on chemistry, math, and physics. I took about every science class they had to offer. While working on my undergraduate studies I spent most of my time working on bioremediation research. One of my projects involved genetically modifying current bioremediation organisms to better suit specific applications. I loved my time at Cal State Channel Islands and continue to do research in their

laboratories. I completed a MPH degree in public health and someday plan to complete a PhD program in environmental science.

After I graduated from Channel Islands, I went to work for a biotech company. I quickly realized I was not interested in the cutthroat biotech industry. I now work at Aquatic Bioassay and Consulting Laboratories, Inc. and love it. Much of my time at the lab is spent coordinating bioassay testing, working on quality control, writing SOPs, and keeping our lab running well, but there is so much more. With the help of colleagues, I have modified existing methods and devised new methods for bioassay testing. I am currently working on grain size research in marine sediments, and have new bioassay test methods I will be using in the next few weeks. Of all the things in the environmental science field, I would have to say it is the great people I have met in the field that I enjoy most. Working with great people makes it feel like I'm not working at all.

I attended my first SoCal SETAC meeting about 8 years ago and I have been a member ever since. I have been elected as Treasurer for SoCal SETAC and I am very excited to be an officer on the board. I have been attending the SoCal SETAC board meetings for years now and have found it a very rewarding experience.

On a more personal note, I still enjoy camping with my family and wife Ashley. I have a 3-year-old daughter named Evie and a 12-year-old nephew Jake who I call "Wildman". I am also a pilot and like to fly around the Southern California coast and islands. I recently flew out to Catalina Island and spent a few days backpacking around the island. I was amazed at how beautiful it was and how close it is to the mainland. I am looking forward to seeing you all at the next SoCal SETAC meeting.